

ECRUSY'S TABLOID

Political Advocacy: Only in ECRUSY By: Hava Goldberg



Not too long ago, members of ECRUSY received a flyer in the mail asking them, "Are you interested in meeting Members of Parliament? Think the voice of Jewish youth should be heard in Ottawa? Have you been feeling frustrated with what our Canadian politicians are saying? This is your chance to have your voice heard in Ottawa..."

The flyer advertised the upcoming political advocacy trip, an opportunity unique to USY, that allows teenagers to attend training sessions on political advocacy, participate in meetings with key political figures and

develop strategies to increase advocacy in their communities.

On Sunday, February 2, USYers from the greater



Toronto area, Hamilton, London, Montreal and Ottawa came together at Agudath Israel in Ottawa. USYers from every grade, as well as levels of leadership experience came together to share in this mind broadening experience.

Eric Vernon, a representative of the Canadian Jewish Congress, opened the sessions with an introduction to advocacy. Vernon, helped the group answer the question, "What is advocacy?" as well as initiate discussions about advocacy issues in the Jewish community.

Presenter David Cooper, spoke on behalf of the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC). His session was designed to help the group gain a better understanding about parties and the political process. Having (cont. pg 3)

Volume 13, Issue 2

Winter Mifgash 2003

- Read interesting articles from your friends!
- Learn how to be an activist in your community,
- Read fun articles like Secret USYer
- Check up on your Regional President
- MUCH MUCH MORE!

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Message From The Big Kahuna

By: David M. Goldberg

Welcome to Winter Mifgash! I hope everyone is having a great time! Thanks to the BDBIBA USY Executive and staff for all of their help in preparing for his weekend. Also, huge thanks go to the ECRUSY Executive and staff for the planning of the weekend's events.

This week's parshah, *Vayakhel*, is a brief summary of all the instructions for fashioning the *Mishkan*, or Tabernacle. It is puzzling to commentators why there is so much detail placed on the *Mishkan*, since it is believed that every word in the Torah is significant and not even one letter is wasted. Some scholars understand this emphasis to underscore the sacredness of the place where you live; the *Mishkan* was the place where the whole community was welcomed; God's home among the people.



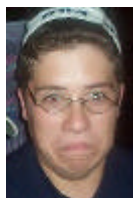
In the same way, Jewish teenagers find a home in ECRUSY. While at school, and in the local community, it is sometimes difficult to find people with whom you share a common bond. But when people come to a convention, they feel more comfortable keeping Shabbat. When people come to a program, they leave feeling re-energized after seeing friends from out-of-town. When spending time with fellow

Conservative Jewish teens, people find their home.

It is our job to spread this welcoming atmosphere. Instead of going straight to bed after Winter Mifgash, call up a friend and tell them how much fun you had. Instead of filling out the application for Spring Convention right away, photocopy it and give it to your friends. Tell them about how they can come and meet new people from across Eastern Canada and have an incredible experience with fellow Jewish teenagers.

Our home is big enough for more people. We can fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Hachnasat Orchim*, welcoming guests into our community. It is our obligation to help Jewish teenagers find a positive, home-like environment- and what better place is there than in ECRUSY?

Message from the Editors!



Hey ECRUSY!!! It's Jeremy and Josh, your favorite Tabloid Editors! We have worked hours and hours trying to finish this issue just for your pleasure so we hope that you enjoy it!

The theme of this issue is political advocacy. We felt that it was very important to have an issue on political advocacy because of our region's amazing program, Political Advocacy. Throughout the weekend we learned about bringing what we learned back to our communities and back to our region.

Throughout this weekend, you will be hearing from other participants of this amazing trip about their experiences. We decided that instead of talking to you about it, how come we can't print it out on a piece of (cont. pg 3)



Political Advocacy (cont. from pg. 1)

recently led a mission, which allowed nearly 20 parliamentarians to visit Israel, Cooper was able to provide the group with first-hand insight about the sentiments towards Israel expressed on a day-to-day basis in the political world. Vernon and Cooper reappeared later to lead discussion groups where the participants were given the opportunity to discuss issues of importance to the Jewish community.

The activity packed day continued with a forum about political reporting with a Jewish representative of the editorial board of The Ottawa Citizen. Lastly, Darcy Richler, a representative of the CIC, who discussed, "bringing it home", treated the high school students to an inspirational presentation. By encouraging every individual to consider the differences they could make in their own communities, Richler ended the first day of the trip on a high note, leaving the teens

anxiously awaiting their upcoming meetings on Parliament Hill.

