



WRITE-ON
FOR ISRAEL
cleveland

Scrapbook

2008 - 2010

Our two-year journey of Israel advocacy



Learning both narratives

Tasting Israeli culture

Forging friendships

Learning to be advocates for Israel

About Write On for Israel

by Ariel Frankel

Through the Write On for Israel (WOFI) program we learned to not just defend Israel, but to be on the offensive and reveal Israel's significance in the world today by especially advocating to impressionable college students.

High-school juniors interested in advocating for Israel, specifically through a journalistic approach, applied to WOFI last year. Once the group was selected, the members met one Sunday every month, 10-5, in order to be versed on Israel's history, participate in mock debates, listen to famous speakers who were both pro- and anti-Israel, and write articles of advocacy.

In the summer between junior and senior year we went to Israel where we could finally experience the place we had been studying.

We returned to the U.S. better armed to advocate for Israel as we now all had personal experiences in the country. During our senior year we divided into groups where we each developed advocacy projects through

different approaches such as creating a movie, writing this magazine, and experiencing "A Night in Tel Aviv" at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

While working on these projects, we practiced the techniques we were taught in WOFI and spread our message about Israel. It is vital that we be able to present the pro-Israel point of view and bolster it with facts.

Though we are not blind to her flaws, we now understand the significance of Israel in our lives. Thanks to WOFI, as high school students soon to be heading off to college, we are now armed, ready, and excited to support our Jewish homeland.

Presenting the
pro-Israel
point of view
and bolstering
it with facts.



The 2008-2010 Write On for Israel Fellows

Jeremy Borison	Fuchs Mizrahi School
Greg Caplin	Hudson High School
Brienne Einstein	Shaker Heights High School
Josh Farkas	University School
Ariel Frankel	Hathaway Brown School
Emily Gross-Rosenblatt	Shaker Heights High School
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Esther Nehrer	Fuchs Mizrahi School
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www.writeonforisraelcleveland.org

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administered through @Akiva.

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CLEVELAND
Jewish News

Join Write On for Israel 2011. Open to all Jewish high school juniors.
Details on how to apply at www.writeonforisraelcleveland.com, or watch the CJN.

Getting a taste for advocacy and falafel in Israel

by Arielle Stambler

Last June, 20 high-school juniors, all participants in Write On for Israel, sponsored by The AVI CHAI Foundation and the Cleveland Jewish News, left Cleveland and flew across the Atlantic, the European continent, and the Middle East to Israel. While all but three had been to the Jewish state before, the trip was a unique experience for everyone in the group.

We toured the country from top to bottom, visiting everywhere from small, tight-knit Beit She'an, Cleveland's Partnership 2000 city, to the urban metropolis of Tel Aviv to the holiest sites of the Old City of Jerusalem. We even saw all of Israel's borders with five Israeli Defense Forces soldiers who talked with us about

everything from what army life was like to what music they listened to on their iPods.

We saw a different side of Israel as we visited Sderot, an Israeli town near the Gaza border, and talked to Laura Bialis, a resident filmmaker who described what life was like being under constant attack. We learned more about journalism and Israel's place in the Middle East talking to David Horovitz, the editor of The Jerusalem Post. The Write On for Israel trip allowed us to see Israel in a way none of us had ever seen it before, and we all walked away from the trip passionate about the country and determined to support it and be advocates for it.



Welcome to Israel from Ami: bus driver, tour guide and ambassador

by Rebecca Sebo

Ami, our Write On for Israel bus driver this summer, was the most dedicated bus driver I could ever imagine.

The job description he devised does not just include driving a vehicle full of young people, but entertaining them and showing them his land, Israel. Ami displayed character, enthusiasm, and kindness to all the WOFI fellows and staff. When the Fellows fell asleep, he threatened to sing to wake us up. Often, he did.

Sometimes he even acted as tour guide and explained to us the history of his favorite sites. When not on the bus, Ami quizzed us on Israeli facts, taught us Hebrew, and made us laugh. His character displays the fun and carefree lifestyle of Israel. Ami's personality was light and caring. He added another aspect to the trip. We were able to see a true Israeli's passion for his country.



Bus driver Ami serves up a cup of coffee he made on the road.

One IDF soldier's story

by Rebecca Siegel

Yet another day of advocacy and learning started when four soldiers in uniform boarded our bus.

