

NAAMAT

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NA'AMAT Woman



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Na'amat Woman

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E-mail: naamat@naamat.org

Web site: www.naamat.org

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Our covers: A collage of photos taken at NA'AMAT USA's exciting national convention. Photos on front cover by C.H.Pete Copeland; back cover by Copeland and Judith Sokoloff.

Mission Statement

The mission of NA'AMAT USA is to enhance the status of women and children in Israel and the United States as part of a worldwide progressive Jewish women's organization. Its purpose is to help NA'AMAT Israel provide educational and social services, including day care, vocational training, legal aid for women, absorption of new

immigrants, community centers, and centers for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence. NA'AMAT USA advocates on issues relating to women's rights, the welfare of children, education and the United States-Israel relationship. NA'AMAT USA also helps strengthen Jewish and Zionist life in communities throughout the United States.

NA'AMAT USA AREA OFFICES

Eastern Area

505 Eighth Ave., Suite 2302
New York, NY 10018
212-563-4962
eastern.area@naamat.org

Southeast Area

4400 N. Federal Hwy., Suite 50
Boca Raton, FL 33431
561-368-8898
margie.moidel@yahoo.com

Midwest Area

10024 N. Skokie Blvd., Suite 226
Skokie, IL 60077
847-329-7172
naamatmdw@aol.com

Western Area

16161 Ventura Blvd., #101
Encino, CA 91436
818-981-1298
wanaamat@sbcglobal.net

President

Elizabeth Raider of Woodland Hills, California, was re-elected as national president of NA'AMAT USA at the 41st national convention, July 21-24, in Cleveland, Ohio. An excerpt from her acceptance speech follows.

It gives me great pleasure to again accept the presidency of NA'AMAT USA. I look forward to continue the progress we have made over the past three years.

I would like to thank the outgoing national board members for their support and willingness to utilize new approaches in technology and social media. I hope you will all remain active in your cities and continue to share your expertise with local leadership.

I welcome the incoming board members and anticipate that together we will continue to provide energetic leadership in promoting our national goals — and I wish all of you Mazal Tov!

For me to be installed in Cleveland is truly coming full circle. My roots with the Labor Zionist Movement began here, through the encouragement of my aunt, Sara Halperin, who was an active member of the city's Jewish community and one of the founders of what was then Cleveland Pioneer Women. Sara urged me (she actually set it up and arranged for a ride) to attend my first meeting of Habonim, our Zionist youth group, and I was hooked! Little did she know that she had not only introduced me to Labor Zionism, but it was through Habonim that I would meet my future husband.

Being the national president of NA'AMAT USA is not a position that I take lightly. It has been challenging, fulfilling, difficult and demanding — sometimes all in the same day — but it has also provided me with opportunities to fulfill the realization of my own goals of working within the Zionist and Jewish spheres of activism that have been a major part of my life since I was a teenager.

These have not been an easy three years in terms of fundraising, and as I mention in my president's report, the difficult economic situation has affected most nonprofit organizations.

However, NA'AMAT USA members have worked diligently to help maintain the services and programs we provide in cooperation with our sister organization NA'AMAT Israel.

The challenges that face us now are broader than ever, as Israel must confront rampant anti-Semitism and continued threats of annihilation. Even with the uncertainty of what tomorrow may bring, life continues and NA'AMAT Israel makes plans for a better future.

NA'AMAT USA has always worked vigorously to enhance the quality of life for women, children and families in Israel. Our constant goal has been to help create and sustain the framework for a productive and stable society.



The national board of NA'AMAT USA wishes you and your families Shana Tova 5774!

We are fortunate to work as a partner with NA'AMAT Israel, and it is gratifying to know that we are part of a world movement as is evidenced by the participation in this convention of Galia Wolloch, Masha Lubelsky and Shirli Shavit from NA'AMAT Israel; Orit Tobe, NA'AMAT Canada president; and Ceres Maltz Bin, former NA'AMAT Brazil president. Thank you for joining us for the celebration of our 41st national convention.

For my family, Israel and NA'AMAT have continued to be a very important and central part of our life. My husband, Dave, has provided me with insight, understanding, encouragement and support, making it possible for me to incorporate the time necessary to accommodate NA'AMAT business and travel — and the inevitable “busyness” — in our lives. Our children and grandchildren — Mark, Miriam, Jonah, Emma, Talia, Danny, Shari, Elias, Yael and Elana — have supported my decision, and I am truly grateful for their continued encouragement.

I thank you all for the honor and trust you have placed in me, and I will do my best to represent NA'AMAT USA as your national president.

Elizabeth Raider

Passionate About

The 19th Knesset has a record number of female members — and they are pursuing a feminist agenda.

by MICHELE CHABIN

It was March 12, 2013 — Rosh Hodesh Nissan — and the Women of the Wall, a group of female activists who are demanding the right to pray from a Torah scroll at the Western Wall, with prayer shawls and phylacteries if their members wish, were holding their monthly prayer service at the Kotel. Anat Hoffman, WOW's chairwoman, feared the police would once again arrest members of her group, as they had every month during the previous six months.

That didn't happen. Stav Shaffir (Labor), Michal Rozin (Meretz) and Tamar Zandberg (Meretz) — three young, liberal female Knesset Members — accepted WOW's invitation to pray with the group. Although secular, they willingly draped the distinctive,

brightly colored prayer shawls designed for WOW supporters around their shoulders.

The presence of the lawmakers apparently made someone high up in the police department reconsider plans to once again detain or arrest some of the 300 women who had come to pray with the group. Instead, the officers formed a human barrier along the divider that separates the men's section of the Wall from the women's section to prevent religious extremists from attacking the group.

For the first time in a long time, WOW's prayers proceeded without incident. "The image of Knesset Members wearing our talitot [prayer shawls] is a symbol of legitimization," Hoffman

said, explaining why, in her opinion, the police backed off that month. "It's saying, 'We're with you.'"

At the end of the prayer service, MK Shafir, who walked out of the Kotel plaza with her arms locked, civil rights style, with the other MKs, said she participated in WOW's prayers "because I believe in their struggle. I believe in the right to express one's religious beliefs in the way that feels right for them."

When, a month later, the police again started to detain WOW activists,

In solidarity with the Women of the Wall, MKs Stav Shaffir (center) and Tamar Zandberg (right) pray with WOW chairwoman Anat Hoffman (left) during the group's monthly Rosh Hodesh prayer service.

Courtesy, Women of the Wall



Women's Rights



Zandberg and Rozin “accompanied us throughout the detention process, including the decision of Judge Moshe Sobel on April 25,” notes Shira Puce, WOW’s director of public relations, referring to the judge’s landmark ruling that WOW was not breaking any laws by praying at the Kotel in prayer shawls and phylacteries.

While there have always been hardcore activists among the 109 women who have served in Israel’s Knesset since its first session in 1949, the 27 female MKs (out of a total 120) in this, the 19th Knesset, “are qualitatively different in that they have a feminist agenda and see themselves as feminists,” observes Hoffman “You can feel their sense of sisterhood.”

Although the Knesset has long had a Committee on the Status of Women, this year marked the first time that female MKs formed an actual caucus. Led by MK Merav Michaeli (Labor), longtime feminist activist, the caucus “has been a unifying force,” says MK Ruth Calderon (Yesh Atid), an educator-turned-lawmaker, now in her first term of office. And three political parties are headed by women: Shelly Yachimovich (Labor), Tzipi Livni (Ha-Tenuah) and Zehava Gal-On (Meretz).

Shavit Ben-Arie, author of the book *Female Members of the Knesset*, says he has “high hopes for these women,” the largest number of female MKs in Israel’s history. “They’re passionate about women’s issues and identify as feminists.”

Though it will take time for many of the women, half of them Knesset

newbies, to learn the ropes, they are off to a good start, Ben-Arie comments. Already, he adds, several women MKs, most notably MKs Shuli Moalem-Refaeli (HaBayit HaYehudi), Aliza Lavie (Yesh Atid) and Zahava Gal-On (Meretz), were instrumental in passing the Rabbinical Judges Bill, which ensures that 4 women (out of 11 members) will be appointed to the committee that appoints dayanim (rabbinical judges). Until now, women have been prohibited from choosing the rabbinical judges who rule on everything from spousal support to child custody.

“Today is a historic day on the way to a substantial change in the rabbinical courts,” Moalem-Refaeli said in May, when the bill passed the first of three readings before becoming a law. “Because the role of judges is barred to women, the only way that women can influence and shape the character of the rabbinical courts is through the committee for appointing judges.”

Lavie expresses the hope that the four female appointees “will contribute understanding, sensitivity and recognition in this area, and will lead to a more healthy situation in the courts, which is more coordinated to the general society in Israel.”

Both Moalem-Refaeli and Lavie are modern-Orthodox Jews who want to promote equality within the framework of Jewish law.

In arguing against the law, MK Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism), who is ultra-Orthodox, told reporters at the time that its backers were trying to “change the rules of the game.” Members of the 19th Knesset, Gafni

said, “endlessly talk about Jewish issues that they have never talked about before. The current terrible government wants to chew away at all things Jewish.”

MK Ayalet Shaked (HaBayit HaYehudi) doesn’t dispute that the new government “is changing priorities,” but denies that it is trying to harm Jewish law. “You feel the winds of change in the Knesset, especially with regard to women’s issues, which are being promoted very quickly,” she notes.

Shaked, who acknowledges that she “is not very involved in the women’s agenda, even though I support it,” says the rabbinical judges law was passed to ensure civil rights, not an attempt to upend Jewish practice. “The dayanim make decisions that affect both men and women,” Shaked continues, “so why shouldn’t women have a say about which dayanim will make these life-changing decisions?”

Perhaps women will now find more understanding and sensitivity when it comes to the rules of divorce. Galia Wolloch, president of NA’AMAT Israel, says the organization is in close contact with the female Knesset Members who, she hopes, will lead the fight for changes in the divorce system.

The rabbinical courts grant the get (Jewish divorce decree), but, Wolloch explains, there is “competition between the rabbinical courts and the civil courts” when it comes to making agreements about child support, alimony and property division. Which court decides these issues depends on who files first. Husbands are

Women Knesset Members pictured above, from left to right: Karin Alharrar, Michal Biran, Ruth Calderon, Rina Frenkel, Yael German, Tzipi Hotovely, Yifat Kariv, Fania Kirshenbaum, Adi Koll; page 5: Aliza Lavie, Orli Levi-Abekasis, Merav Michaeli, Shuli Moalem-Refaeli, Michal Rozin, Stav Shaffir, Ayalet Shaked, Orit Strock, Penina Tamanu-Shata; page 6: Zahava Gal-On, Gila Gamliel, Sofa Landver, Limor Livnat, Tzipi Livni, Miri Regev, Shelly Yachimovich, Hanin Zoabi, Tamar Zandberg.



“more likely to open a file in the religious court, which is more sympathetic to men. Most wives choose the secular court. NA’AMAT is lobbying the Knesset to pass a law that would allow the rabbinate to provide only the get and leave all other matters to the civil court.”

Elana Sztokman, executive director of the New York-based Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, says the election of the 19th Knesset was “historic for women in some ways.”

When this writer interviewed Sztokman right before the elections, held on January 22, she was especially impressed by the “turnaround” of Tzipi Livni, “who rose in politics without touching feminism” and who, during the past two and a half years, “publicly embraced” feminist issues.

During the campaign, Livni “reached out to women as a constituency, making statements about feminism and speaking at feminist conferences about the importance of women’s leadership and making changes in society,” Sztokman observed. “That in itself is also new — the idea that feminist women are a constituency that should be wooed. It shows that feminist issues around gender equality are gaining momentum and becoming much more mainstream than they have in the past.”

Sztokman gives much of the credit to the “feminist activism” of the past few years by both women and men in Israel, especially around issues of gender segregation and religious pressures to exclude women from public spaces.

The public demonstrations, letters to the editor and petitions to the Supreme Court by the Israel Religion Action Center and others against attempts to force women to sit in the back of the bus or to walk on the other side of the street “are now paying off with a greater societal awareness of these issues,” Sztokman said. “Some politicians are starting to get the message. It seems to me that most of the parties are starting to appreciate the urgency of the gender issues to the public consciousness.”

Many observers have likened the current crop of female MKs to the powerhouse women parliamentarians of the 13th Knesset, including Yael Dayan, Naomi Blumenthal, Limor Livnat and Naomi Chazan.

“They are very similar to what we saw in 1992, when there was also quite a big leap in the number of women in the bigger factions who became committed to the promotion of the status of women,” Ben-Arie says. “They made sure all the women MKs were involved in what they did by making them responsible for various lobbies and joint initiatives.”

Thanks to their efforts, the author adds, the Committee on the Status of Women became a permanent body in 1996.