The next morning, USYers were privileged to begin the day at the Israeli Embassy for a meeting with Ambassador Chaim Divon. Divon relayed to the group his sense of grief and sorrow over the loss of Israeli astronaut, Colonel Ilan Ramon, who had fallen victim to the Columbia disaster only two days earlier. Despite his sadness, the ambassador was also able to convey to the teens his continued hope for peace as well as the efforts that are being made to that end by Canadian politicians.

Following their time at the embassy, the group made their way to the Hill for a brief meeting with Elinor Caplan, Minister of National Revenue. Students grilled Caplan with questions related to the Canadian government's position

on Israel in the hopes of learning more about the national standpoint.

Liberal MP Art Eggleton also spoke to the group, telling them of his recent experience on the CIC parliamentary mission to Israel, an experience that reaffirmed his commitment to Israel, an area of great importance to his largely Jewish riding of York Central.

After observing politics in action during Question Period, the group had the opportunity to speak with Canadian Alliance MP Stockwell Day. Day, a self-proclaimed supporter of Israel, allowed the group to express to him their concerns about Israel as well as ask questions related to his position as Foreign Affairs Critic. The politician ended the day on a high note, leaving participants with a renewed sense of hope and determination.

Message from the Editors! (cont. from pg. 2)

paper!

In this issue, we will be discussing why it is important to be an advocate in your community as well as outside your community.

We hope you are all having a great time at Winter Mifgash and we hope that after you finish reading this you will be more interested in political advocacy. Remember, if you

have any questions about how to become more involved, ask any member of the trip.

Jeremy Moses Editor in chief
Josh Goldberg Assistant Editor

Bringing it Home

By: Adam Serota

How would one approach the task of applying the abundance of knowledge that has been passed to us on the Political Advocacy trip, to everyday life in our hometowns? First one must carefully analyze the information put forward to us on the Political Advocacy trip. To do so would take an essay the size of this very tabloid, so I must do my best and sum up, in one sentence what we learned in almost entire day of sessions from representatives from the CIC (Canada Israel Committee) and the CJC (Canadian Jewish Congress). Here it goes... GET OFF YOUR TUCHAS AND DO SOMETHING!!! Or in Norwegian, *Komm seg av Deres bumb og gjør noe!*

That was the just of it, do something. We need to take action as leaders of our communities. "But Adam, how

do we go about taking action?" Well, anonymous questioner, that is a large part of what we discussed at Political Advocacy. We need to "mobilize" as Darcy Richler would say. Get involved and informed. Stay informed about Israeli politics and the situation so you can combat anti-Israel rhetoric. Bring people to come and speak at your schools and USY chapters and make them more informed about Israel. Write your MP and MPP about your dissatisfaction or satisfaction of a particular action that their government took with regard to Israel. There are many ways, on top of the few I listed above in which you can help. We cannot merely sit on our couch and watch CNN and say "oh, isn't that terrible." Mobilize. That was the key message sent to me personally during our discussions with the C I C a n d C J C .

There are many key issues facing the Jewish community worldwide and in Canada. Only by activism can we better these situations. Don't stay home when there is a rally in support of Israel, go! Don't assume that since you go to a private Jewish school that automatically makes you informed and knowledgeable about Israel, cause' it doesn't! (That's not a cheap shot at CHAT students wait... I go to CHAT!). You need to attend speakers because, believe it our not, they will teach you something. Follow up on your words! I recently wrote a letter to Stockwell Day and I encourage all to take the same types of actions. If I learned anything from Political Advocacy, particularly from the CIC and CJC representatives, it is that more action, more activism is needed. We must start taking the attitude of if not me, then who?

Note: Adam Serota does not go to CHAT. He in fact goes to CHAR.

Possibly The Funniest Joke Ever...

Avi loved golf, but his eyesight had gotten so bad, that he couldn't find his ball once he'd hit it. He consulted with his wife, and she recommended that Avi bring along her uncle Yaakov. Avi said, "But Yaakov is 80 years old and half senile!" His wife replied, "Yes, but his eyesight is incredible."

Avi finally agreed and took Yaakov along. He teed off and could feel that he had hit it solidly. He asked Yaakov, "Do you see it?" Avi nodded his head and said, "Boy, that was a beautiful shot!" Avi excitedly asked, "Well, where did it land?" Yaakov said, "Hmmm. I forget."

What Political Advocacy has taught me

By: Tova Silverman

I was very honoured to have participated in this year's Political Advocacy Trip. I was really looking forward to the political advocacy trip because I didn't know a lot about politics and I was hoping to learn more about issues confronting Canadian Jews as well as ways to advocate myself in my community.