I watched them all awkwardly take seats with us, seeming as nervous as we were about meeting new people. One took a seat beside me. I waved because I was unsure how good his English was.

His response was a clear, fluent "hello." What? An Israeli soldier speaking fluent English?

He introduced himself as, "Yoni, short for Jonathan." Once again, I was confused. How is Yoni short for Jonathan? His father is Israeli, and his mother is American. Therefore, to satisfy both parents, he had an American name and an Israeli nickname.

Although Yoni is a paratrooper in the IDF, he was born in America. When he was young, he lived with his parents, older brother, and older sister in New York. He recalls his mother being concerned about his siblings' safety, especially trick-or-treating on Halloween.

From New York, Yoni and his family moved to Texas and then Israel. Yoni attended high school in Ra'anana, Israel, where he enjoyed surfing

after (or sometimes during) class and hanging out with friends.

Yoni's conflicting identities and loyalties – American and Israeli – came into play during Operation Cast Lead (the Dec. 2008 Gaza conflict). His maternal grandmother still lives in Florida (as he joked, "Isn't that where all grandparents live?"), and she was undergoing heart surgery. Yoni requested leave from his unit in the military to visit her for a week in Miami.

This turned out to be horrible timing, for while he was visiting his grandmother, Operation Cast Lead began in Israel. Because Yoni was away from his unit at the time, there was no way of anyone informing him of the mission. When he finally learned of the events back home, he made immediate plans to fly back to Israel.

His fellow soldiers were surprised and flattered that he would make the effort to support them.

In some ways, Yoni is no different from an average American 21-year-old, except that he's in the military instead of college. (He plans on attending college afterward.) He knows how to let loose and have fun, just like us. He named his gun Zoe, and he recognized the music on my iPod.

When Yoni and the other soldiers walked onto the bus, I made the mistake of not seeing them as people, but as foreigners. By conversing with them, I learned so much more about Israelis and their stories.



WOFI Fellows hang out with Yoni Nissanov, an American-born IDF soldier.



IDF soldier Matt Wantman visits a war memorial.

A new view of the army

by Arielle Stambler

While in Israel, I met Shaun Hoffman, an Israeli Defense Forces soldier from Canada in his early twenties. He told everyone on our bus how he had always wanted to integrate into Israeli society, and he believed that the quickest way to do so was to join the army.

He joined us on the bus and toured with us for several days. I learned



Shaun Hoffman, a Canadian-Israeli soldier who traveled with us.

that he was a real person with a family, musical interests, and aspirations outside of being a soldier.

Our group asked him everything we could think of, from what army life was like to what was on his iPod. Meeting him helped me put a name and face to the Israeli army. I no longer see it (or any

other army, for that matter) as an amorphous, inanimate blob. When I hear about Israel on the news, I think about the people who are defending it and the fact that they are, in fact, people.

Shaun represents the thousands of young people who join the Israeli Defense Forces (either by choice or by law) because they want to protect a country they care deeply about. Serving in an army to protect a country you love shows the utmost devotion to that country's people, culture, landscape – everything about it. And now because I know someone in the Israeli army, I care even more profoundly about Israel's future and safety. Shaun is a perfect example of how much Israelis care about their land and culture and how strongly they want to protect it.

I know
someone in the
Israeli army.

Keeping Israel safe: Security threats explained

by Oren Wolpert

We heard many political experts and journalists who analyzed and scrutinized Israel's current position on global affairs. The expert who left me with the greatest understanding of Israel's current dangers was Sheldon Shuman. Shuman was aware of and unafraid to identify all the possible threats to Israel's security, as well as offering legitimate and reasonable methods by which Israel can prevent serious dangers.

Shuman's outlook on Israel's foreign affairs may seem pessimistic, yet his views are based on well-grounded research and decades of experience. In response to the dangers of Iran, Shuman cited the significant majority of oil in Iranian territory, which discourages other foreign countries from preventing Iran's planned nuclear program.

He also recalled the 1979 war between Iran and Iraq in which thousands of Iranian teenagers were marched, unarmed, into Iraqi mine-

fields to detonate the mines and clear the battle theater. This cruel act displays the difficulties of negotiating with a villainous tyranny.

Although the message Shuman delivered was dire and all the more frightening due to its relevance, he identified the problems and suggested ways to combat them. After the atrocities committed against the Jews in the Second World War with our people being marched into gas chambers, it is utterly sickening to Shuman that his children live in a time and place where they have gas masks under the beds as a precautionary measure against terrorism.