Naomi Chazan, who served in the Knesset with the Meretz Party from 1992 to 2003, recalls how her group of female MKs “systematically” examined the legislation on gender equality and women’s rights that were on the books at the time and “started a mini-revolution.” Chazan explains that the vast majority of Israel’s very strong laws — against sexual harassment and workplace discrimination; for equality of women in the workforce and military; and the overall advancement of women — were passed during their watch.

If there is a difference between the old-timers and the newcomers, Chazan says, it is how and why they were elected. In decades past, both male and female candidates gained their seats through party primaries, an election process “that put women at a disadvantage.” To have a chance in the primaries, “you need money, organization and public visibility. So unless you have an affirmative action mechanism in place, it’s a joke.”

But a large percentage of today’s female MKs were elected to parties that did not hold primaries, Chazan points out. Rather, the party heads made a conscious decision to place women candidates in realistic positions on their party lists. The number of seats a party gets

is proportional to the number of votes it receives, so candidates sitting toward the top of the list have the best chance of getting a seat in the parliament.

In contrast to previous female MKs, most of the women voted into the 19th Knesset are not professional politicians, Ben-Arie stresses. “We’re seeing very accomplished women who weren’t politicians by skill or activism. Ruth Calderon, an educator [she founded a secular, egalitarian yeshiva in Jerusalem], and Miri Regev, a former general, are just two of the women who decided to put their life on hold and enter politics.”

Though feminists are pleased to see more women than ever serving in the 19th Knesset, Chazan, like many others who care about women’s representation in all spheres of life, emphasized that women still comprise less than a quarter of parliamentary members. “It’s a gradual improvement, but in truth, there isn’t always a direct correlation” between numbers and actions, the former lawmaker says. The 18th Knesset had about 20 percent women, but very little got done on issues of gender equality. It’s about the commitment of the women.”

Chazan is hopeful that “the balance has shifted. There are some very leading feminists in this Knesset: Merav Michaeli, Michal Rozin and Aliza Lavie, to name a few. They established a women’s caucus for the first time. That says a lot.”

MK Calderon says the caucus has fostered “some closeness” between the female MKs despite their widely divergent political views. Some would like to uproot all Jewish settlements from the West Bank, for example, while others believe Israel shouldn’t relinquish any land whatsoever to the Palestinians. “We have a group and we communicate on women’s issues ranging from sexual harassment to human trafficking to single mothers,” Calderon comments.

Veteran MKs like Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni (Ha-Tenuah) and Minis-



ter of Culture and Sport Limor Livnat (Likud) have been “very helpful” to the newcomers,” Calderon says. “I feel a kind of solidarity as sisters, even though we don’t come from the same party. To be a woman in the Knesset is a little like being a Jew in a non-Jewish parliament or meeting an Israeli when you’re traveling abroad. It’s finding a kindred spirit.”

Despite the steady increase in the number of women over the decades (the first Knesset had 12 women; the tenth, in 1981, had just 8), Calderon said the parliament sometimes feels like the male-dominated institution it is. “Sometimes I feel we are guests in a place built for men,” she said, relating how, when a Knesset session goes into the wee hours, the overwhelmingly male lawmakers are served unhealthy snacks. At the request of some of the women MKs, cut vegetables are now on the late-night menu.

During the past five years the Knesset has had to adapt to a more substantive challenge: accommodating female MKs when they become new mothers. According to Ben-Arie, from 1951 to 2008 not a single female MK gave birth while in office, perhaps reflecting the fact that, until relatively recently, the women who became MKs “climbed their way up the party ladder or were involved in the Histadrut” labor union. Both of those paths took many years, so by the time these political veterans entered the Knesset, their child-bearing years were behind them.

That changed in 2009, when Anastassia Michaeli (Yisrael Beiteinu) a mother of eight, and two other members of the 18th Knesset gave birth, one of them twice.

Although Israeli women are entitled to a minimum of three months paid maternity leave, a legal loophole means that “legally, there is no maternity leave” for female MKs,” Ben-Arie explains. And that can be problematic.

While the Knesset has a tradition

The men have changed. If you ask men whether they are feminists, many say yes.

of “off-setting” — a practice whereby a party member agrees not to vote when a member of an opposing party cannot be present, essentially cancelling out each other’s votes — a recent incident revealed that this system is imperfect, and that political considerations often trump human rights.

In June, MK Shelly Yachimovich, head of the Labor Party and the opposition, didn’t let the Knesset’s “sisterhood” get in the way of party politics. She refused to allow MK Karin Alharrar (Yesh Atid), who had given birth two weeks earlier, to be offset during Knesset voting. She did not provide an explanation. Yachimovich, who campaigned on a platform devoted to social justice and women’s rights, was roundly condemned by her fellow lawmakers.

In a letter to Yachimovich, MK Erel Margalit, a male lawmaker from the Labor Party, offered to offset Alharrar. “What have we come to? I ask, really, have we gone crazy? Do women who enter the Knesset have to time the date of becoming pregnant in order to give birth during the recess? What kind of message are we sending to pregnant women? We are first of all human beings, beyond being politicians.”

Feminists were dismayed by Yachimovich’s behavior during this incident, but also pleased that male MKs are standing up, more and more, for women’s rights. “The men have changed,” WOW’s Anat Hoffman says, referring

to the Knesset as a whole. “If you ask the men whether they are feminists, many say yes.”

Hoffman had especially high praise for MK Dov Lipman (Yesh Atid), an American-born ultra-Orthodox community activist who, before being elected, made a name for himself by challenging ultra-Orthodox extremists who were harassing religious schoolgirls, claiming they were immodestly dressed.

“It is now perceived as really uncool to not be sensitive to these issues,” Hoffman observes. Following the national outcry that accompanied ultra-Orthodox attempts to segregate women and erase women’s image in the public sphere, “men saw that it is unacceptable. Today, when we try to legislate change, we have many male supporters.”

But just as support for legislation empowering women isn’t confined to female MKs, female MKs don’t spend all their time on women’s issues.

“Looking at this objectively, I wouldn’t say that women’s issues take up the largest proportion of their work,” says Ben-Arie. “And I’m not saying this as a criticism. They do manage to fit women’s issues within the larger scope of other issues” like education and social justice.

Galit Desheh, director of the Israel Women’s Network, says that while women are especially concerned about socioeconomic issues, education and children, labeling them “women’s issues” makes it easy for some to “put them in a corner” and marginalize them. “They understand that what women want is extremely important,” but how they define this “is still based on chauvinism and assumptions about what they think women’s issues are.”

The women of the 19th Knesset say their interests and concerns are as diverse as they are.

“The public I represent are interested in the Jewish identity of Israel, economic issues, the Palestinian-Israeli

continued on page 27

Rock With NA'AMAT!

Highlights of the 41st national convention of NA'AMAT USA,
held in Cleveland, July 21-24.

by JUDITH A. SOKOLOFF

People go to conventions (we've heard this many times) to "re-charge their batteries" and go home revitalized, eager to jump into whatever mission they're on. It was clear from the start of the 41st convention that NA'AMAT USA members arrived already energized and went home feeling even more upbeat about the organization's future. You could feel this vitality in the opinions expressed at every session from the "War on Women" to the honing of advocacy skills to the sharing of organizational strategies. The women (and a few brave men) came from many cities across the United States, bringing a wealth of diverse interests, experiences and knowledge, but they were united in their strong commitment to — as national convention chair Chellie Goldwater Wilensky said — the "rocking work that NA'AMAT does."

NA'AMAT: One Great and Devoted Family

It's always gratifying to hear that NA'AMAT is the largest women's organization in Israel, providing social services to 40,000 families. Convention-goers had the privilege of meeting some of its movers and shakers. Galia Wolloch, president of NA'AMAT Israel, and Shirli Shavit, director of the NA'AMAT International Department, gave delegates a vivid picture of where NA'AMAT stands and where it is headed, sparking everyone's enthusiasm.

Emphasizing that "we work to empower and promote women in society," Wolloch enumerated the principles that will guide the organization over the next five years, all dealing with advancing the status of women and achieving equality between the sexes.

She presented a copy of the NA'AMAT Charter for Women's Rights, signed by thousands of men and women in Israel. Delegates lined up to add their signatures, too. "We are committed to do all it takes to meet the expectations of women in Israel, who are not standing where they deserve to be," she declared. "We can do it — everything is possible."

Wolloch also stressed the importance of the partnership between NA'AMAT USA and NA'AMAT Israel. "We are here for one another — and we are making a real difference in the lives of Israelis." She said she "was going home to NA'AMAT with a strong feeling that we are not alone" and with stories about her rewarding time at the convention. "In the name of NA'AMAT and the women and children we help, I express our deep appreciation for your support and commitment."

C.H.Pete Copeland



NA'AMAT USA national leadership celebrates at installation of new officers.



Laurie J. Wasserman,
employment law attorney.



Nina Turner,
Democratic Ohio
State Senator.



Mark Raider,
professor of
modern Jewish
history at the
University of
Cincinnati.



**From left: National convention
chair Chellie Goldwater Wilensky;
national president Elizabeth
Raider, and Yoran Sideman,
consul general of Israel to the
Mid-Atlantic Region.**



**From left: Masha Lubelsky, NA'AMAT
representative to the WZO Executive;
Ido Aharoni, consul general of Israel in
New York; Galia Wolloch, NA'AMAT Israel
president; Shirli Shavit, director, NA'AMAT
International Dept.**

Shirli Shavit updated delegates on NA'AMAT's services and programs. She announced the opening of nine new day care centers in the near future, with facilities in Netanya and Ramle opening in the next few months. She also noted that two centers have recently opened in Yavneh and Nes Ziona, the latter thanks to a significant contribution from NA'AMAT USA.

Shavit pointed out that 20 of NA'AMAT's 250 day care centers are multipurpose centers — "life savers" for children with emotional problems, learning disabilities and difficult family situations. This is their "real home," she said, singling out two-year-old Tali whose father is in jail and whose mother barely makes a living and can't afford even the most minimal tuition. Thanks to NA'AMAT's special day care fund, Tali is able to attend.

The organization's 17 high schools, Shavit noted, give teenagers who have "experienced failure all through their lives a last chance to integrate into society." And they have a high success rate. Note Kobi, she said, who at age 16 had barely attended school. Now he is graduating with full matriculation and plans to become a paratrooper. He did well, he said, because "someone cared about me."

The Glickman Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Family Violence provides shelter for 30 women

and their children, along with a counseling facility, Shirli told delegates. The new second floor of the center will allow each family to have its own space and much needed privacy during the difficult adjustment.

She proudly announced that this year 190 scholarships were given to women pursuing higher education, along with 8 research grants for doctoral students, 4 in gender studies and 4 in the life sciences. Most of the contributions to the scholarship fund come from NA'AMAT USA. In a stirring new video that was shown, viewers meet some of the recipients who talk about their studies, work and families — and how NA'AMAT allowed them to "reach for the stars." You can view this video on Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vwg3hQ7EdGU>.

"Together, we do make a difference and ensure a better future for the younger generations," Shavit said. "We bring you NA'AMAT's appreciation for your commitment, love, time and effort."

Delegates also heard "An Outsider's View of NA'AMAT." Sue Linzer, associate director of Planning/director of Overseas Operations for the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, recalled her recent visit with a Federation group to the Weiner NA'AMAT Pittsburgh Center for Women's Health in Karmiel. Using a Powerpoint presentation, she showed delegates how the center's health education programs help the women of the

Karmiel/Misgav region — Jews, Arabs and Bedouins, many of whom lack important health information. The new second floor will enable the center to enhance its services, which include preventive medicine, pregnancy and childbirth guidance, along with exercise and nutrition classes.

Commenting on all the accolades the organization was receiving at the convention, Elizabeth Raider, re-elected for a second term as national president of NA'AMAT USA, stated: "Our success has always depended on our enthusiasm in sharing the story of our success and of our partnership with Israel. We touch and influence countless Israelis. We are the 'go to' organization in Israel."

Israel: Always on Their Minds

Israel was foremost in the thoughts of NA'AMAT USA delegates, and many speakers reflected their concern. Key-note speaker Ido Aharoni, consul general of Israel in New York, opened the convention with a talk about recent developments in the Middle East.

He expressed optimism about Israel's future due to four major reasons. One is the "reinvigoration" of Israeli-



Harriet Green, chair of National Funds, Gifts and Bequests (right), presents a generous check to Galia Wolloch for day care centers. Elizabeth Raider is on the left.



Orit Tobe, president of Na'AMAT Canada (right), and Ceres Maltz Bin, former president of Na'AMAT Brazil were enthusiastic participants.



Hilary Botchin, Western Area coordinator, signs Na'AMAT Declaration of Women's Rights while Raquel Rub waits her turn.