We participated in sessions and discussions with members of the CJC and the Canada Israel

Committee. We met with the Ambassador, Haim Divon and various politicians. The person who spoke to us that influenced me the most was Art Eggelton. He spoke to us about many political issues and his most recent trip to Israel. He went to Israel with many politicians on a trip sponsored by the Canada Israel Committee. The purpose of this trip was to let Canadian politicians see Israel with their own eyes, not through the eyes of the media. I think that Art

Eggelton experienced a lot on this trip. The way he spoke to us, so passionately about Israel, it was unbelievable. It was very confronting to know that there are people in our parliament who support Israel and will do so much to help our homeland.

The whole trip was such a great experience. I learned so much and I am now ready to begin using all the information I attained to start advocating in my community.

Secret USYer

By: Well, if I told you it wouldn't be a secret...

1) If a Staple can't ... then who will?

I'll tell you who will, and it's not what you're thinking and it's not even what he's thinking. *Gasp*. Yes I know this comes as a shock and it may be hard to accept at first, but sooner or later we are going to have to face the truth... You see, we can't just lie back passively and allow staples to run our world for another 8 thousand years. It is about time humans started taking back what is truly ours from our fascist staple masters...our blankets. And in the words of captain planet: "the power is yours."

2) Lookin' for a good time stranger?

Yes I am, but that's an odd question for you to be asking a stranger. How very neighbourly of you. You know I once knew a stranger, but then he wasn't. Well if you have any good times on your person I would be very happy to take them of your hands, perhaps lease them from you for a short while? Thanks anyways lady, you better go inside or you'll catch a cold.

3) Why is red?

Why is red is a question that we have all asked ourselves at one

point or another throughout our lives. It is a question that strikes at the very essence of our existence, and yet it is almost impossible to answer. Fortunately for you, *almost impossible* is not a phrase that easily daunts the secret USYer, and so I have an answer for you. Red is because thermonuclear flashes in accreting neutron stars deploy charged neutrinos into space creating a rift in space and time. The very existence of these charged neutrinos is a paradox whose consequences are so great that they have a tremendous effect on the existence of the universe. The universe balances this effect by possessing the colour red.

Israel: How Can I help?

By: Adam Zarek

Israel is right now suffering from a slowdown in her economy. Less and less tourists are visiting her attractions and the difficulty is shown through all the lives of all Israelis. As the situation grows on, the government is being forced to divert money from social services towards increased spending for defence and security. No matter who it is, all Israelis are being affected in more than one way by the current situation and as Jews in the Diaspora it is our responsibility to help our brothers and sisters in trouble.

All Israelis are currently being harmed by the lack of tourists right now. Hotels and attractions are being forced to drastically cut prices to attract tourists. Not

only shopkeepers and hotel workers, but also every Israeli thank every person that visits because they all understand the situation they are in. It is impossible to be able to expect us to just jump on a plane to Israel and start buying everything we can to help the stores, but there is still a lot we can do. Instead of buying normal potato chips buy Bisli or Bamba, Israeli snack foods. We all have to try to do our bit that it is possible to help the Israeli economy from sinking too low.

But what about the social services budget that is being reduced to deal with the rising security needs. One of my friends told me a story about her cousin that lives in Israel and is dependent on social services to live her life. Her cousin is in a

wheelchair after losing the use of one leg, and damaging the other in a workplace accident and needs to go to rehab therapy three times a week. She can't afford the therapy by herself and can only get treatment through Israeli social services.

See how the life of one person is drastically affected by the current situation that has nothing to do with a fear of terrorism. But the solution to this problem can be solved in a much easier way. All that is needed is for people around the world, not only Jews, to do what they can to help the Israeli economy. So do what you can to help, even if it is only buying Israeli snack foods because every little bit helps and can help the life of even one person in Israel.

Israel: The Absurdity of "Zionism is Racism"

By: Eric Lander

Note: The opinions expressed in this article may or may not express the views of USY

I often find myself sifting through the heaping rhetoric of farcical international organizations. And of all the farcical international organizations that I just love to criticize, the United Nations, in all of its absurdity, takes the cake. To delve even further into said absurdity, we find the most atrocious of all UN atrocities, the Durban Conference of 2001, in Durban, South Africa,

inappropriately titled "World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance". Sounds pretty appropriate at first. However, throughout this conference, Israel was hit with consecutive "cheap shots", as the delegates at the conference ignorantly equated Zionism with Racism. In fact, this is a perfect example of the heaping rhetoric of

farcical international organizations to which I alluded beforehand. I feel the need to address the "Zionism is Racism" ideology, which is so hard to advocate against.