Shuman's message was that never again should our people have to be subjected to such acts of hatred and lack of humanity from a neighboring country.

More than just camels and sand dunes?

by Gadi Yungster

When people think of Israel, they simply picture a big open desert with a bunch of sand and a few camels. What people don't know is that Israel is home to a number of high-tech industries and very urban lifestyles.

Take Tel Aviv for example.

Tel Aviv has just about everything that someone might want in a city. It is much like many of the cities we have in the U.S., such as Miami or Los Angeles. Tel Aviv is located along the Mediterranean Sea and has wonderful beaches. The city is full of skyscrapers and very modern buildings like we see in the U.S. Tel Aviv is a very young city with a very young community, which is why the city is so vibrant.

There are dozens of nightclubs that are very popular among the people living in Tel Aviv. The people are friendly and very happy to help

you find your way around, especially if you get lost, as I personally experienced when I had to do a scavenger hunt throughout the entire city.

The music in Tel Aviv is also fantastic. There are concerts happening all the time, and we went to a nightclub to hear one.

Tel Aviv is
lively, fun and
modern.

Meeting the band after their concert.



Checking clues for a scavenger hunt was a way to see the real Tel Aviv.



Tractor's Revenge concert in Tel Aviv has WOFI members rocking out.

Nightclubs, theater and art museums

by Brienne Einstein

After visiting Tel Aviv, I discovered the hidden side of Israel that is not covered by major news reporters.

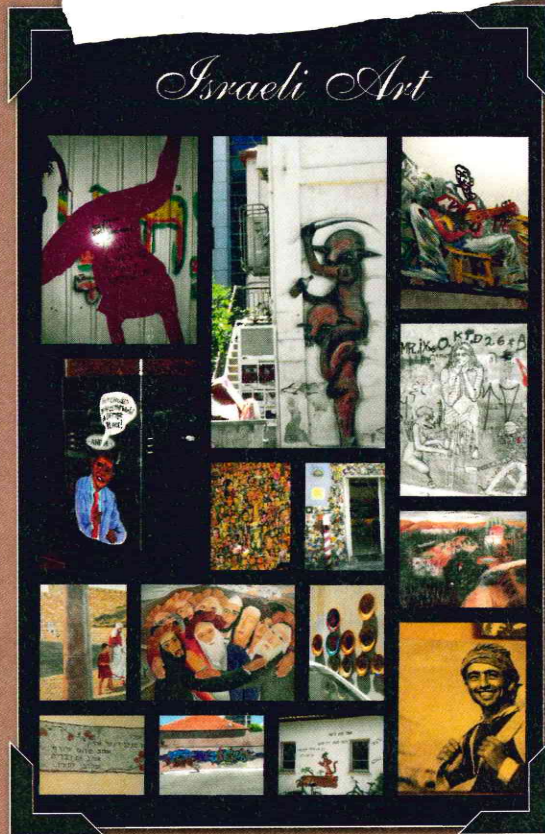
I attended a theatrical play the first night in Tel Aviv, which showcased Israel's passion for the arts. I also attended an Israeli rock concert in a trendy nightclub – a night I will never forget. Finally, being on the streets of Tel Aviv and completely lost, I was able to find my way by asking so many different, yet always considerate, individuals to get to my destination.

The people living in Israel add so much to the atmosphere there. The reason why there are so many different activities to do on a given night, so many museums to view, and so many restaurants and shops to enjoy, is due to the culture and enthusiasm that Israelis bring. For instance: an organic kibbutz. Kibbutzim in general are native and unique to Israel and make up part of Israel's fascinating culture. Being able to go not only to a kibbutz, but one that exports organic crops all over the world, was a very neat experience.

Israel is so tolerant of other cultures, races, and religions and tries to always associate itself with the word equality. Israel gives its women more rights than any other Middle Eastern country. It promotes gay rights and has an annual gay pride parade in Tel Aviv each year.

Israel is a vibrant place to visit, study and live. How can you resist?

Poster created by WOFI poster committee.



Israel's high-tech achievements

by Morde Khaimov

A significant part of Israel's economy is based on technological advancements. Israel has created life-changing technologies. For example, some of Israel's technologies now run famous programs such as ICQ and AIM (internet communication networks). Others help manage Israel's limited water supply by allowing the country to conserve water and flourish at the same time (e.g. drip irrigation).