NA'AMAT USA

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Susan Isaacs	Debbie Troy Stewart
Judy Kobell	Rebeca Yohai
Marjorie Moidel	Raena Zucker

Palestinian peace negotiations, though he pointed out that Israelis “did not greet this news with a great deal of enthusiasm.” It’s not that Israelis don’t care about peace, he explained, but it’s because they are convinced that the “root cause of the conflict is not necessarily territory.” Citing past failed attempts to achieve peace, he said they all had one thing in common: The Palestin-

ians declined to accept a territorial deal. “Israelis care passionately about peace, and we believe in democracy...but we also understand that it takes two to tango.” He also noted that the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians must be looked at in the context of two major processes: “the disintegration of the Mideast and the rise of political Islam.”

His second reason for optimism is that Israel has reached the point of water self-sufficiency. “Israel can produce all the water we need” and soon we will be able to export water — a “miracle of historical proportion,” he said. The third dramatic development, he continued, is Israel will soon reach the point of self-sufficiency in energy. With the discovery of huge deposits of natural gas and shale oil in the Mediterranean and other areas, “you will see a different kind of economy in five to ten years” that is able to export natural gas to the world and “not be dependent on our neighbors for purchasing it.” The fourth reason for optimism is the rise of Israel’s fast growing “creative class,” which is generating unique ideas that will not only change Israel, but also the world. “Creativity is the DNA of Israeli society,” he observed.

To the women of Na’AMAT USA, Aharoni expressed “our deepest gratitude” from Israelis for your “unconditional love” and for all the work you did in the past, but more important, all the work that you will do in the future.

Yoran Sideman, consul general of Israel to the Mid-Atlantic Region, spoke about the two positive developments for Israel that occurred in July. First: the efforts of U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to bring Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table. “It’s easy to be skeptical and cynical.... Courage and determination have to be exhibited by both parties,” he commented. The other development, he said, is the designation of the military arm of Hezbollah (which acts under the auspices of Iran) as a terrorist organization by the European Union.

At the “Celebration of Israel at 65” dinner, Sideman reviewed the miraculous history of the country from its situation in 1948 — a place with “no natural resources, no skilled labor or currency” — to the strong democracy with a thriving diverse society that it is today. “We never turned back on the basic Jewish values,” he said. “We have matured as a society; we’re old enough to take pride and accept criticism and admit mistakes and shortcomings.”

One area that still needs work, he admitted, is the area of women’s empowerment and rights. “The strength of society is measured and correlated with the advancement of women,” he observed. “Women’s rights means not just empowerment of women, but society at large.”

Sideman noted that “Na’AMAT has been an integral part of the Zionist endeavor almost from the beginning.”

The organization was fighting for the rights of the women pioneers in Palestine, he said, pointing to some of its dynamic early leaders like Golda Meir, Beba Idelson and Rahel Yanait Ben-Zvi.

"I'm proud to be living in an Israel that is stable and democratic in a region that is not, and I thank you for all you do," he concluded.

Masha Lubelsky, past president of NA'AMAT Israel, former Labor MK, and now NA'AMAT representative to the WZO executive committee, spoke on the topic of Zionist leaders in times of crisis. She illuminated the pivotal roles played by Theodor Herzl, David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin in the formation and history of the Jewish state. Born in Herzliya during the British Mandate period, Lubelsky "was raised with the idea of practical Zionism and compromise," she said. "You have to do this to realize your vision. We need this kind of leadership in Israel now."

Lubelsky reminded NA'AMAT USA members: "You belong to the movement that paved the way for 100 years to have an independent state. Go home with pride and hope for peace."

A Voice for Women

The advancement of women has been a key component of the NA'AMAT USA agenda for 88 years. This concern was addressed in a multitude of ways at the convention.

Mark Raider, professor of modern Jewish history at the University of Cincinnati and co-author (with Shulamit Reinharz) of *American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise*, among other books, presented an incisive history of the significant and diverse role of Jewish women in Zionist organizations in the United States. Starting from the time of the mass immigration of Yiddish speakers to America, Jewish women were involved with the "twin themes of female and Jewish liberation," he explained. The romantic mix of a progressive, American sensibility and an idealist Zionism shaped their self-perception and helped them to identify Jewishly and fight assimilation. In America, Raider continued, they had more freedom from traditional gender roles, more freedom of movement and expression and more money; they had social and political opportunities to get on an equal footing with men. Here they became involved in promoting worker's rights, women's suffrage, the birth control movement.

Hadassah broke away from the male-dominated Zionist Organization of America, Raider noted. Pioneer Women (now NA'AMAT USA) separated from Poale Zion, also controlled by men. The organization's progressive 1930s credo called for free labor and social justice, for members to think and act independently, to develop their creativity and self-esteem, fulfill their potential — all for "unexcelled spiritual

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Toda Raba!

NA'AMAT USA wholeheartedly thanks the national convention committee for making this event a huge success.

Chellie Goldwater Wilensky, Chair
Linda Schoenberg, Gail Simpson and
Marcia J. Weiss, Program Chairs
Robin Lieberman, Local Chair
Gail Simpson, Nominations
Lynn Wax, Bylaws
Debby Firestone, Declarations
Sandra Silverglade, Credentials
Debbie Kohn, Steering Committee
Marjorie Moidel, Publicity
Barbara Novick, Displays

And all the volunteers from
NA'AMAT USA Cleveland



Marcia Weiss discusses advocacy strategies as Gail Simpson pens major points. Both were convention program co-chairs.

Judith Sokoloff



Members who raised and/or contributed \$15,000 since the last convention show the beautiful pins they received; from left: Sheila Adler, Chellie Goldwater Wilensky, Pearl Schwed, Dee Selekmán, convention program co-chair Linda Schoenberg, Raquel Rub and Rebeca Yohai.

VOICES

Sephardi

With memories fading and the elderly dying, this audio-visual history project provides the last chance to document a vital part of Jewish history.

by RAHEL MUSLEAH

Lisette Shashoua remembers the terror she felt as a teenager in Baghdad, following Israel's 1967 victory in the Six-Day War. She and her family were among the city's persecuted Jewish population of 3,000, remnants of its once-proud and illustrious community of 150,000.

Saddam Hussein's Baath regime had frozen Jewish bank accounts and confiscated properties, restricted travel to a radius of a few miles, cut off phone lines and forbade employment and education. The Baathists arrested, tortured and hanged Jews on trumped-up charges of spying for Israel. "Every time a car passed by at night, I would wake up, kneel and pray that it would not stop at our house," recalls Shashoua. "We bought sleeping pills to commit suicide

in case they came to arrest us."

Shashoua escaped Baghdad in 1970 via Kurdistan with just one small suitcase. She marvels that she still uses the curlers she took with her 42 years ago. Her parents stayed behind, hopeful that they would recover their vast property holdings. Shashoua traveled the world as a flight attendant with Air Canada, but she could not see her parents or even speak to them by phone for another 20 years, until they, too, left in the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq War — penniless. (She does not want to say where she lives now.)

For decades, Shashoua kept silent about her experiences. But now, she and other Sephardic Jews from Algeria to Yemen are telling their stories publicly. Many are stories of forced displacement, escape and migration.

Until now, no organizations akin to Spielberg's Shoah Foundation have been set up specifically to record the memories of the 850,000 Jews who lost their rights, were uprooted from their homes and became refugees in the wake of World War II and the establishment of Israeli statehood. Within half a century, Jews living under Arab rule almost disappeared and number less than 7,000 today. They and their descendants now represent half of Israel's population, most of the Jewish population of France, and a minority of the Jewish population in the Diaspora — but their voices have been muted.

Sephardi Voices, an independent, international, audio-visual history project, hopes to change that. Its purpose is to create a digital archive to map the shape of Sephardi Jewish memory, to help families ensure the preservation of their Sephardic heritage, and to craft an academic resource for scholars to research Sephardic history and identity as well as broader questions of exile, otherness, migration and marginality. It will have branches in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Israel and France.

The project gives voices to refugees from the Tigris to the Euphrates, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean, says Henry Green, Sephardi Voices international director and professor of religious studies at the University of Miami. "For the Sephardi, exile is not temporary. It is the disappearance

Lisette Shashoua escaped Baghdad in 1970 with just one small suitcase. Her parents stayed behind.



Photos, Courtesy of Sephardi Voices

of landmarks, ethnic culture, ritual, belief, food, music, dance, manner, folklore and language. It is personal and collective.” The subsequent generations, he says, speak a different language and were raised in different cultures. “This is the last chance to document an irretrievable period of Jewish history.”

The memories the project has raised have provoked emotions ranging from pride and wistfulness to sadness and anger.

“When I was in Baghdad, we were sure we would just become statistics like the German Jews. We’d die and nobody would know anything about us,” says Shashoua, who mourns the extinction of a community that stretched back in time 2,500 years. In 1950, the Iraqi government announced that Jews could leave the country legally — but only if they renounced their citizenship and left behind everything of value. The Israeli government airlifted almost 100,000 Jews to Israel in 1951. Today there are five Jews left in Iraq. “We need to tell the history because we are the end of the line,” she emphasizes.

“We are disappearing,” agrees Lib-

yan-born Moshe Labi, an 82-year-old retired physician who lives in Scarsdale, New York. During his videotaped interview with Sephardi Voices, “things came out of the bottom of my heart and memory and there were moments of great emotion. There are things hidden in the archives of our memories and if we don’t touch them they never surface.”

Since Libya was an Italian colony, the fate of its Jews plummeted when Italy joined Germany in World War II.

Labi’s father was imprisoned in a Libyan concentration camp simply for being a Jew, a trauma that left a permanent scar on Moshe’s nine-year-old psyche. Labi recalls racing past a Christian school as a child, his heart pounding in fear. Decades later, 9/11 catapulted him back to the terror of his youth. The family was ultimately able to escape on a British troop carrier to Egypt, the Sudan and finally to Palestine in 1943, where Labi joined the Haganah and, later, the IDF.

Labi is proud of his Sephardic heritage, which he traces back to 15th-

century Spain; his father’s ancestors fled to Morocco following the Expulsion in 1492. Shimon Labi (1480-1580), a poet, rabbi and kabbalist, journeyed from Fez toward the land of Israel, but when he



Juliette Glasser enjoyed a comfortable childhood in Cairo, but then

had to quickly leave for France in the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis. Her father's French passport is shown.

Eli Jejeune tells his life story to an interviewer from Sephardi Voices. He grew up in Port Said, Egypt, and came to the United Kingdom in 1955 on a student visa.

encountered Jews in Tripoli he stayed to teach the Jewish community. The family later moved to Benghazi. Labi’s mother is an Ashkenazi Jew from Rome.

The term ‘Sephardic’ or ‘Sephardi’ signifies one of the two streams of Jew-

Photo ©Sephardic Voices UK



Things came out of the bottom of my heart and memory and there were moments of great emotion. There are things hidden in the archives of our memories and if we don't touch them they never surface.

ish civilization (the other is Ashkenazi), explains Green. It is not used solely to designate Jews from Spain ("Sepharad" in Hebrew), Portugal and the countries in North Africa and the Middle East they fled to after the Expulsion. Mizrahi Jews (Hebrew for Eastern) have ancient roots in the Middle East. Because Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews share religious traditions, customs and philosophies, the terms are often used interchangeably. (Arab rule, he adds, sometimes differs from Islamic rule. Iran, for instance, is an Islamic country with a population of 15,000 Jews today.)

Jews in Arab countries flourished through good times and bad. Under Islamic law Jews were protected, but they were also second-class citizens with limited religious, professional and business opportunities. Their treatment differed depending on the current caliph, king or sultan. In some cases, their condition improved temporarily with the advance of Western ideas. Still, they were often influential in business, philanthropic and governmental spheres and produced giants of Jewish scholarship and tradition. The Babylonian Talmud was redacted in what is modern-day Iraq in the 6th century; the first siddur (*Seder Rav Amram*) developed in Iraq; Moroccan Rabbi Yitshak Alfasi was the first to codify Jewish law (*Sefer HaHalakot*), and Maimonides produced his masterful 14-volume *Mishneh Torah* in Egypt.

"I want to spread the word for the world to know who we are, because most Jews and non-Jews don't know what a Sephardi Jew is," says Juliette Glasser, who fled Egypt with her family in 1956 at age 14. "We are a minority... but our culture is so rich."

Interestingly, it took two Ashkenazi Jews to propel Sephardi Voices forward. Green, the project's founder, was raised in Ottawa in a Modern Orthodox family of Polish and Ukrainian ancestry. As a historian and sociologist, he has researched Sephardi communities extensively and is distressed that their experience has been largely overlooked. UK project director Bea Lewkowicz grew up in Germany, the child of Holocaust survivors. A social anthropologist and oral historian, she is an expert on the Jews of Thessaloniki, Greece, which was almost annihilated by the Nazis. She was also an interviewer for the Shoah Foundation.

