

ISRAEL SHELANU ישראלי שלנו

This newsletter is a nonpolitical, informational and educational publication. Informing about news that does not always make the US headlines. We aim to educate about institutions, constitutions, organizations, history and other small things that makes Israel, Israel Shelanu - Our Israel.

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A word from the Editor

דבר העורך

Israel Shelanu was a newsletter that was published for the members of Shaare Tefilla between 1997 and 2003. Many people have asked about the newsletter and since the need to inform and educate about Israel Shelanu – our Israel still remains, we are back.

We will publish bi-weekly for the remainder of 2007 but the goal is to become a weekly newsletter by January 2008.

Your constructive input is important as we finalize the format. If you have ideas, suggestions or have an interest in being part of the Israel Shelanu team please e-mail the editor, Mickie Sallmander, at IsraelShelanu@sbcglobal.net.

News

חדשות

Take me out to the ballgame. The first professional baseball game in the history of Israel took place on June 24 in front of 3,112 fans in Petach Tikva. The traditional singing of the Star Spangled Banner was replaced by Hatikva. Mincha minyanim abounded during the game and at least one Maariv minyan took place beyond the left field fence immediately after the game. Even the jerseys had their own unique touch. In addition to being in Hebrew, the official league jerseys have the logo of the Jewish National Fund adorning the sleeves. The six league teams are the Tel Aviv Lightning, Netanya Tigers, Bet Shemesh Blue Sox, Petach Tikva Pioneers, Modi'in Miracle, and Ra'anana Express. The league has an eight-week, 45-game season. There are 120 players from nine countries: the United States (77), the Dominican Republic (16), Israel (15), Canada (9), Australia (7), Colombia, Japan, New Zealand, and Ukraine. Those selected were current and former U.S. minor leaguers, professional baseball players from other countries, and starting college players. The quality of play is similar to low Class A ball in the United States.

(Israel Highway)

Nefesh B'Nefesh, an organization dedicated to revitalizing aliyah from North America and the UK, brought its final summer flight to Israel on September 4th, carrying the last 215 new immigrants to Israel on 15 aliyah flights over the last few months. This season, the organization helped over 2,200 people make aliyah - including almost 400 singles, 265 families with approximately 600 children, and 115 people who joined the IDF.

(Israel line)

More news on page 2...

Did you know?

הידעת?

Israel's Currency

When the Fathers of the Modern State of Israel were engaged in establishing the new state, one of the matters they had to deal with was its currency. As the name of the new state had not been decided, the question arose as to what would be printed on the banknotes.

The banknotes could not be printed in Israel as the British Mandate had not yet expired, as well as lack of the required technical expertise. When the banknotes were ordered from the American Banknote Company of New York, no one yet knew what the name of the new state would be, let alone its currency. It was therefore decided to print "Palestine Pound" on the notes, the currency of the mandate.

In June 1952 the name of the currency was changed to the "Israeli Pound" (1 Israeli Pound = 1,000 Prutah). There were a total of four different series of the Israeli Pound.

On June 4, 1969 the Knesset passed a law providing for the Sheqel to become the currency of Israel at a date to be determined. In May 1978 Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Finance Minister Simcha Erlich approved a proposal to introduce a series of Sheqel banknotes identical to the Israeli pound notes except for the denominations, which were to be determined by dropping one zero from the denominations of the pound series.

The preparations were conducted in complete secrecy over a period of more than two years. On February 22, 1980 the Sheqel was declared legal tender, and the first notes went into circulation on February 24, 1980. The Prutah was replaced by the Agora

Initially there were four denominations (1,5, 10 and 50 Sheqalim), but as inflation accelerated, another five were added between 1981 and 1985 - 100, 500, 1,000, 5,000 and 10,000 Sheqalim.

On September 4, 1985 the new Sheqel, equal to 1,000 old Sheqalim, became the currency of Israel. The dropping of three zeros from the old Sheqel denominations was intended to simplify money calculations and to facilitate cash payments and financial recording.

On January 3, 1999, the second series of the New Israel Sheqel was put into circulation providing improved security features against forgery.

Israel still has no mint. Banknotes are imported by air, and coins by sea.

Source: Bank of Israel



Insights about the Land of Israel through the eyes of the Torah and Sages throughout Jewish History.

We read this week in Parashat Vezot haBeracha of the passing of Moshe, who even in death so greatly desired to enter the Promised Land. The Talmud asks:

R. Simlai expounded: Why did Moshe our teacher yearn to enter the Land of Israel? Did he want to eat of its fruits or satisfy himself from its bounty? Rather, Moshe said, 'Many mitzvot were commanded to the Children of Israel which can only be fulfilled in the Land of Israel. I wish to enter the land so that they may all be fulfilled by me'

Sotah 14a

...And speak of them

וזכרתם בם

Facts about the modern State of Israel that you can share with your children.

If you teach your children 2 facts a week about Israel for the next 120 years, they will know 12,480 facts about Israel.

Israel's first Prime Minister was David Ben-Gurion.
Israel's first female Prime Minister was Golda Meir.



A good laugh

שמח ומבדח

A friend was in front of me coming out of the Synagogue one day, and as always the rabbi was standing at the door shaking hands as the congregation departed.

He grabbed my friend by the hand and pulled him aside.

The rabbi said to him, "You need to join the Army of God!"

My friend replied, "I'm already in the Army of God, Rabbi."

Rabbi questioned, "How come I don't see you except for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur?"

He whispered back, "I'm in the secret service."



At the International Koran exhibition hosted in Tehran during Ramadan, U.S. and Israeli flags were placed on the floor at the entryway, forcing visitors to walk on them as they entered - symbolically trampling Iran's enemies (Ynet).

Syrian news agency SANA proudly reported last week that The International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear watchdog, elected Syria as deputy chairman of its General Conference. "This move shows how little these types of international frameworks can really do when some of the main players are also the main violators of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," said Prof. Gerald Steinberg of Bar-Ilan University. (JPost)

Israeli chess player Boris Gelfand tied former chess world champion Vladimir Kramnik of Russia for second place in the world chess championship in Mexico.

The Israeli chess master was ranked seventh in the world at the beginning of the competition which made his accomplishment at the competition all the more remarkable. Gelfand received \$250,000. Boris Gelfand was born in the city of Minsk in Belarus. He taught himself how to play chess at the young age of five. He and his family made aliyah nine years ago. (Ynet)

A senior Hamas official in Gaza, turned down a request by the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit Israel Defense Forces soldier Gilad Shalit, who was captured in a cross-border raid in June 2006. The request was made by the director-general of the Red Cross, Angelo Gnaedinger, during a visit to Gaza. (Ha'aretz)

A national hero in the making. Shahar Pe'er became the first Israeli woman tennis player to reach the US Open quarterfinals. She defeated Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland, 6-4, 6-1, before a capacity crowd at Flushing Meadow, New York. She lost her quarterfinal match but throughout the tournament Pe'er received great support with Israeli flags peppering the stands and shouts of encouragement in Hebrew.

August saw a record demand for workers, with an 18% rise in the number of available salaried positions. Demand was especially high in the fields of management, office administration, and manufacturing. (JPost)

Israel sent a group of 52 graduates of the firefighters' officers course to help Greece battle the raging fires that crippled the country back in August. The dedicated actions of the Israeli firefighters succeeded in saving one of the villages together with some of the surrounding forest. In an emotional encounter, the villagers expressed their gratitude to their Israeli rescuers. Greek newspapers, government ministers and normal citizens praised Israel's readiness to lend a helping hand in Greece's hour of need, and Olympic Airlines offered to fly the group for free. (MoFA)