Israel is also a major religious center for religions such as Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and Druze. This religious diversity emphasizes that Israel is not a biased state and does not discriminate based on religion or anything else.

Furthermore, Israel is so accepting that it is the only country in the Middle East that provides full rights to its citizens. Israel is a country with freedom of speech, press, and elections. When I was in Israel, I met Arabs who were Israeli citizens and thus had the same rights as any other Israeli citizen in Israel. They explained to me how fortunate they were to live in Israel, for in other Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, they would not be granted the same rights of citizenship.

If Israel did not exist as it does today, then the world as we know it would be changed for the worse.

A border kibbutz seeks safe buildings

by Sarah Jaffe

Nachum Landow looks like a classic Israeli kibbutznik. When we met him, he was wearing sunglasses, a baggy short-sleeve button-down shirt, cargo shorts; and he spoke only Hebrew. He cannot be more than 45, but he has an aged, serious quality about him because of all he has to deal with in his day-to-day life. He has a head of gray hair, which serves as witness to the stress that comes with living in Kibbutz Sa'ad.

Nachum Landow made a documentary to describe some of the struggles that confront the people living in Kibbutz Sa'ad, a small kibbutz over 60 years old located near Sderot and Gaza.

Their main dilemma is whether they can cover up everything with concrete in hopes of securing the buildings from the frequent fire of Kassam rockets from nearby Gaza. The problem with that is it gives the

buildings a much more ominous look and is a constant reminder of the ever-present looming danger.

Something that

stood out in the movie was when one kibbutz member pointed out there will never be enough paint to cover the concrete. Of course, Israelis need to protect their homes, but it means a lot more than simply securing the buildings. No matter what happens, Israelis try to make life as normal as possible; otherwise they would never be able to get up in the morning and go about their lives.

While they debate over the gloomy reminder, the truth is no matter what the buildings look like, the danger is always on their minds.

For the children, the rocket attacks have a severe mental impact. Many children are suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome, and others are experiencing developmental delays in other ways. Landow's movie shows the constant conflict his fellow kibbutzniks experience and how they adapt their lives to these conditions.

The danger is always on their minds.



Concrete shelter to protect against incoming rockets in Kibbutz Sa'ad.

A filmmaker captures young musicians

by Jeremy Borison

My first impression of Laura Bialis was that of an American tourist visiting the Jewish homeland. I was proven right when I learned that she grew up in Los Angeles and had only recently moved to Israel.

Yet Bialis is unlike any other Israeli immigrant I have ever met. She is young, she came without family, and she moved to the dangerous city of Sderot to film a documentary about the terrors occurring there.

When Bialis first heard about Sderot, she was unnerved to find out that for the past eight years the Palestinians in Gaza have been firing Kassam rockets into the small city. No one had done anything to stop them. As she sat searching, unsuccessfully, for a news reports about the situation, she realized that she could not sit by and let this information go unnoticed. She, along with two friends, decided to document the lives of the people of Sderot.

As a documentary filmmaker who has detailed human rights stories in the past, Bialis learned about the city's history with rock music and its reputation for raising some of Israel's most famous rock bands. She contrasted the talent and inspiration of the young Sderot artists with the bomb shelters and the fear of rockets. To her amazement, Bialis found a great deal of optimism in the town. "I thought I might find anger and hate," she said. "What I discovered was ... incredible resilience, hope, and people who will do almost anything to support each other."

She followed teenagers who captured their suffering in songs and



Filmmaker Laura Bialis is working on a documentary about Sderot.

turned bomb shelters into rock clubs. She found amazing stories of flourishing bands and kids who simply wanted to express themselves through song during these harsh times.

Bialis soon decided to move to Sderot to finish her film "Rock in the Red Zone." She wrote a blog about the hectic four months enduring daily rocket attacks and made an impact on many people. Bialis's dedication has inspired me to help bring her film to Cleveland, and I cannot wait to view it.

An immigrant who doesn't fit in

by Maya Rosenblum

We met Kathy Rivkin, a film student, at Sapir College in Sderot, where she presented our group of Israel advocates with her video titled "Meltdown."

The film captured the life of a young Russian immigrant who longed for the days before she became an outcast upon immigrating to Israel.