The project was originally called the Forgotten Exodus — forgotten due to the dominant Ashkenazic narrative, a smaller Sephardi population with a more recent migration than that of Eastern European refugees, and cultural barriers within Sephardic communi-

ties. Time is running out, says Green, especially since demographers estimate that over 70 percent of the displaced Jews from Arab lands are no longer alive. It's urgent, he says, for Jewish schools, community centers, old-age homes and organizations to collect these stories for family continuity as well as to paint an accurate portrait of Jewish civilization. The project focuses on forced migrations, but the stories cover a spectrum of experiences.

Green knew next to nothing about Sephardim as he was growing up. But during his master's and doctoral studies in Israel, he says he "began to appreciate that there were two Israels." A grant he wrote for an early childhood home-schooling program geared primarily to the Sephardi at-risk population turned into a book, *Research in Action*, which investigated programs that integrated Sephardim in Israel in the 1970s. "It was a kind of internship in terms of being connected to the Sephardim at all levels of personal human connection." (He helped bring that program, now called HIPPY, to the United States.)

Back in the United States, Green worked with the American Sephardi Federation and the Federation of Sephardim of Latin America, which led to



Above: Jacqueline Douek's parents, Rachel and Joseph Barnathan, at their wedding in 1932. Right: A family outing in Cairo. Douek is sitting on her father's lap.

his founding of the Jewish Museum of Florida. He brought a Sephardic component to the Jewish Studies program he directed at the University of Miami from 1984 to 2001, and, in 2005, introduced his agenda at the World Congress of Jewish Studies to encourage others to collaborate. Jewish education does not usually include Sephardic history, folklore and culture, he says, and even the story of Israel's creation neglects Sephardic contributions. Part of the challenge, he notes, is that the Sephardic experience is not monolithic; every country, region and city was different from the other.

Sephardi Voices is not the first organization to focus on Sephardic refugees. But other groups — including San Francisco-based JIMENA (Jews Indigenious to the Middle East and North Africa), the British-based HARIF (Association of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa), and JJAC (Justice for Jews from Arab Countries) — have a political and advocacy agenda in addition to collecting oral histories. Sephardi Jews did not ask for or receive refugee status or privileges, nor have they received any compensation for their losses, say Sephardi activists, who have testified in government forums. They are urging that references to Palestinian refugees be matched by similarly explicit references to Jewish and other refugee populations.

"When the word 'refugees' is mentioned in the context of the Middle East, people invariably refer to Palestinian refugees," reads the JJAC Web site. "Little is heard about these Jewish refugees from Arab countries because they did not remain refugees long." The site defines a 'refugee' as a person seeking refuge because of political oppression or religious persecution in their country of residence.



Left: Libyan-born Moshe Labi at age 19 (right), an officer in the IDF, is shown at the time of his discharge in 1950. A retired physician, he now lives in Scarsdale, N.Y. His brother Eldad was being enlisted; today he is a lawyer in Tel Aviv. Below: Labi's two brothers with the family's maid, Fortuna, on Sukkot in 1934.

Green stresses that Sephardi Voices does not have a political agenda and is not linked to any advocacy groups. Yet he also notes that it chronicles important human rights issues. "Arab Jews' were in a way the first to be decimated and delegitimized to create a monolithic Muslim population, similar to what other religious groups are experiencing today in the region. There has been little or tepid acknowledgment of their fate."

To date, the project's staff of 28 (including volunteers) has interviewed 150 subjects — 60 in the United States, another 60 in the United Kingdom and a handful in France and Canada. It has also gathered 100 oral interviews from other organizations and has identified thousands of interviews from the 1950s and 1960s that are in fragile condition and in need of digitization. Copies of the interviews will be archived either at Israel's National Library at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the British Library or the University of Miami.

"The collections will be part of the country's immigrant story and heritage," Green explains. Interviews might also be used for the creation of films, exhibitions and other educational materials; two short documentaries have



already been made (*Sephardi Voices: Seven Stories* and *Moroccan Diasporas: London, Miami and Montreal*). In Israel, the project is being guided by Margalit Bejarano, former director of the Oral History Division at the Institute for Contemporary Jewry at Hebrew University; she is of Sephardi background and has engaged members of Israel Oral History Association (an independent organization that she co-founded) to serve as interviewers.

Comparisons to Holocaust survivors are inevitable — and tricky — even eliciting a sort of apologetic response that as painful as the Sephardic plight was, it in no way matches the genocide and magnitude of the Holocaust. Green points out the Shoah Foundation has

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NAZARETH

Revisted

Our NA'AMAT correspondent visits the beautiful new school in Nazareth, a special place for Arab girls who couldn't succeed in the regular high school system and for Arab women who want to develop skills to enter the workforce.

by JUDY TELMAN

The historic city of Nazareth is the largest Arab city in Israel. Located in the Lower Galilee in northern Israel, its population of 75,000 is made up predominantly of Arab citizens of the country, Muslim (69 percent) and Christian (30.9 percent). In the New Testament, the city is described as the childhood home of Jesus, and as such it's a center for Christian pilgrimage, with many shrines commemorating biblical

events and several imposing churches.

When I went to visit NA'AMAT facilities in Nazareth five years ago, I remember being very impressed with Rodaina Geraisi, the NA'AMAT regional chairperson, who drove us to visit the various NA'AMAT facilities throughout the city. My positive impressions were magnified when I met with Nadera Tannous, principal of the NA'AMAT Technological High School for Girls. At the time, the high school was housed in three buildings with poorly equipped classrooms linked by winding stairways and narrow corridors. Nevertheless, the students benefited from quality teachers, challenging subjects and individual attention. They

were inspired to make progress and succeed despite the fact that they could not make it in the public school system.

If not for the school, they would be destined to a life that is most likely less than fulfilling — or even hopeless.

This visit, I thought, would just reinforce what I had seen before, which it did, but even more so. Rodaina and Nadera remain in their respective positions, and I don't think I've ever met two happier women — due to the dynamic changes that have taken place in the school.

Once again, I traveled with my husband, Stew (the designated driver), and Rivka Finder, our talented photographer. When we arrived — this past June — Rodaina met us at the old building. She led us through the winding streets and back alleys to the recently completed facility that houses the NA'AMAT offices, the vocational training program for women ages 18 and up (no age limit

Future chefs hone their cooking skills.





Photos by Rivka Finder



From left: Rodaina Geraisi, NA'AMAT chairperson for the Nazareth region; Nadera Tannous, principal of the NA'AMAT Technological High School; Leila Yazbok, director of the Adult Vocational Training Program for Women.

at the top), and the Technological High School for Girls, both Arab Christians and Arab Muslims. It was a pleasure to view a modern, three-story structure with an underground parking lot for the staff, beautiful stairways and an elevator.

Opened in April 2013, the new building is a dream come true, according to those working and studying there. Both Rodaina and Nadera had approached the Nazareth Municipal Council with a request for a new facility to replace the inadequate high school. They were told the municipality could allocate land, but was not able to build a structure. If they could find a donor, they would have a place to build.

Someone mentioned to Nadera that a man named Irwin Green, who was staying at a hotel in Nazareth, might be willing to help. She, Talia Livni (president of NA'AMAT at the time) and Rodaina met with Green several times, telling him about the school and showing him the old building. Convinced of the importance of the project, he agreed to contribute one million dollars, asking that the new facility be named in memory of his wife Bethea Green, who had been an active member of NA'AMAT USA. The Ministry of Education and NA'AMAT USA also donated a generous sum and construction began. Sadly, Green died before the building was completed, so it has been named for both of them. And the school has a new friend: the Greens' son, Don, who attended the last graduation ceremony in the old facility. He is planning to visit again this year.

The building is located in a new, developing neighborhood of Nazareth,

overlooking a beautiful landscape of hills, trees and still vacant areas. However, one can see the beginning of the construction of 4,500 apartments and homes to accommodate the city's growing population.

We began our visit in the NA'AMAT office where we met with Rodaina and Leila Yazbok, the director of the Adult Vocational Training Program for Women. This program had previously been housed in the local YMCA facility where NA'AMAT rented space.

To our regret, the classes had not started because the program, the teachers and the facility had to be examined and approved by the relevant government departments — even though it had been operating for several years in the old location. That approval has now been granted; classes began in July.

The program includes courses in cosmetology: make-up artist for beginning/professional levels; nail technician (manicures and pedicures) and skin care technician; day care center caregiver; graphic and product design; bookkeeping and accounting for beginning, intermediate and advanced levels; dental technician and hygienist; secretarial training for senior secretary, medical secretary, legal secretary; and office management.

Students come from throughout the area — Nazareth, Beit Shean, Afula. They must be high school graduates to qualify, and each one is interviewed before being accepted. Many of the women who enroll have raised their children and want to learn skills to enable them to find work, improve skills they already

have, and bring in additional income. Each course runs for two years; students undergo an evaluation at the end of the first year before advancing to the second.

The need for qualified personnel in the above fields has grown not only in Nazareth, but also in surrounding communities due to expanding industry, increased tourism and the growing population.

When I asked if the women have difficulty finding jobs when they have completed their studies, I was told that the graduates are given all the necessary tools to help them find work. They are taught how to write a curriculum vitae, prepare for interviews, fill out questionnaires, promote their abilities and how to dress.

Many of those who study early childhood education to become caregivers find work in local NA'AMAT centers. There are three NA'AMAT day care centers in Nazareth. Two are multipurpose centers, open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Friday afternoons, a separate in-service training program is conducted for NA'AMAT caregivers.

Leila and Rodaina are working on a new course entitled "Women in Three Religions," reaching out to Muslims, Christians and Jews from the local and surrounding communities, including Tiberias. The goal, they said, is to promote better understanding, tolerance and mutual respect among the women; to learn about the different religions — the similarities and the differences — to strengthen the concept of coexistence and shared responsibility.

Rodaina and Leila proudly showed



From left: design student Fabiolla Habash with some of her work; the new building; photo of Irwin Green, who donated funds for the school in honor of his wife Bethea, also pictured; dental technician classroom.



us around. The first stop was the auditorium — something they never had before — where lectures are given, graduations ceremonies are held and assemblies for the entire student body can take place. The beautifully furnished teachers' lounge and meeting room could be featured in *Better Homes and Gardens*.

One of the classrooms is fully equipped with computers. Another houses a dentist's chair and the tools for the dental technician course in which there are already 25 women enrolled. The room for beauty treatments is also impressively furnished. All classrooms will accommodate 18 to 25 students, and enrollment is full.

Before moving on to the high school, Rodaina and Leila reiterated their gratitude to the Green family, NA'AMAT USA and the municipality. They are still overwhelmed by the beautiful building, furnishings and equipment, which have made it a jewel in the crown of NA'AMAT. Rodaina emphasizes her message: "If one has positive aims and goals, and there are cooperative efforts, dreams can be realized." She expressed her thanks to Talia Livni for her support and current NA'AMAT president Galia Wolloch for ensuring the dream continues to flourish. Both she and Leila said they were proud to have created a program that

helps women step out into the world, utilizes their knowledge and abilities, and contributes to the community and to their families.

We were now looking forward to our meetings with high school principal Nadera Tannous and assistant principal Lilian Haki, to visiting classrooms and speaking with students.

I met first with Lilian, who gave me an overview of the school. In addition to being the assistant principal, Lilian serves as the pedagogic coordinator, responsible for planning all the programs. She has a degree in educational psychology and counseling and utilizes all her skills working with the students and staff. The professional staff includes 56 teachers and 8 others, including secretaries, psychologists, social workers and maintenance staff.

There are 335 students enrolled in the school — 9th to 12th grade. They live in Nazareth and the surrounding villages. Public transportation to the school is not available, and although a request was made to the municipality to create a bus line to this neighborhood, it has not happened. Therefore, the school has arranged for transportation with the cost being picked up by NA'AMAT — a very important investment, as there wouldn't be any other way for the girls to get here.

The school day starts at 7:45 and finishes at 2:30, with attendance closely monitored. If a girl doesn't show up, a call is made immediately to find out if she is all right and ask why she's absent. Sometimes the call awakens the student, who just simply overslept. The girls come to know and appreciate that they are given a second chance and that somebody cares about them.

The first year, the girls are enrolled in regular classes, which are taught in Arabic, Hebrew and English. They are introduced to the various technological courses, so when they enter their sophomore year they can choose which vocations they want to focus on. Each student is tested when she enrolls, and each class is divided into three groups depending on how the student fares in the tests. Those in Group A, the top level, are capable of taking and passing the matriculation exams. The Group B students work toward matriculation in the technological track they chose. And Group C students are encouraged to become adept in their vocations so they can find jobs after graduation. As the term progresses, it's possible to move from a lower group to a higher one, but there is no stigma in remaining where originally placed.

Last year, 15 percent of the graduates passed the matriculation exams, and 25 percent passed the technological matriculation. Considering their

The teachers here are special. They care about you and make you feel good about yourself.

backgrounds, social/economic status and family situations, this was quite an achievement, as none of the teenagers had succeeded in the public school system. Many come from broken homes, single-parent households and families where the father is in prison. They are facing what they consider to be insurmountable hurdles — and without incentive or guidance they would be destined to continue their pattern of failure.