Firstly, let me make it absolutely clear that Zionism is in NO WAY Racism. The Jewish Virtual Library defines Zionism as "the national movement for the (cont. pg. 10)

SA/TO: Where does the money go? By Hava Goldberg

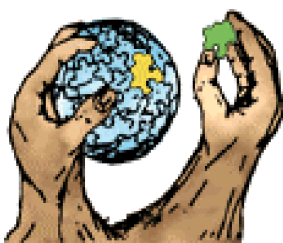
No chapter or regional USY program is complete without the requisite push to raise money for USY's charity, Tikun Olam. Some of us are more eager and willing to give than others, but despite the general enthusiasm among USYers about "making the world a better place," there is one ominous question that always resurfaces. Where does the money go?

Every year USY allocates over one hundred thousand dollars to charities worldwide. Some of them, like Magen David Adom and the Make a Wish Foundation, are familiar names. But others such as Seminario Rabinico Latinamericano- The Latin American Rabbinical Seminary or Project Ezra- a program that aids needy Jewish in New York's Lower East Side, are largely unheard of.

The following is a sample of two very different, but equally important causes that USY donates funds to-

Alyn Hospital- One of the world's leading specialists in the active and intensive

rehabilitation of children with a broad range of physical



disabilities and it is the only facility of its kind in Israel. **Alyn** is a non-profit organization treating physically handicapped children and adolescents.

The hospital specializes in fields such as the treatment of trauma and head injuries from road accidents, spinal cord injuries, neuromuscular diseases, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, rehabilitation of cancer patients, burns victims and children with developmental delay. **Alyn Hospital** is also home to 37 long-term patients, including 13 patients who are dependant on respirators.

The Jewish Foundation of the Righteous- As result of the book and movie, "Schindler's List"

Oskar Schindler has come to personify the words "righteous gentile," yet there were thousands of courageous individuals throughout Europe who helped save the lives of Jews during the Holocaust. Today, more than 50 years after the end of the Second World War, these brave men and women are growing old. The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous has two mandates- its first and foremost is to provide over 17 000 Righteous Gentiles with monthly financial support. The second is to educate the world about the extraordinary acts of courage displayed by these people.

Three unique charities, three worthy causes. These are only a small sampling of the vast array of causes that each and every one of us helps contribute to on a yearly basis. So next time your friendly chapter or regional SATO VP invites you to participate in a fundraising activity, keep these charities in mind and remember that every dollar can do a world of good.

We lied. This joke is funnier...

Moishe walks into a post office to send a package to his wife.

The postmaster says, "This package is too heavy, you'll need another stamp."
Moishe replies, "And that should make it lighter?"

Rel/Ed: Parashat Vayakhail By: Jacob Zeliger

The commands for building the Mishkan (Tabernacle) were fully dispensed. As the job was winding down, Moshe gave the nation the final directives of the monumental task. First, however, he had a message.

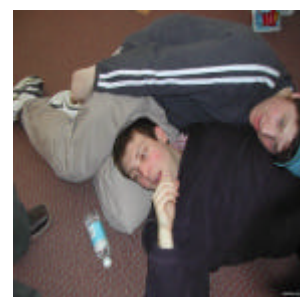
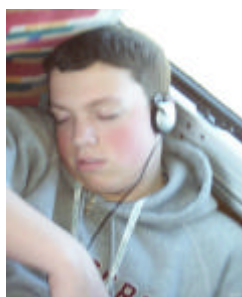
The portion begins by telling us that Moshe gathered the nation and told them "Six days work may be done and the seventh day shall be holy...you shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day" (Exodus 35:2-3). Only then does he continue with the directives that pertain to the completion of the Mishkan. The

strange combination of the laws of Shabbat in the midst of the instructions about building the sanctuary is confusing. Our sages explain that Moshe was informing the Jewish people that despite the Mishkan's importance, building it does not pre-empt the Shabbat. Indeed, there, must be no work on Shabbat regardless of its impact on the progress of the Mishkan.

However, why the seemingly disconnected verses? Why didn't the Torah tell us of Shabbat's requirements in a straightforward way, by openly directing the nation "You shall

not construct the Mishkan on the Sabbath"? Why the side by side, Shabbat as a separate unit leaving us to figure out its overriding power through Scriptural mixture? In fact, the words "you shall not kindle fire in any of our dwellings on the Sabbath" (Exodus 35:2-3) make the commandment seem totally irrelevant to the Mishkan per se and applicable instead only to every individual homemaker. If so, the command is out of place. Yet, regardless of its relation to the laws of daily life, Shabbat plays a greater role in comparison with the Mishkan. What is it?