In Russia, the character was a promising figure skater, but her opportunities were limited because she was Jewish. In Israel, her father could barely afford life's basic necessities, and there was nowhere to skate. It seemed obvious that the film was a reflection of the filmmaker's own experience. The music was depressing, as was the outcome of the story. Kathy sat uncomfortably, fidgeting with her necklace while watching her own production.

When asked what she could tell us, as advocates, Kathy replied, "The most important thing to understand is life is not black and white. Most lives are gray. I'm living here, I know exactly what's going on every day in the news, and I live the news. It's very hard for me to be

(an advocate for Israel)."

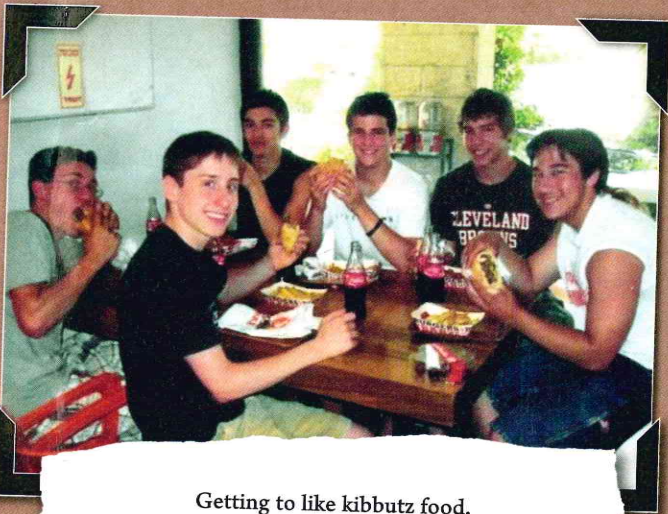
Immediately, the room understood Kathy's point of view and the video.

Kathy seemed bitter that she ever left Russia. Being an outcast from the moment she arrived, not understanding the language or culture in her new home, she never gave Israel a fair chance. It didn't seem to matter what country she landed in; she was a pessimist from the moment she arrived.

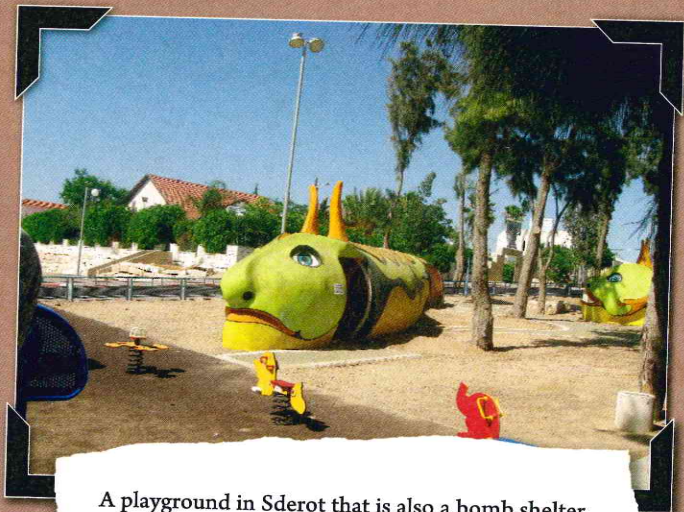
Yet she understood that Israel was a new country facing difficult challenges. "The things that happen here are not always ethical or nice ... but they are necessary," she claimed.

The biggest frustration for Kathy is the lack of identity she has as an immigrant. "I really hate that in this country, you don't have a separation between religion and state. My father is Jewish; my mother is not. This means that I am not (Jewish). When I went for my passport, they wrote three dots, so I am nothing, and this is how I feel."

The typical immigrant to Israel is a Jew who has finally found his place. Kathy feels let down by the fact that as a non-Jew in a Jewish state, she doesn't fit in.



Getting to like kibbutz food.



A playground in Sderot that is also a bomb shelter.

Unearthing the history of ancient Israel

Yuval Marcus's archaeological dig

by Eden Pecha

With dirt-caked hands and a weather-beaten army-green hat, Yuval Marcus greeted our group with an eager smile, wringing his hands and sprinkling the earthen floor with more dust. As we slumped into the benches, he enthusiastically held up crinkled historical pictures, attempting to infuse some energy into our sleep-deprived group. Shaking out our wind-ravaged hair and chugging down bottle after bottle of cool drinks, we turned our attention to the animated man in front of us.