Currently, there are three main tracks — graphic and product design, early childhood education and hair dressing — and the plan is to add a fourth course in hotel management due to the increase in tourism and the addition of more hotels in the area. The school already offers a class taught by a chef/teacher, which provides a hands-on

experience in planning, preparing and serving food. The only thing missing from this class is a professional kitchen; now the girls crowd uncomfortably around one table and have limited equipment. Before the class can be expanded and permanently added to the curriculum, they must have the kitchen installed, inspected and approved by the proper authorities and receive certification. Job opportunities for cooks and chefs are available. On weekends, the hotel and neighborhood restaurants in Nazareth are full to overflowing — and the majority of customers are not local residents.

When we met with Nadera, I couldn't help but recall the previous visit — when we sat in a small, windowless room that, nevertheless, proved to be warm and inviting due to her presence. Now with bright



Tenth-grader Salam, wheelchair-bound since childhood, creates beautiful clothing decorated with embroidery and beads. Below, students enjoy a break.

light streaming in the windows that overlooked the gorgeous landscape, the new office reflected her satisfaction and happiness.

Describing the wonders that occur in the education process, she said: "You can't imagine the changes that take place from when the girls arrive as freshman

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Going Away, Coming Home

A Mother Grows Up

by JUDITH SUDILOVSKY

The day my 11-year-old son left for Athens with his judo team for their first international tournament, our yellow tabby kitten, Honey, disappeared.

We had roused our eldest son from his sleep at 4 a.m., and, excited about his foray into the world without us, he got ready quicker than usual. Less than 20 minutes later, as he and my husband were walking out the door on their way to the airport, I managed to slip in another kiss and a hug, and Honey managed to slip out the door.

From the corner of my eye I saw Honey trot down the porch stairs right behind them, but it was too early in the morning to run after him, and I remembered the advice about the roaming cat spirit my cat-owning friends had given me — something different than what I am used to with my dogs. Besides, Honey (who, just for the record, was, of course, already neutered) had never wandered farther off than our next door neighbor's yard. So I went back to bed for a few more hours of sleep, thinking it was a good thing that my husband was taking my son to the airport. I would have probably cried and embarrassed him in front of his friends.

At seven months old, Honey technically has entered his adolescence, as has my son at 11. Honey is large enough to no longer be considered a kitten any more, and though my son has not yet reached his full height, eight years of judo training has bulked him up, and I can make out the dark shadow of downy hair beginning to line his top lip.

In the morning, when my husband returned and my younger son woke up, Honey had not yet reappeared, not even when I started feeding the dogs and rattled his bowl full of kibble out over the balcony, hoping that the noise would carry through the neighborhood and into the park behind our house where he may have gone.

It was unbearably hot that Saturday — the heat so oppressive the entire city seemed at a standstill. I tried not to worry too much about dehydration, or a variety of possible horrendous scenarios involving our unpleasant neighbors or the jackals that we sometimes hear howling late at night as they come into our area from the Jerusalem Forest to search for food in the garbage bins.

I glanced at the clock, trying unsuccessfully not to gauge the time he should have been arriving at their Athens hotel. We had sent him off equipped with Skype, Facebook and Viber (free calls and text) on his iPod so we could be in

touch with him, and it took a lot of self-control to wait for him to call us.

Even though my son has slept over friends' houses before, the house seemed especially quiet without him. Honey, whom I rescued as a week-old kitten after his mother abandoned him at a neighborhood pool just after Rosh Hashanah, had been with us only for a short time, but I still felt his absence, even among the energy of my five tumbling (rescue) dogs.

My son had been born into the intifada, and when my husband convinced me that we should enroll him in the experimental school kindergarten class at the tail end of that period, I warned him that I would never let my son ride public transportation to school — even when he was in high school. As a journalist I had had too many experiences with bombing scenes, spoken to too many bereaved families on both sides of the violence, and the thought of sending my son off on a bus on his own, not knowing if it would explode or not, was too much for me.

But I knew that in our reality — completely different from the protected American middle-class suburban childhood I had lived — even being with him every step of the way could not guarantee his safety.

When he was three months old, I had strapped him to me with the baby carrier and gone off with my husband to our neighborhood supermarket. About that same time, Ayat Akhrasan, an 18-year-old Palestinian girl from the Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem, was making her way toward our supermarket with a bomb strapped to her body in yet another act of the violence and counter violence that has racked this country even before its creation and that seems so much a part of this entire region.

Had it not been for my husband's penchant for quick shopping, we would have been inside the supermarket, with my son as close to me as he possibly could be, when the bomb exploded. As it was, my husband hurried me along through the aisles, not allowing me to linger over our shopping. Less than ten minutes after we left the supermarket, the bomb exploded, killing Akhrasan and two other people, including the supermarket guard who, a few minutes after greeting me so pleasantly, had blocked the bomber from walking inside the doors with his own body, thus averting more bloodshed.

For a long time after the intifada I still found myself nervous when traffic would force me to stop my car next to a bus. And while some of my friends allowed their children

to ride the bus alone to school a few years back already, I remained adamant that we would not. Finally, last year, my Israeli-born husband who would tell tales of riding the bus home alone as a first grader, persuaded me to let our son start taking the bus occasionally. This year he uses public transportation daily, either coming home alone on the light rail or on the bus, or when he stays later at school for soccer practice he comes home with my husband.

Until recently, my son's world has pretty much involved school, judo and soccer practice, home and a few close friends. And now here he was, flying off all the way to another country, to a city with its own violent history.

Knowing it was too early for my son to call us, I drove down to the park with a bag of Honey's favorite treats, walking around the overgrown weeds at the edge of the park and calling him to no avail.

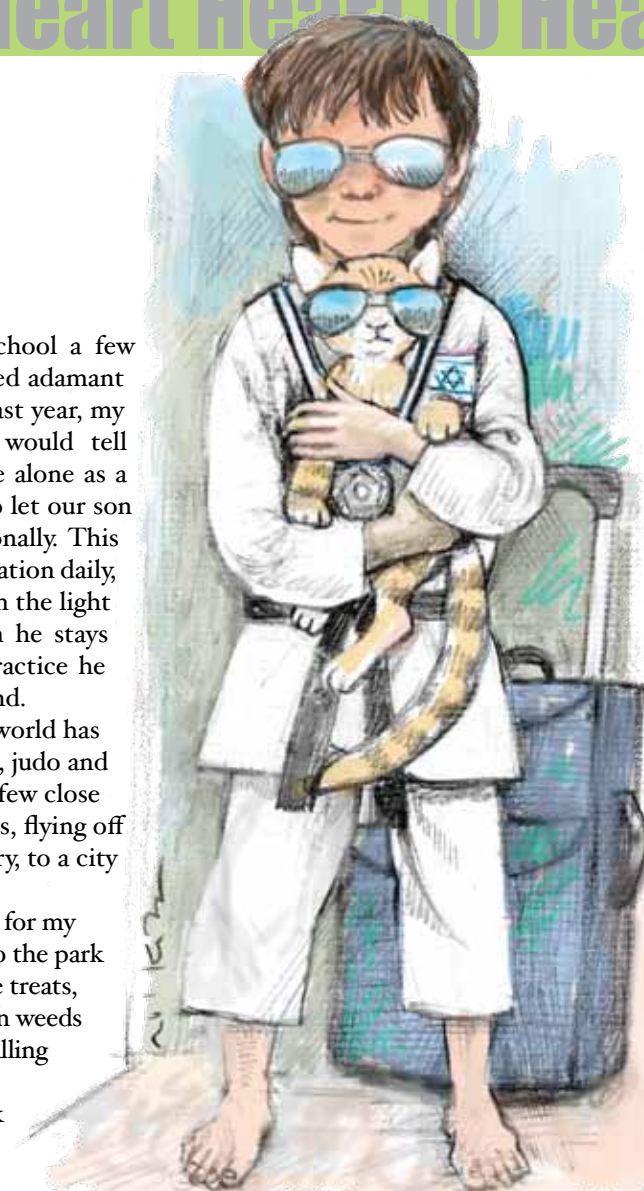
Feeling unsettled back at home, I hung up laundry and strained my ear for the tiny tinkling sound of the bell on Honey's collar or for the ringing of my Skype or Viber or the popping of a message on my Facebook.

By mid afternoon there was no sign of Honey, but my son called on Skype and though the conversation was short, he sounded excited and happy, which put me more at ease. That first day he made contact with us numerous times with Skype, Viber and his Facebook account — more, I think, to try out the apps on his iPod than because of any feelings of homesickness.

Another expedition at dusk in search of Honey around the neighborhood and park was no more successful than my morning search had been.

As the evening stretched out in front of me, I checked

Until recently, my son's world has pretty much involved school, judo and soccer practice, home and a few close friends. And now here he was, flying off all the way to another country, to a city with its own violent history.



Avi Katz

in on my Facebook — trying to pretend that this was nothing more than my regular nightly log-in, that I wasn't checking to see if my son or one of his friends had posted something from Athens.

My son was online, and even though if he had been at home I would have sent him off to bed by then, with him far away in Athens, I was more than happy to have a little "face time." I did not mention Honey's disappearance.

Honey had not come home by the time I went to bed, and I turned off the lights with a heavy heart. Sometime in the middle of the night I heard his faint mewing at the side door and I scrambled to open it for him lest he decide to go off again. He sauntered in as if he has just been gone a few minutes, languidly rubbing himself along the side of my legs, his tail held high and the tip at a jaunty angle. He wanted food and water and then curled up on the rocking chair where I had nursed my son when he was a baby, sleeping through the night and most of the next day.

A few days later, I was the one picking up my son at the airport. I clutched a helium balloon emblazoned with the word "congratulations" as he came through the customs

gate to the arrival area with a second-place medal tucked in his suitcase, a pair of mirror aviator sunglasses — the kind I had not agreed to buy him in Israel — clipped to his T-shirt collar and a satisfied grin on his face.

Jerusalem journalist Judith Sudilovsky is a frequent contributor to this magazine. She wrote "Yad Vashem" in our summer 2013 issue.

to when they graduate,” she observed. “Working with a maximum of 20 students per class allows us to know each student individually, to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to provide exactly the program that will guarantee success and improve their self-image. Their maturation is remarkable and helps to inspire all of us to continue.”

She continued: “Outside my office is a survey taken in April 2012, before we moved to this new building — and even in the old, inadequate facility, there was positive feedback. The girls were asked to respond to Why I Attend This School. The percentages speak for themselves.” Here are the students’ responses: 1. Understanding and caring teachers and staff — 80 percent; 2. Successful teaching strategies — 90 percent; 3. Motivating and positive learning atmosphere — 90 percent; 4. Challenging and incentive activities — 80 percent; 5. Supportive counselors — 90 percent; 6. Inevitably warm and caressing home feeling — 100 percent; 7. Educates for behavior and manners — 90 percent; 8. My first steps toward a career. And my guarantee for a better future — 100 percent. “I am sure that at the end of this year, all of the percentages will go up — including those that reached 100 percent already!” Nadera promised.

Every possible step is taken to assist the students. Before matriculation, students must wait for someone to contact them and do the preliminary exams — and this can take time. Prior to taking the matriculation exam, they must pass a didactic exam (not the full matriculation, but a focus on a particular subject) and a psychometric exam, a procedure that can cost NIS 2,000 (about \$550). To expedite the process, the school has trained and given permission to two of its own teachers to provide this service free of charge, enabling the students to take one more step forward once they graduate.

While I was speaking with Nadera, Rivka, our photographer, was roaming around the building taking photographs of the students, classrooms and teachers. After a few short giggles and attempts to hide, all the girls began pos-

ing and gathering for the pictures.

One of the highlights of the visit was the opportunity to speak to these students. Unable to adjust to the regular school system, the girls I spoke to had been referred to the NA’AMAT facility by a school counselor or social worker. It took some time before they “felt comfortable in their own skin,” I was told. Overcoming difficult challenges and disappointments, they were all on the road to a productive future.

Fabiolla Habash, 17, has been attending the school for four years, majoring in graphic design and art. Her graduation ceremony was held the week before I visited, but matriculation exams are not held until July. Therefore, Fabiolla continued to come to the school to prepare for the exams. When asked why she chose this school, Fabiolla answered, “I love art and wasn’t able to take the courses I wanted at any other school.” She preferred to speak to me in English as she said that it is better than her Hebrew. I told her it was probably better than my Hebrew. “I have learned a lot and am very glad that I came to study here. I live outside of Nazareth, about five minutes away by bus. My parents were born in Jerusalem, lived in Ramallah and moved here when the war started and before I was born. I hope to be able to work in the field of graphic arts when I complete and pass my exams.” I asked if she had brothers and sisters and was surprised when she said, “I have one sister and two brothers — we are quadruplets.” Some of Fabiolla’s wonderful artwork is displayed on the walls at the entrance to the school.

