

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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News

חדשות

Shabbat Start/End Jerusalem: 4:44 / 6:03 Tel Aviv: 5:05 / 6:04

Long live the people of Israel

The average lifespan of Israeli men is among the highest in developed countries, according to an annual Taub Center for Social Policy Studies. Men in Israel live an average of 78 years. Only five other countries have longer life spans than Israeli males. Even though Israeli women place lower than Israeli men, they live longer, with an average lifespan of 82.4 years. The most prevalent causes of death in Israel are heart and blood vessel diseases, which were responsible for 30 percent of all deaths (in 2003), and cancer, at 25 percent. (Haaretz)

Long live the bananas of Israel

Israel's Rahan Meristem biotechnology company has developed bananas that can defend themselves. The banana plants are completely resistant to pathogenic nematodes, which are parasitic organisms that normally damage the plants and their fruit. (Arutz Sheva)

No headline needed

In the first five weeks of 2008, Gazans had fired 330 rockets at Israel, one-third of what they had fired in all of 2007. (JP)

Konnichiwa Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv celebrated the opening of its 100th sushi restaurant, and thus became the third largest sushi market in the world (in per capita terms) behind New York and Tokyo. Approximately 20% of said restaurants are kosher. Tel Aviv isn't alone: new sushi restaurants can be seen sprouting up everywhere around Israel, from the Golan Heights to Eilat.. (Israelplug)

Tony Soprano is now an Israeli psychologist

HBO has decided to order 40 new episodes of the series "Treatment," based on the critically-acclaimed Israeli television series "Betipul." The series portrays a psychologist who treats patients at his clinic five days a week and then seeks psychological treatment for himself. The original Israeli series was aired on the Israeli HOT cable network and starred actor Assi Dayan. HBO will cast actor Gabriel Byrne (The Usual Suspects) in the leading role as the psychologist. The 45 episodes will be the same number of episodes originally aired in Israel. (Haaretz)



Did you know?

הידעת?

Music to the Ears

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra

Since its inception in 1936, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (originally named the Palestine Orchestra) has been dedicated to presenting the world's greatest music to audiences in Israel and the world. Founded by the outstanding Polish violinist, Bronislaw Huberman, the IPO represents the culmination of his dream "to unite the desire of the country for an orchestra with the desire of the Jewish musicians for a country." Huberman spent countless hours arranging for first-chair musicians of Eastern European and German orchestras, who had lost their jobs as a result of Nazism, to migrate to Palestine. In doing so, Huberman created an "orchestra of soloists" that under the esteemed leadership of Maestro Zubin Mehta, Music Director for Life, continues to provide vital inspiration to the people of Israel.



From the outset, world-renowned soloists and conductors have performed with the IPO. Its inaugural concert was played under the baton of Arturo Toscanini who felt his participation was a means to demonstrate his opposition to Fascism. Since that time, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra has enjoyed associations with such renowned artists as Leonard Bernstein, Laureate Conductor of the IPO, and Kurt Masur, Honorary Guest Conductor of the IPO. Other celebrated artists to perform with the Orchestra are Itzhak Perlman, Arthur Rubinstein, Gil Shaham, Isaac Stern, Pinchus Zukerman and many others.

The IPO frequently travels throughout the world. The goodwill created by these tours, which have included historic visits to Japan, Argentina, Poland, Hungary, Russia, China and India, is of enormous value to the State of Israel. As a result, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra maintains its position at the forefront of cultural diplomacy and the international music scene.

Source: American Friends of the IPO



Olives & the Mount, History & Irony - הסטורים ואירוניה

Rav Benjy Myers

This week's Parasha begins with the command to prepare and bring the purest of olive oil for use in the Menora. Rashi teaches us that only the first drop squeezed from each olive could be used for this purpose, and the rest of the oil could be used as part of the meal offerings brought in the Mishkan - the Tabernacle. This is ironic in that in everyday life, we would normally use the best oil in our food preparation, and the lesser oil for lighting. This is not so in the Mishkan, where spiritual illumination was of greater significance than physical sustenance.

Olives are one of the seven species with which the Land of Israel is blessed, and possibly the most famous olive place in Israel is the Mount of Olives.