Yuval began with the typical, oft-told history of ancient Israel, weaving in the modern day Arab-Israeli conflict and introducing new political and archaeological twists. However, Yuval conveyed to us more than just what the Torah says. He mixed his own personal passions and fascinations into the story, growing livelier and livelier as he continued.

Yuval explained that the reason we were at this archaeological site was to help The Israel Museum rescue Second Temple-period artifacts from the massive piles of dirt that had been dug out of Solomon's Stables by the Islamic Waqf. Once again, he held up his historical pictures; however, this time the pictures didn't seem like mere, distant collections of our Jewish history, but rather significant artifacts currently located in the very piles of dirt before us. That made these pictures very, very modern.

As we sifted through dirt and ran hoses over potential valuables, we began to sense the significance of our history through these seeming-

ly trivial artifacts. The stories of the Bible came to life as we held decaying coins used to barter for animal sacrifices, or pieces of animal bone, or shards of glass carefully blown during the Second Temple period. This was more than just a neat history gimmick. It tied each and every one of us to this land.

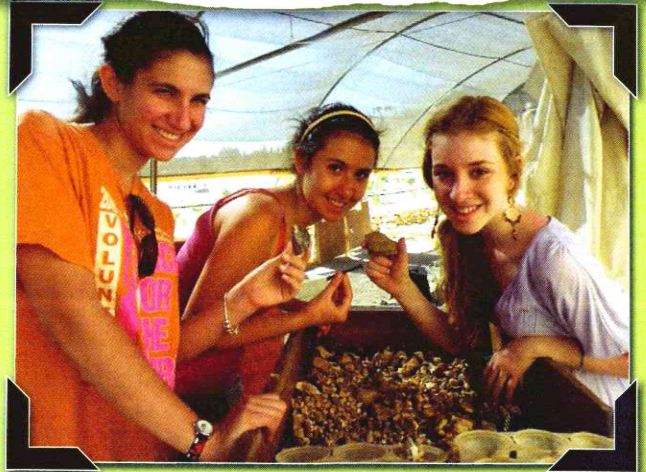
The entire WOFI trip was designed for modern-day advocacy. But you cannot understand any of its current issues or why Israel needs and deserves our help until you immerse yourself in the land's history.

Yuval devotes his life to unearthing this connection and educating other people about it.



Yuval Marcus

Searching for ancient artifacts at an archaeological dig.



Jerusalem: The swing from ancient to modern

by Peter Waxman

For people who have never visited Israel, it can be seen as only a historical, biblical, and religious country. People tend to miss the more modern attributes that Israel exhibits. Jerusalem has remained "The Old City" in the minds of many.

While Tel Aviv has remained the cool and hip capital of Israel, Jerusalem has begun to step up its game. Jerusalem has embarked upon embracing its inner hip-ness and has finally begun to attract tourists for not only its historical aspects, but for its modern attributes as well.

Jerusalem began its march into modernism back in 2005 with the construction of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum. The Museum is a futuristic-looking triangular tube that expands nearly 600 feet through

the Mount of Remembrance. The erection of this modern museum set the tone for more recent architecture all over Jerusalem. For example, the intricate Chords Bridge rises almost 400 feet above Western Jerusalem's main entry way.

Also, the renovation and expansion of The Israel Museum has been eagerly anticipated and will be revealed this July. James Snyder, director of the museum, said, "We will showcase the making of material culture from antiquity to contemporary times – for both the region and the world."

Jerusalem has begun to make a swing from antiquity to a more contemporary style without diminishing the beauty of "The Old City" that will always be preserved.

Teens on an urban kibbutz

by David Levin

A young Israeli named Aviv Kest made a massive impact on me while I was in Israel. He was one of the members of the urban Kibbutz Reut.

I was able to relate to him as any person my age. I also connected with him on the multiple instruments he plays and the music we both enjoy. These connections made his reasons for helping the kibbutz even more powerful to me.

He chose to help teach children in the kibbutz how to play instruments and to develop an appreciation for music. For Aviv, music was a way that he could help keep all the youth out of trouble and direct

them to make better choices. While we were talking, he played a sound bite that he and one of his friends had made. When I heard this, it made me think of a friend of mine who is also in a band and how much work goes into making a new song.

Aviv told me to look him up on Facebook. For me, this made the Israel trip more worthwhile because I knew that I had made a new friend and thereby developed an even greater connection to the land that my ancestors call home.