As we were talking, a group of girls walked by carrying their graduation gowns and wearing T-shirts emblazoned with the school emblem. On the back of the shirt was a list of the names of all the graduates, proudly displayed.

I next met Almaza abu Hatoum, 18, who completed her studies in early childhood education. “Do you like little children?” I asked. “Sometimes,” she replied. Almaza had decided she wasn’t really interested in working in this field after she completes her matriculation exams but wants to go on to study nursing and work in a hospital. She has three brothers, one studying in a university, another who graduated,

and the third still in high school. “I am very happy that I came here,” she said. “The teachers here are special. They care about you and make you feel good about yourself.”

Laila Nasser, 16, is also studying early childhood education and hopes to work in that field. She likes little children and believes she will find satisfaction working with them. Her father was badly injured in a traffic accident and is still undergoing rehabilitation and unable to work. Their economic situation is very stressful, but Laila is determined to complete her studies and succeed in her field. This is her first year at the school. Although Laila was not satisfied with the public school she was attending, she was hesitant to make the change, but is now happy that she did. She, too, commented on the good relationship she has with her talented teachers and how comfortable she feels in the classroom and with her peer group.

Rivka ushered me into one of the classrooms where 10th-grade student Salam was seated in her wheelchair. I learned that she was handicapped since birth, but that didn’t stop her from studying. In addition to learning the core subjects, she was working on clothing design, creating beautiful blouses decorated with embroidery and beads. As I watched her, I was very moved. I didn’t want to disturb the class to speak to Salam, but her smile and the obvious pride in her work radiated. In general, the creativity exhibited in the students’ work — furniture, paintings, graphic designs, clothing — was inspirational.

The world should know about this NA’AMAT school, about the amazing achievements that happen under the leadership of Nadera, Lilian and the dedicated staff. It is a symbol of what can be accomplished when committed people think and work together to bring about positive changes in the lives of young people and adults who want to progress and not be hampered by the obstacles in their lives.

Judy Telman is a writer living in Mevaseret Zion. She was a national vice president of NA’AMAT USA before she moved to Israel close to 30 years ago and continues to be a NA’AMAT activist.

The Wanting

By Michael Lavigne

New York: Schocken Books

318 pages, \$25.95

The political becomes the personal, and the personal sheds light on the political, in *The Wanting*.

While the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains elusive, its complexities provide fodder for Michael Lavigne's beautifully written and riveting second novel about the aftermath of a bus bombing in Israel.

The lives of the three very different main characters are radically changed in the process: one of the Jewish victims, who is wounded but survives; his 13-year-old daughter; and the young Palestinian — once moderate — who pushed the button.

Though Roman Guttman, a noted Tel Aviv architect who came on aliyah from Russia years earlier, recovers from his physical injuries, he suffers mental aftereffects that others see as hallucinatory. His formerly leftist views are thrown into disarray, and he feels driven to break the rules to visit the most seriously injured bombing victim, a young girl who lies in a coma.

Guttman's impulsive journey into Palestinian territory becomes a symbol for the frayed relationship of the two peoples, though the period in which the novel is set — the 1990s — saw greater contact between them in the workplace and socially than the present.

Unbeknown to the secularist Guttman, Anyusha (who may not be his biological daughter) is flirting with both Orthodoxy and radical friends intent on placing a Third Temple where the Al-Aqsa Mosque stands.

Initially amiable and apolitical, the Palestinian perpetrator, Amir, changes when Israeli soldiers shoot his brother. Technically, Amir dies in the intended suicide attack, but is forced to wander

the land in a kind of Cain-and-Scrooge-like misery, observing the repercussions of his actions.

The gifted author (winner of a Sami Rohr Choice Award for emerging Jewish writers) shifts perspectives among the three main characters. He tells the story of each in the first person, both in the present and in flashbacks that shed light on their psychologies and how they arrived at this moment.

The time changes and perspective shifts may momentarily confuse (although a consistent symbol of either a Magen David, crescent, or yin yang symbol, and a hammer and sickle for those sections taking place in Russia appears at the head of each chapter). But Lavigne's lyricism and compelling storytelling carry the reader along. It would be surprising if you didn't want to finish his book in just a few sittings.

Don't, though, or you might miss the richness of the writing. Consider a jarring passage such as "Around her (the comatose girl) bed are all kinds of shapes and chimeras, jinns and demons, strange sea creatures and spirits, dim and sickly, like blighted wheat." Or the way Anyusha describes her adolescent crush: "... Even though he was still a block away I could see he was sweating because here were those big wet stains under his arms, which were sticking out of his short sleeves like two uncooked kolbasi...and of course the big glasses and everything."

There is Guttman's description of Collette, the brave refusenik but elusive woman he loved in Russia: "...she turned to face me, revealing a remarkably pale skin in the glow of the apartment lights, a skin so white and flawless it was almost like a geisha's mask, troubling, erotic, necromantic."

Whether exploring motivation, creating realistic dialogue, plotting or stirring the emotions, Lavigne's work is a welcome throwback to traditional novels. There is something about the way he blends realism and possible fantasy (did Guttman really see that flying head?) that reminds one of the short stories of Bernard Malamud, even if not in the writing style.

Each character comes to life convincingly — it's not easy to write in first person about someone of the opposite gender or much younger than oneself. But is it my imagination that the least persuasively portrayed, at least initially, is Amir?

Other less central, yet vivid characters people the book, such as Nadirah, Amir's sexually provocative sister-in-law, and Abdul-Latif, his father, both well disposed and angry toward Israelis; and Collette, who gave her up her child and is presumed to have perished in a Soviet jail.

The locales in which the action takes place, in Israel, Russia and the Palestinian territories, are rich characters of their own.

Extremism and its consequences may be the main theme of *The Wanting*, but a significant secondary one is that love is never perfect or easy — any more than finding a solution to the political conflict is. The novel also gives a good sense of displacement, whether one comes to a new place willingly or feels compelled to. It reminds us of the dreams, sometimes disappointed, of those who left hostile lands to come to the Jewish State.

From the shocking opener to the sadly inevitable ending, this is a book that grabs the senses and touches the heart.

— Barbara Trainin Blank



Being Esther

By Miriam Karmel

Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions

187 pages, \$22

Miriam Karmel's debut novel, *Being Esther*, is a slim volume, full of emotion and wisdom about aging and finding meaning from a life well-lived. Narrated by 85-year-old Esther Lustig, the novel weaves through time, as the title character tries to make sense of the events of her past and the present and the emotional legacy that she has to impart. While reading this lovely book, I felt as if I were reconnecting to the women in my life of Esther's generation. I savored it and did not want it to end.

Among the characters that populate the book is Esther's well-meaning daughter, Ceely, who has always tried to improve Esther. "Ceely had a way of making Esther feel like the old love seat that they'd moved to the basement rec room after the stuffing started to show." Concerned for her mother's safety in the demographically changing neighborhood on the northwest side of Chicago (where the familiar Jewish butchers and merchants are being rapidly replaced by sari shops), Ceely tries to convince her mom to move into an independent living facility, but Esther resists.

Esther institutes her own coping mechanisms. At 8:30 each morning, she speaks on the phone to her friend and neighbor Lorraine. One morning Lorraine makes the call and the next morning Esther returns the favor: "the delicate expression the two employ for checking to see that the other has made it through the night." Mrs. Singh, a neighbor unlike any she has ever had, "lands unbidden at Esther's door, a bird-of-paradise in her brilliant saris bearing samosas, lentils with curry, chapatis, and dal." Esther returns the dishes filled with her own creations

— poppy seed cookies or a wedge of homemade kugel — understanding that her neighbor's generosity has much to do with finding her own, momentary escape from the daily care of her sick husband. Esther takes pleasure in the haunting piano melodies played by the autistic boy who lives down the hall, and takes comfort in knowing that Milo, the building's super, is there to change a light bulb, fix a leak or perhaps open an apartment door if one morning either she or Lorraine fail to pick up the phone.

Trying to reconcile her past and her present, Esther goes through the contacts in her worn-out address book, from A to Z, and makes calls. She is struck by the juxtaposition of her diminishing circle of friends and the growing

plethora of choices in her everyday life. Standing in front of the juice case in the supermarket, she questions how and why life had morphed out of control and feels so empty. Her own mother squeezed oranges by hand. "Then came juice in bottles and wax cartons. Frozen concentrate had seemed like an improvement at the time.

Now there was all this. Too many orange juice [choices]. So this is what happens when you're living your life. Stuff accumulates." She pictures the lines running through the names in her address book that have been crossed off over the years. "Was this why we had all those choices? To balance the losses? To make us forget that every day our lives become a little less full than they were the day before? Still. Esther can't imagine being consoled by a carton of orange juice with extra pulp."

Esther's late husband, Marty, is still very much present in her life, and she touchingly recounts the long arc of their marriage. She argues with him, tries to explain the periods of time when she felt overlooked and ignored, remembers the sexual rekindling of their marriage when they became empty nesters, and still feels his palpable presence.

Twice a year, Esther makes excursions to the cemetery with her daughter and leaves two of Marty's favorite cookies, in lieu of stones, on his grave.

In a touching scene, Esther asks a friend to drive her to visit Marty and ask his permission, "before she is stashed away in the assisted living," to have lunch with Buddy, a man with whom she contemplated a dalliance decades earlier. When she does meet Buddy, she is surprised to find an old man. She remembers Buddy as lean and tall, "good looking in a Cesar Romero kind of way" — but "with the exception of those dazzling blue eyes, there is nothing familiar about this man." She wears her good blue dress — the one in which she plans to be buried (she tries it on twice a year to make sure it will fit when the time comes) — and is hit by the irony that she is meeting this man in her funeral attire. Forever practical, she notes, "...it is the best dress she ever owned and she'd bought it during her svelte phase and recently had it altered in accordance with her body's latest revision."

Throughout the book, in her relationship with family members and acquaintances, Esther has the urge to tell them that "growing old is one of the most surprising things that has happened to her. She hadn't given it any thought. Then one day, she was 85. She is old. Not just old, but an object of derision, pity. Is there any use explaining that she is still herself albeit a slower, achier, creakier version of the original?" Perhaps the fact that the author is able to communicate both versions of Esther to the reader is what makes the novel so poignant.

Toward the end of the book, Esther contemplates the contents of her apartment that she has chosen to save over the years and realizes with "sadness, akin to grief" that her daughter, granddaughter and daughter-in-law might not want any of it. While her relatives may not value her possessions, the reader is sure to treasure the insight, wisdom, and humor that Esther delivers with such nonchalance and verve.

— Marilyn Rose



Even Tough Girls Wear Tutus: Inside the World of a Woman Born in Prison

By Deborah Jiang Stein

Minneapolis: Cell 7 Media

188 pages, \$14.95

There are certain people — because of where and how they're born, genetics, a mysterious force that is life — who live impossibly complex lives. When we encounter them — at a party, on a plane or a bus — and they tell us about themselves, it's impossible not to be riveted by their every word.

Deborah Jiang Stein is one of those people, and in her honest, bold, unflinching memoir, she tells us just how amazing and difficult her life has been.

Deborah is 12 when her story begins. She and her brother Jonathan are both adopted. She's a mixed-race child, adopted by a Jewish family. They live in a good Jewish home, secure, middle class, intelligent and kind. One day Deborah wanders into her parents' room, usually off-limits, when they are not home. She opens her mother's drawer and finds a formal letter, written by her mother: "Can you please alter Deborah's birth certificate," her mother asks the family attorney, "from the Federal Women's Prison in Alderson, West Virginia, to Seattle? Nothing good will come from her knowing she lived in prison before foster care, or that her birth mother was a heroin addict. After all, she was born in our hearts here in Seattle, and if she finds all this out she'll ask questions about the prison and her foster homes before we adopted her."

So begins an enormous change in Deborah's life. She says "My 'real' mother's an addict and criminal. My 'real' home is a prison. Finding this out all of a sudden, in a letter, changed her life in a way she believes imprisoned her for the next 20 years. 'I'm not hers,' she says of the mother who raised her.

Deborah becomes truly impossible, and the downward spiral of her life begins at that moment. "My lifelong

battle begins when I force my brain to divorce from reality. It's the only way to metabolize what I've just learned. I was born in prison."

She comes to believe that prison is where she belongs, that drug addiction and breaking the law is her destiny. Her mother is patient. She never gives up on Deborah, who does all she can to sabotage their relationship. Her father, a remote intellectual type — she depicts him sitting in a study surrounded by books, away from the family — he isn't entirely there. She and her mother fight all the time. "Every molecule in me is packed with mad." Deborah punches the wall behind her mother, mangles her hand, and still her mother does not give up. She leaves home.

The author's descent is drug-filled and quick. Drugs become a lifestyle and a living. She carries a ten-inch switchblade and a revolver. She struggles and struggles.