USY! See what all the fun is about!



SATO 2003: Formal Ball

By: Eva Zucker

What is surely one of the coolest and most exciting parts of USY? It's SATO of course! What else could it be? Performing Social Action deeds and raising money for Tikun Olam has always been a fun-filled occasion at an ECRUSY event. Whether we're seeing someone eat an entire bowl of mayonnaise, witnessing the executive board members receive pies in their faces, or laughing at the sight of our "male" ECRUSYers showing off their feminine side by wearing the appropriate clothing and cosmetics SATO fundraisers are always a memorable experience for everyone.

As a co-chair for this year's Formal Ball, I decided to make an extra effort to implement as many SATO fundraisers into the event as possible. I mean, why not? Formal Ball could not be a more perfect event for ECRUSY to bring Social Action awareness to the region, as well as raise money for Tikun Olam. As a result, I worked with Elise our Regional SATO VP to bring about four separate SATO components to Formal Ball, all of which will surely make the night complete.

The centrepieces of each table will be comprised of a party bag with balloons, which will be filled with non-perishable food items. Each Formal Ball

attendee has been asked to bring at least one food item to fill up the bags. This food will then be donated to a local food drive. This is an easy way to make a difference in our local communities. It may not be a big deal for us to donate a single food item, but we must realize that every contribution makes a big difference.

Now, for the three Tikun Olam fundraisers!! The first fundraiser the ECRUSYers will encounter at Formal Ball will be the Tikun Olam raffle. By entering this raffle, you have the chance to win some AWESOME prizes.... including Raptor tickets!! All the proceeds from this raffle obviously go to Tikun Olam.

The second fundraiser is the one and only.... "Swing Dance for SATO"! This fundraiser will be so much fun and will really add some spunk into raising money for Tikun Olam. Basically, this is a swing-dancing contest where all you need to do is grab a partner and show the judges your stuff. Each pair will pay \$5 to enter and receive a number on their backs. After 10 minutes of dancing, the judges will pick the top three pairs to compete in the ultimate swing dance showdown. Each of these three pairs will be given 30 seconds to show off their best moves for the judges and audience. The pair who receives

the loudest ovation from the audience will win free cameras!

The third and final fundraiser will be ECRUSY's SLAM DUNK CONTEST!!!! To go along with the "Sports Extravaganza" theme, an entertaining contest that everyone will get a kick out of has been planned. The participants are given two opportunities to show off their slam-dunk skills. This contest will happen in the middle of the dance floor for all the Formal Ball attendees to witness and enjoy. The judges of the competition will award the winner with a special prize. The cost is \$2 and goes to Tikun Olam.

Well, there you have it! Tones of SATO stuff, eh? But who ever said there was anything wrong with too much SATO? I sincerely hope each and every one of you realizes the mitzvah you will be making by taking part in these SATO fundraisers. I hope you all enjoy these fundraisers planned for Formal Ball because you will not only be satisfying yourself, but you will be making a difference in the community, as well as throughout the world.

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***KOCH'S KORNER!!!! This month...
Old School Tamara!!!!!!***

*Tamara has tried to
hide her past from
us all. But we here
at the Tabloid have
uncovered her se-
cret. Ladies and
gentleman, we
bring you the real
Tamara
Kochberg...*



Absurdity of "Zionism is Racism" (cont. from pg. 6)

return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel, advocated, from its inception, tangible as well as spiritual aims".

So where am I going with this? Zionism, despite the misinformation and selective omission floating throughout the media and political scene today, is something that we should all be proud of. Through the dreams and achievements of such great Zionists as Theodore Herzl and David Ben-Gurion, sovereignty in the Land of Israel, advocated, from its inception, tangible as well as

spiritual aims".

So where am I going with this? Zionism, despite the misinformation and selective omission floating throughout the media and political scene today, is something that we should all be proud of. Through the dreams and achievements of such great Zionists as Theodore Herzl and David Ben-Gurion, we realize that the State of Israel, our beloved State of Israel, is more than a country. Israel is more than a landmass within drawn borders. Israel is more than a machine of polity and policy. Rather, Israel is an idea. No, Israel is more than an

idea; it is an emotion, a feeling. For those who have not even felt the ground of Israel, yet bear a true and authentic love for the Jewish homeland; it is this feeling of Israel that is present and alive.

Victor Hugo once said "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come". Beyond Israel's military power, and beyond all military power working against Israel, the *idea* Israel, the *feeling* of Israel that rests in us all, is what we hold in our hearts.