Teens in an Arab village

by Greg Caplin

The first thing I noticed this summer in Jisr az-Zarqa, an Arab-Israeli village on the Mediterranean Sea, was the poverty. As I left the trash-covered streets to enter the community center, I felt as if I had a giant bull's-eye painted on my face. Here we were, our Write On for Israel contingent, 20 middle class Jewish kids from Cleveland, trying to force conversation with 20 Muslim kids from this village.

Due to the unbearable heat, the girls from Cleveland wore short shorts and tank tops, while most of the girls from Jisr covered themselves from head to toe. We did not speak the same language or practice the same religion. We had nothing in common with these teens, nothing to talk about. Or so I thought.

We spoke English; they spoke Arabic. So, to bridge the communications gap, we all spoke in Hebrew. Our discussion cards suggested topics such as family, entertainment, and dating. We fumbled our way through this ice-breaker until one of the American girls mentioned that she enjoyed Harry Potter. Instantly, the faces of the Jisr kids lit up, and they began to buzz about the lives of Harry, Hermione, and Ron. I smiled.

Arab, Israeli, and American teens all spoke the seemingly universal language of Ha-Ree Pu-Ter!

It wasn't just Harry Potter that brought together these different people, some being sworn enemies. It was the need to enjoy oneself, the longing of human beings to search for the brighter side of life. In a world of "us" and "them," people forget to look at the "we." The world is not just Arabs and Israelis or Muslims and Jews. It is people, people who want nothing more than to work, have friends, or even read Harry Potter.

These are things that "we" share: a desire to live life. Although we have done terrible things to each other and may again in the future, we have much more in common than we imagine. Although our differences drive us apart, our similarities can give us strength. What we have in common can ultimately bring us together, while our differences should be celebrated.



A delicious dinner on the beach with our new friends.

Hanging out with teens from the Arab Village of Jisr a-Zarka.



The message was in the fun

by Rebecca Levinsky

On Saturday, Jan. 9, Write On for Israel organized an advocacy-based evening of food, music, art and friends for Cleveland-area teenagers. The event, "A Night in Tel Aviv," hoped to reveal to 250 teenagers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, the "cool, hip and modern" aspect of Israeli culture that has long been associated with the city of Tel Aviv.

Upon arrival, guests were greeted by Israeli music, courtesy of Amnon's iPod, and Israeli food, including delicious falafel from Jerusalem Grille. The exhibit on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, "Hugging and Wrestling," featured multimedia Israeli artwork. Groups of teenagers explored the exhibit, guided by a scavenger hunt survey.

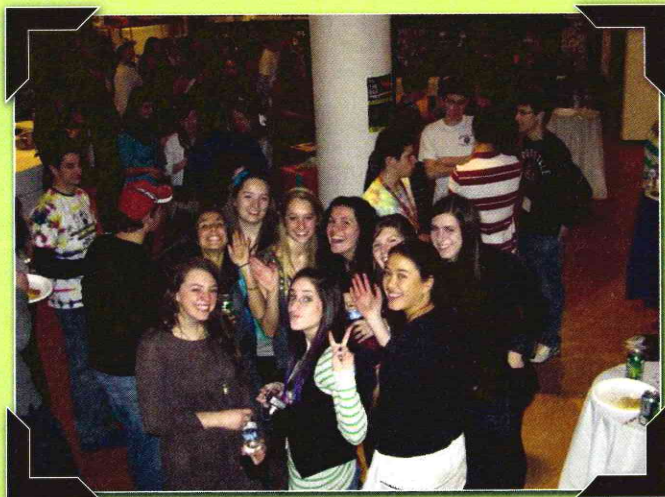
At 10 p.m., Nutbug Crossing, a band of Israeli musicians based in New York City, began to play. Although the dance floor was rather bare at times, the talented musicians entertained partygoers for two hours, up until the raffle drawing, where winners were drawn from the scavenger hunt forms.



"A Night in Tel Aviv" showed the community exactly what Write On for Israel is all about. Posters made from pictures from our trip as well as pamphlets of articles that we had written depicted the nuts and bolts of the program, but the real advertisement for the program was the fun of the event itself. "A Night in Tel Aviv" was an opportunity to experience Israeli culture at a fun venue with friends.

There was no discussion about politics and no talk about the current situation in Israel, but everyone who drove down to MOCA was able to enjoy what normal Israelis experience in Tel Aviv, with none of the tensions of a war-torn land.