"What's normal for a girl like me born in prison, heroin-addicted at birth? What's normal for a Jewish family who adopts a multiracial girl, and parents who veil my race and conceal my prison birth? What's normal for a 19-year-old like me who runs drugs for a living, blueprints burglaries and bank scams, and who's the think tank in a small gang of ex-felons?"

At 19, Deborah develops an advanced ulcer. Her life continues to descend. She's at a bar and one of her female companions stabs a man in the stomach. This incident becomes a turning point, and she runs away from this life and ends up living with her mother's young brother (he's 60) in Minneapolis. The FBI is looking for her, and Uncle Peretz hires her a lawyer. Like her mother, Peretz is unfailingly kind. She kicks her drug habit and begins a sort of recovery. She's clean for a year, and then, another descent.

By then, her parents are living in Champaign, Illinois, where her father teaches at the university. Her mother



invites her to lunch where Deborah reveals what she believes is the core of her anger, the reason for her craziness and all her confusion: her knowledge that she was born in prison and that her parents didn't tell her. But she knew. Her mother explains that she didn't want to hurt her. Deborah doesn't really understand.

Still, they resume trying to cobble together a relationship. And then her mother becomes very sick. It becomes clear that she is dying.

At the same time, after 20 years of trying to visit the prison where she was born, Deborah gets approval. "Prison is my birth country.... I'm going home, home to prison." The prison is in the Appalachian Mountains, and her visit, grim and difficult, seems to her almost synchronized to coincide with the time that her adoptive mother is leaving her.

Deborah has come to the realization that her adoptive mother truly loved her, and she is full of guilt and regret. She takes care of her mother as she's dying, becomes the daughter her mother had hoped for all along, and recognizes that her mother was the best possible mother she could have had. This understanding changes her and dissipates some of her anger as she becomes loving, devoted and even able to have two children of her own.

Now Deborah is a public speaker who devotes her work to women, men and children in the margins of society. She is the founder of The unPrison Project, a non-profit organization that serves women in prisons.

For an intensely personal and honest book, Deborah doesn't tell us anyone's names. Her adoptive parents remain unnamed and so do her children. Secrecy, privacy, revelation and the price paid for all of those is the fascinating theme of this very unusual memoir, a memoir that questions what birth means, what history means, and how life takes shape.

— Esther Cohen

52,000 interviews of which 364 are on Sephardim; of those, less than 100 focus on Jews from North Africa and the Middle East. Many subjects have been overlooked, says Green. Though Sephardi Voices is not focusing on the Holocaust experience, it is part of the story, he says.

Collecting stories about what life was like in their countries of origin provides a snapshot of a heritage that has vanished. In *Seven Stories*, Eileen Khalasty shares a sweet memory of sleeping on the flat rooftop of her home as was common during the hot Baghdad summers, as palpable as if it were yesterday. "Every morning the maid goes and covers the beds because it's so sunny, so hot, and in the evening after sunset she goes to the roof and opens them. It's so beautiful to sleep on the roofs, so cool, so nice, and to look at the stars...I miss sleeping on the roof."

Cairo-born Ellis Douek shares a lyrical memory of early mornings when his nanny would take him to his grandmother, who would be sitting on the balcony overlooking the Nile. "The servant would make her very strong, sweet Turkish coffee, and she would be smoking ceaselessly these scented Turkish cigarettes, and she would pour some coffee on the saucer and give it to me to lick." The aromas merge with his vision of the Nile at dawn, when through the mist you could only see the tops of the palm trees.

Many of the stories follow bitter-sweet timelines — happy childhoods, followed by upheaval and fear, and the difficulty of integrating into new cultures. "By age 17, I had lived in three different continents and cultures," says Glasser, a tournament bridge player who married an Ashkenazi Jew and now lives in Miami. She recalls a comfortable childhood in Cairo, where she attended a private French Catholic school; spoke French, Arabic and English; had friends of all nationalities; enjoyed Sunday family picnics and summer vacations on the Mediterranean. But in the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis, most of the Jews of Egypt were given 48 hours to leave and, like the Iraqis, were allowed only one suitcase each and a minimal amount of money.

Glasser's family migrated to France and then to Atlanta, where her uncle owned a store. She still has her mother's 21-carat gold bangles and her parents' wedding bands, which recreate the warm family feeling she remembers. For her son's engagement, Glasser used the fine embroidered silk paisley her mother had packed in her suitcase 60 years earlier and created a dress that she wore at the henna party. Her mother had bought yards of the expensive material to transport out of the country instead of cash.

Green emphasizes the alienation, discontent and displacement many refugees felt; they were often ill at ease in a borrowed culture and were looked down on in a Eurocentric setting. Telling their stories reaffirms their dignity and fosters self-esteem, he notes, quoting the Sephardi anthropologist Ruth Behar, who says that providing testimony is a crucial therapeutic tool.

For Jacqueline Douek (no relation to Ellis), the transition from Cairo to Brooklyn in 1958 was harrowing. "I saw my parents struggle. My mother cried every day. She'd had servants. My father, who spoke seven languages, worked three jobs and couldn't make ends meet. My brothers went to work when they were 13. I cleaned the house before I went to school and took my mother to doctors for her high blood pressure. It was the end of my childhood." Douek says she learned to cope with whatever situation arose. "I never ever panicked."

Douek's education languished. She didn't complete high school because she married at 17. Last year, at age 63, she graduated magna cum laude from Brooklyn College with a degree in Judaic studies and political science. Her 4 children and 13 grandchildren do not know all the details of her life. "I didn't expose them to that burden. They knew their grandparents, but they didn't understand that although the older generation was thankful to live in freedom, they also felt regret that they had lost everything."

"We all came as immigrants and threw ourselves immediately into starting new lives," says Shashoua. "We were so grateful for the fact that we escaped. We just wanted to build and go on. We didn't compare stories of how we escaped — though each story could be a thriller on its own."

More Sephardim are coming forward to give testimony, encouraged by family members or Jewish organizations to ensure a lasting legacy, but others worry about what they say and how public it is, says Lewkowicz. "Some don't want to be publicly recorded; some request that their testimony be closed for 10 or 20 years. They feel their private history is not for the public domain." Those who left as teens are more willing to talk, but older people don't want to remember the difficult times. Some who still have relatives under Islamic rule — Iranians, for instance — don't want to endanger their families. "It's very political in a way Holocaust testimony was not," says Lewkowicz. Green adds that it took Holocaust survivors 50 years to break their silence; similarly, Jews from Arab lands are passing the 50-year-mark and beginning to speak out.

Some interviewees say their ultimate message is cautionary. One Iraqi Jew who does not want her name used says it's not the past that frightens her but the future. "When we came here we felt Baghdad was another constellation, finished, gone, we're safe. Now the whole world is not safe and this is terrifying. I'm afraid history will repeat itself — and the second generation is oblivious. The hatred is simply seeping through."

"When you're a Jew this could happen anywhere, anytime, in any country," agrees Douek. "I tell my children that besides having faith in God you must make sure Israel survives and flourishes. You cannot be complacent. You must always be vigilant."

The story of Jews in Arab lands is similar to the story of American Jewry, says Green, with its immigrant roots and history both of anti-Semitism and of success. "We have to keep an eye on the past because the story of Sephardi Jewry covers millennia — a much longer track record than that of European Jewry. The Sephardi experience will be helpful in how we plan for the future."

Rabel Musleah is a New York-based writer, singer and educator who presents programs on the Jews of India and Iraq. Visit her Web site: www.rabeljewishindia.com. She wrote "Jewish Girl Power!" in our spring 2013 issue.

conflict,” MK Shaked emphasizes. “A big law I’m working on would define Israel as a Jewish country.” Shaked said the legislation is necessary to redress the rulings of Aharon Barak, who served as the president of the Supreme Court from 1995 to 2006. Barak “dominated the court, and democratic values were promoted over Jewish values,” Shaked insists. “We want them to live in parallel.”

In a *Jerusalem Post* profile, MK Michal Biran (Labor) says her agenda is to make the national budget “more transparent” and to improve the working conditions for outsourced employees, who have traditionally worked without receiving benefits.

Biran would also like to provide scholarships to ultra-Orthodox Jews and Arabs, both underrepresented in the workforce, “so they can find employment, which will increase their feeling of solidarity with society,” and encourage them to perform military or National Service.

MK Zandberg has “a rainbow of goals”: to advance the peace process, women’s rights, gay rights and civil justice. “I’m working very hard to make medical cannabis more available,” she says, referring to marijuana. “And to make sure the public, and not just rich guys, reap the benefits of our natural resources, like natural gas and phosphates.”

If Calderon has her way, Israelis will learn more about Judaism in a non-coercive way. Long ago, the Talmud scholar noted that in order to reinvent themselves, Israelis “gave up more Jewish culture than is healthy. We got to a point where we are ignorant. The aim is to make decisions based on knowledge, not on ignorance.”

Like the public, Calderon says, the country’s female MKs are still finding their way. “It’s like building the plane while you’re flying in it.”

Michele Chabin is a journalist living in Jerusalem. She covers the Middle East for The New York Jewish Week and other publications. She wrote “A Taste of Culture in the English Mama Losben” in our summer 2013 issue.

Let’s Crack Down on Sexual Assault in the Military

by MARCIA J. WEISS

Sexual assault has emerged as one of the defining issues for the United States military this year. Its occurrence has reached epidemic levels. A recent Pentagon survey found that an estimated 26,000 sexual assaults took place last year, up from 19,000 in 2010. The numbers are actually much higher, however, as more than 86 percent of service members do not report their assault, fearing retaliation or ostracism from their units. Less than 5 percent of sexual assault cases move toward prosecution and less than one-third of those cases result in imprisonment. Although the majority of complaints have been filed by women, who comprise about 15 percent of the military, statistics show that one in five have been assaulted. Often overlooked is that the majority of service members who are sexually assaulted are men, and their assaults have been vastly underreported.

The military chiefs contend that it is the responsibility of commanders to ensure trust between victims and leaders, and it’s the military justice system’s duty to investigate and prosecute sex crimes properly. Despite promises that commanders would be held accountable for any failure to do so, there exists a general tolerance of sexual harassment and abuse.

Bills to toughen penalties and prosecution have been introduced in Congress. Significantly, the Military Justice Improvement Act of 2013 (MJIA), introduced by Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand (D-NY), has bipartisan support. Both Senators Rand Paul (R-KY) and Ted Cruz (R-TX) have signed on to this proposal, as have 38 other Senate cosponsors. The measure would give experienced military prosecutors, holding the rank of colonel or above, rather than commanders, the power to decide which sexual assault crimes to try — with the goal of increasing the number of people who report crimes without fear of retaliation. The bill would also take away a commander’s authority to convene court-martials and put them in the hands of judge advocate generals (the military lawyers).

Senator Carl Levin (D-MI), chair of

the Senate Armed Services Committee, supports a measure requiring a senior military officer to review decisions by commanders who decline to prosecute sexual assault cases. Levin and the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that cutting commanders out of the legal process entirely would undermine their ability to enforce order and discipline. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) feels that Congress should replace commanders with state prosecutors to deal with military sexual assault cases. Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO), although a Democrat and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, opposes the MJIA, stating that victims can report assaults outside the chain of command. Although state courts already have authority over rape and sexual assault cases should a victim choose to go that route, this rarely happens as the military prefers to prosecute its own.

Obviously, there is much confusion and disagreement among legislators. What is clear, however, is that victims of military sexual assault should be encouraged to report these offenses without reprisal. The perpetrators must be brought to justice outside the military chain of command.

TAKE ACTION! Encourage your legislators to support the Military Justice Improvement Act of 2013 so that justice and reform will prevail.

Marcia J. Weiss, J.D., is the NA’AMAT USA advocacy chair and the new vice president for program and education.

Take Action!

AROUND THE COUNTRY



▲ Esther Goldsmith club of Toms River, New Jersey, pays tribute to longtime member and club treasurer Rita Michel at its Circle of Love Luncheon. Mayor Menashe Miller of Lakewood, also a U.S. Army chaplain, enthralled the group with his stories. From left, back row: Mayor Miller; Deborah Troy-Stewart, club president and national board member; Carole Adler, event chair; front: Rita Michel and husband Ralph, who owned Lakewood's first kosher food store.



▲ Avodah club in Syracuse, New York, honors longtime member Ettarae Alpert for her commitment and service to the club at the annual Donor Luncheon. Alpert is flanked by co-presidents Nancy Barnett (left) and Karen Roberts (right).



▲ Some 300 people attended San Fernando Valley Council's Spring Luncheon. Attendees enjoyed a silent auction, boutique and a fashion show. From left: event co-chairs Roz Porton and Lea Templer.