This mountain is also known throughout the Midrash and Talmud as הר המשחה, the Mount of Anointing. It is here that oil used for anointing kings was prepared, and it is here that the Red Heifer was slaughtered and its ashes prepared to be sprinkled over those who have become ritually impure through contact with the dead. This too is ironic, as the Mount of Olives is now best known as a cemetery containing approximately 150,000 graves.

The Mount of Olives also plays a significant role in the Messianic era. Zechariah prophesied that "the Mount of Olives shall be split along the middle of it by a very great valley from east to west... And on that day, living waters will go forth from Jerusalem... And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: on that day the Lord will be One and His Name One" (Zechariah 14:4-9).

Our tradition states that it is through this newly created valley and on through the sealed Gates of Mercy that the Mashiach will enter the Old City of Jerusalem, rebuild the Temple and gather the exiles back to their eternal homeland.

...And speak of them

...וזכרתם בם

If you teach your children 2 facts a week for the next 120 years they will know 12.480 facts about Israel.

- Israel produces 93% of its own food requirements.
- About 5% of the population are members of rural cooperative settlements - the kibbutz and the moshav.

A good laugh

שמח ומבדח

Actual personals which appeared in Israeli papers:

- Worried about in-law meddling? I'm an orphan!
- Jewish Princess, 28, seeks successful businessman of any major Jewish denomination: hundreds, fifties, twenties.
- Divorced Jewish man, seeks partner to attend shule with, light Shabbos candles, celebrate holidays, build Sukkah together, attend brisses, bar mitzvahs. Religion not important.
- Female graduate student, studying kaballah, Zohar, exorcism of dybbuks, seeks mensch. No weirdos, please.

**Who said anything about a recession?**

There's no sign of an economic recession for 2008, the Bank of Israel announced last week. Data point to a growth rate of 3.6-4.4% for the Israeli economy this year, more than forecasted for most developed countries. In addition, exports to the U.S. have experienced no negative impact as yet.

Ze'ev is the man

The most commemorated historical figure in Israel is Ze'ev Jabotinsky, founder and leader of the Irgun and Revisionist Zionism. According to data collected by the Mapa geographical database, 57 sites (including streets, squares and parks) in the country are named after Jabotinsky. Herzl, the founder of Zionism, lags behind, with only 52 sites across Israel named after him. Among the 20 most commemorated figures in Israel, there is only one woman, paratrooper Hannah Szenes, who gave her name to 38 Israeli sites. What about Golda Meir? The woman who has a Manhattan junction bearing her name is only commemorated in 12 streets in Israel. (Ynet)

Google that

Google co-founder Sergey Brin has accepted President Shimon Peres' invitation to attend a conference he is organizing in Israel this coming May. Hundreds of statesmen, businessmen, artists and physicians from all over the world are expected to take part in the conference, which will focus on "how Israel and the Jewish mind can contribute in the medical, scientific and ecological fields". Brin, a 35-year-old Russian-born American Jew, is considered one of the richest people in world, with an estimated fortune of \$18.5 billion. (Ynet)

Move over Las Vegas

Tourism Ministry officials have recently closed a deal with the Israel Land Administration to apportion 12 acres of land on Eilat's northern shore for Israel's first legal casino. Hotels, commercial trading centers and other tourism venues are expected to be established in the area. An important goal is promoting tourism in Eilat, which is losing tourists to neighboring cities like Aqaba, Taba and Sharm el-Sheikh, which have casinos. The estimated scope of illegal gambling in Israel stands at over \$3.6 billion per year. (Ynet)

You shall not steal

eBay and its subsidiary PayPal has purchased Israeli online risk tools startup Fraud Sciences for \$169 million. The small privately owned company, has developed verification technology for securing commercial transactions on the Internet. Fraud Sciences' technology is designed to uncover fraudulent credit card purchases by verifying that the customer making the purchase is in fact the cardholder. It uses a technique, known as 'identity proofing', which builds on the behavioral practices already used by many online retailers to detect fraud. (Israel21c)

Oscar nomination

Israeli film Beaufort has received an Oscar nomination for best Foreign Language Film. The passionate and moving film, which tells the story of a unit of soldiers caught up in the Lebanon war, is the first Israeli movie in 20 years to win a nomination. (Israel21c)