▲ Mayor of Beachwood, Ohio, Merle S. Gorden proclaims Sunday, July 21, 2013 (the first day of the 41st National Convention), as "Na'amat USA Day in the city of Beachwood." From left: Natalie Landy; Linda Schoenberg, convention program co-chair and national board member; Mayor Gorden; Robin Lieberman, local convention chair, and Gaylee Cweiber, Cleveland council's executive director.



▲ At a local shelter, San Fernando Valley Council hosts a birthday party for children who were born in March. Through the generosity of the members, the children left with an armload of toys, books and Target gift cards.

Palm Beach Council holds an 87th birthday luncheon for Na'amat USA. The guest speaker was Norman Frajman, president of the Child Survivors/Hidden Children of the Holocaust. He spoke about his childhood experiences in Poland, where he witnessed the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and survived three concentration camps and a death march. From left: Rhoda Birnbaum, president; Norman Frajman and Raena Zucker, national board member and council fund-raising vice president.



▲ Broward Council marks Israel's 65th anniversary at a celebratory luncheon. From left: Isabel Resnick, Medina club president; council co-presidents Bess Frumin and Ruth Racusen; Masada/Natanya co-presidents Helen Cantor and Helen Lefkowitz; Sophia Winkler; Marjorie Moidel, Southeast Area coordinator.



▲ Mildred Weiss celebrated her 100th birthday with Broward Council, family and friends who honored her at an elegant luncheon. An inspiration to all, she is a dedicated Life Member, past national board member and has served in many other leadership positions. Mazal Tov, Mildred!



▲ The Mazal and Or clubs of South Florida Council honor Or club president Matilde Behar for her 29 years of dedicated service to NA'AMAT USA at a gala Giving Tree auction and dinner. This unique auction was the brainchild of Mrs. Behar's 14-year-old grandson Isy Mekler Behar, who asked artists to donate paintings, sculptures and other renditions of the Giving Tree (he was inspired by Shel Silverstein's book) to benefit children in NA'AMAT day care centers. From left, standing: Fanny Yohai and Rebeca Yohai; seated: Sarita Dornbusch (Behar), Matilde Behar, keynote speaker Isy Mekler Behar and Becky Mekler (Behar).



▲ Amat club of Akron, Ohio, honors Sandra Levenson for her longtime commitment and generosity to the organization at its Spiritual Adoption Brunch. Photo shows Levenson, seated, and her family.



▲ Hatikvah club of Pittsburgh Council gathers for lunch to discuss NA'AMAT USA business and social issues. Clockwise from bottom: Judy Sufrin, Dee Selekman, Maria Scheinman, Alexandra Greenberg, Barbara Samet, Joan Sheer, council president Marcia Weiss, Sibyl Treblow and Shulamit Bastacky.



▲ Meet Youngstown Council's program planning committee. From left, seated: Ruth Katz, Hope Bard and president Bertha Froomkin; standing, Florence Harshman, treasurer Edith Peskin, Susan S. Epstein and Lucille Vegh.

Youngstown Council holds ► a festive donor luncheon, its most successful fund-raising event of the year. From left: President Bertha Froomkin and event chair Ruth Katz.



Convention

continued from page 11

gain.” Pioneer Women advised: “Share our joy! Be a Pioneer!” As time went on, he said, Jewish women’s Zionist organizations in the United States became very successful in fund-raising and developing leadership skills. In fact, they “were frequently stronger and more effective than their male counterparts.”

With this insightful background, the convention moved on to its “War on Women” session with panelists Nina Turner, the Democratic State Senator from Ohio, and Laurie J. Wasserman, an employment law attorney practicing in Washington, D.C. Both are outspoken advocates for women’s rights.

Wasserman observed that America has come a “long way in the area of women’s rights in the workplace, but has an awfully long way to go.” For one, women are still stereotyped in many situations, she said. They are viewed as not needing pay raises and promotions, not being tough enough (or too tough), less dedicated (they are mothers and partners!). And they have to prove themselves much more than men do. They experience discrimination in a working world where they get fewer promotions, fewer opportunities for advancement and fewer work training opportunities than men, Wasserman explained. In addition, women are concentrated in lower paying jobs.

Even though there are laws to prevent discrimination, they are not necessarily enforced, the attorney noted. This is the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, but women are still paid just 77 cents for every dollar that men make in the same job. The 2013 Paycheck Fairness Act, which updates and strengthens the Equal Pay Act, she said, has “zero chance of passing.” The 1978 Pregnancy Discrimination Act does not always prevent major violations in the workforce, where employers come up with “very creative reasons for dismissing pregnant employees” or cause them to quit by refusing to provide temporary adjustments in work conditions. And after the birth of a child, there is little allowance for flexibility in a woman’s work schedule or access to parental leave. Forty-seven percent of working mothers have

no sick leave or paid vacation. The 2013 Pregnancy Workers Fairness Act, if passed, would make certain accommodations to pregnant workers. The Family and Medical Leave Act, she noted, provides job security only where a business employs 50 or more people living within a 75-mile radius, among other requirements. “People want a work-family balance,” she emphasized.

Senator Turner, minority whip for the Ohio Senate, is a vehement critic of efforts to restrict abortion, contraception and sex education. She slammed anti-abortion legislators “who are acting like MDs” by putting themselves between women and their doctors, and she accused members of the Ohio General Assembly of “practicing medicine without a license.” Ideologically driven lawmakers are putting women’s health at risk, she said, by promoting lies about the risks of abortion (such as abortion leads to breast cancer) and creating many impediments. Preventing the right to choose, she declared, is a “war on families.... You would think these folks would honor womanness.... they are pro-birth but not pro-life! Women will find a way to get abortions, so let’s keep it safe and legal.” Let’s use the power of the vote, she urged. “We are pro-quality of life.”

Turner also commented on the nationwide strategy by Republican lawmakers to sneak abortion and contraception restrictions into law. Particularly insidious is the restriction of access to information that is being imposed in a number of states. For example, in Ohio, no rape crisis center that receives state funding can counsel rape survivors about abortion. Also, Ohio legislators reprioritized federal funding for family planning by slipping the decision into the budget at night, directing funds to clinics that don’t focus on family planning.

As Turner is “very concerned” about men’s health, she has introduced the Erectile Dysfunction bill (SB 307) in Ohio. The senator said she “certainly wants to stand up for men’s health and take this seriously and legislate it the same way mostly men say they want to legislate a woman’s womb.” Some of the requirements of SB 307 are: The physician prescribing a drug to treat symptoms of erectile dysfunction must

obtain from the patient a notarized affidavit in which at least one of the patient’s sexual partners certifies he has experienced symptoms in the preceding 90 days; must refer the patient to a sexual therapist approved by the state medical board for an assessment of possible causes....” You get the idea. This bill joins a trend where female lawmakers around the country are submitting bills regarding men’s health.

In a rousing video address to the convention, U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Florida, called for justice and equality for women the world over.

Praising NA’AMAT, she said its work to improve the lives of women, children and families in the Jewish state is “remarkable” and “crucial” and “I am proud to stand with you in your efforts.” Women in the U.S. and Israel have an “undeniable sisterhood...and are united in our fight for women’s equality, full political representation and economic justice and parity.”

Schultz commended NA’AMAT’s domestic violence initiatives — its shelter, counseling centers and public awareness campaigns — which “give Israeli women the opportunity to overcome violence and find new hope.” The specter of violence looms globally, she noted. “One in three women will experience abuse... that’s one billion women alive today.”

To get closer to true equality, Schultz urged, “we must come together to work tirelessly for global health, education, political participation and women’s empowerment. You must never forget that you are not a woman on your own, but part of a network of women, a sisterhood of strength.... As Jews we know that the suffering of one deserves the attention and compassion of us all.”

In a session on advocacy that utilized role-playing, delegates focused on the huge problem of sexual assault in the military (see page 27 for more information). It was emphasized that speaking out on important issues involves becoming as knowledgeable as possible, making sure you know your audience’s position and keeping up the communication. Participants signed and took home a petition to the U.S. Senate called “The Invisible War,” which calls for the Senate to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice and move the prosecution of military sexual

assault out of the chain of command. Only Congress can change the UCMJ to create a working system for prosecuting sexual predators in the military.

They Learned, They Were Motivated, They Enjoyed!

Delegates were kept busy with an array of gatherings throughout the convention. There was a meeting for club and council presidents; a bylaws session; a program on Jewish women in history; early morning exercises; workshops for exchanging ideas for fund-raising, membership recruitment and leadership development; area meetings and many inspiring speakers.

Anti-Semitism was addressed by Bettysue Feuer, former Anti-Defamation League Regional director. She pointed out that anti-Semitic incidents in the United States have decreased about 14 percent over the last few years. "Anti-Semitism is no longer politically correct as it was when the ADL was founded [in 1913]. Now it is found mostly among individuals and small groups and is usually addressed immediately."

But in many parts of Europe, she noted, incidents have increased. There is also a disturbing trend, as anti-Semitism is "making its way into political discussions and party platforms." In Hungary, for example, the third largest party, Jobbik, is openly anti-Semitic. In July, Adonis Georgiades, a right-wing Greek politician who has made anti-Semitic statements and promoted an anti-Semitic book, was appointed health minister of Greece.

Feuer remarked that "hatred is learned and can be unlearned" through early childhood intervention. One important tool in fighting hate is ADL's Miller Early Childhood Initiative, which provides anti-bias training programs for teachers, caregivers and families. Other training programs reach middle-school and high-school teachers and administrators, focusing on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school atmosphere by addressing issues of bias and bullying.

Jill Miller Zimon, Pepper Pike, Ohio, councilwoman and social media blogger, gave delegates tools and insight into using new social media, stressing the importance of its use to help a

younger generation become more involved in NA'AMAT. Orit Tobe, president of NA'AMAT Canada, and Ceres Maltz Bin, former president of NA'AMAT Brazil, brought greetings and news from members in their parts of the world.

At the Gala Installation Banquet, Elizabeth Raider of Woodland Hills, California, was installed for a second term as national president. Mazal tov to her and all the new officers: Gail Simpson, vice president/Membership; Jan Gurvitch, vice president/Fund-raising; Ivy Lieboss, vice president/Leadership; Chellie Goldwater Wilensky, vice president/Organization; Marcia J. Weiss, vice president/Program and Education; Debby Firestone, recording secretary; and Debbie Kohn, treasurer/financial secretary (see sidebar on page 10 for a list of all board members).

At the closing luncheon, Harriet Green, chair of National Funds, Gifts and Bequests, presented three checks to Galia Wolloch, totaling \$174,000 to be used for day care services. She also presented a stunning gold and silver pin to each member who had raised and/or given \$15,000 since the last convention. "A special feeling of hope rises from this convention," she said, "as the dream of our founders lives on."

Convention participants also enjoyed a trip to the beautiful Maltz Museum of Jewish History, and early arrivals got a chance to tour the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Entertainment throughout was provided by the talented and charming artists Shlomo Haviv, Cantor Kathryn Wolfe Sebo, and the Yiddishe Cup Klezmer Band.

Delegates shared their organizational strategies and skills, gained insight into the Mideast political situation, learned about NA'AMAT's latest projects in Israel, and were updated on the status of women's issues. But even more important, they enjoyed that wonderful, warm connection ("haver-shaft" was the word used in the older days) between members — sisters who care passionately about making life better both in Israel and America. And together they danced.

Judith A. Sokoloff is the editor of NA'AMAT Woman.

Welcome to the New Life Members of NA'AMAT USA

EASTERN AREA

Leora Cohen
Syosset, N.Y.
Harriet Heller
Bayshore, N.Y.
Anne Hoffnung
Bronx, N.Y.

Sara Rosenthal
Wilmette, IL
Hanna Saar
Cleveland, OH
Fern Simkoff
Beachwood, OH

MIDWEST AREA

Kimberly Frankenthal
Highland Park, IL
Melanie Hoffman
Highland Park, IL
Randi Gelfand Lewis
Columbus, OH

WESTERN AREA

Marlene Gurewitz
Woodland Hills, Calif.
Barbara Rubin
Laguna Woods, Calif.

Na'amat Woman **Wins Rockower Award**

Na'amat Woman received an award in the category of "Excellence in Arts and Criticism News and Features — Reporting" in this year's Simon Rockower Awards competition. Sometimes referred to as the "Jewish Pulitzers," the awards are presented by the American Jewish Press Association at its annual conference, held this year in Seattle. Members of the AJPA include all the national and most local Jewish newspapers, national and international magazines and Web-based publications. The awards honor the best Jewish journalism published in 2012.

The second-place winning article was "Helène Aylon" by Judith A. Sokoloff, editor of *Na'amat Woman*, published in the summer 2012 issue (you can view it online on the NA'AMAT USA Web site; go to magazine). The comments of the judges: "This is a smart, sophisticated and admirably in-depth profile of an artist who both uses Judaism and questions Judaism in her work."



Members enjoy the warmth and spirit of the 41st national convention of NA'AMAT USA.