Enjoying
"A Night in
Tel Aviv"
at MOCA.



With their own eyes

by Jeremy Borison

One of the ways we promoted our case for Israel and displayed our experiences in Write On for Israel was through video. I put together a four-minute video that was shown at WOFI's MOCA "A Night in Tel Aviv." The video was a blend of all the clips we had taken throughout our trip in Israel. WOFI fellows described the activities we experienced and the lessons and advocacy tools we learned about Israel. The video visualized not only our trip, but the purpose and meaning of Israel advocacy.

Videography is a great form of Israel advocacy because it is not simply a story that a speaker is sharing or facts that the listener must trust. It allows the audience to see what Israel is like with their own eyes and hear directly from the people whom we met. Hopefully, our video was able to inspire other students to learn more about Israel and join us in advocating for our homeland.

View the video at www.writeonforisraelcleveland.org.

Resonating with Israel through art

by Emily Gross-Rosenblatt

Maya Rosenblum and I created a lively and revealing poster exhibit. As artists ourselves, we used photography to display Israel's diversity and vibrancy. For the party, "A Night in Tel Aviv," we created nine posters utilizing photographs taken during our trip to Israel last summer – each is a collection of images focusing on a theme.

Visual presentations are an effective way to advocate for Israel. First, being in Israel is a rich and appealing experience, so seeing it in pictures imparts a positive feeling. Secondly, photographs convey an abundance of information in an easily accessible way. Viewers don't need to research; they learn a lot without much commitment of time.

Looking at our posters, observers are drawn to pictures that elicit a myriad of thoughts and emotions. Imagery often evokes ideas and feelings more vividly than narratives. We experience empathy when we see 18-year-olds in uniform defending their home. We are touched when we observe Jewish-American and Arab teens hanging out together as part of efforts toward peace. We experience joy and connection as we look at ourselves walking through Israel arm-in-arm. Hopefully, others also feel a resonance with Israel through our posters.

We still have more to learn about Israel

by Eden Pecha

Did you know that Israel has the highest ratio of university degrees to its population in the world? That Israel is ranked #2 in the world for venture capital funds, right behind the U.S.? Or that Israel is the only country in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees?

Many people, Jews included, don't know this. It's hard to advocate for Israel when all you have is bloodshed and rocket statistics backing you up.

In our second year, several Cleveland WOFI Fellows, like myself, recently took a trip to Washington, D.C., to attend the AIPAC Schusterman Advocacy Institute High School Summit. AIPAC, or the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, invited students from over 120 different schools across the country and helped them gain a better understanding of the best way to advocate not only for Israel, but for a positive Israeli-American relationship.

During the three-day seminar, we were educated on AIPAC's advocacy strategies. We were told: Never advocate for generalizations –

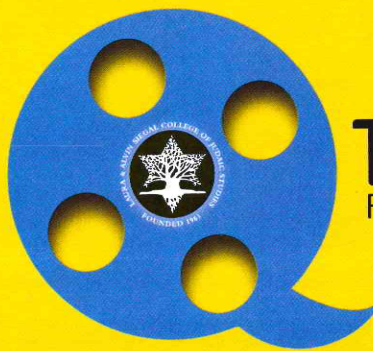
advocate for specific issues. Focus on American/Israel relations, not just things that benefit Israel. AIPAC's main focus is advocating to members of Congress, where issues that affect Israel are being discussed and voted on.

AIPAC also emphasized that many of the Middle Eastern conflicts have nothing to do with Israel. Iran's nuclear program, minority-led governments (Syria, Iraq), and multiple geopolitical conflicts are going on in the region right now. Yet Israel's actions are the ones thrust into the spotlight, while the actions of her neighbors are far more worrisome.

Many people know these truths, have the ability to incite change, but do nothing. Once armed with the truth, it's pertinent to spread it to others, especially in the nation's capitol.



WOFI at AIPAC in D.C.



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PURPLE LAWN

Wednesday, April 14, Noon

Location - Siegal College

LONE SAMARITAN

Thursday, April 15, 7:00 pm

Location - Green Road Synagogue

LONDON AT BEN YEHUDA

Friday, April 16, Noon

Location - Siegal College

YES, MISS COMMANDER!

Sunday, April 18, 1:30 pm

Location - Cleveland Museum of Art

ARAB LABOR

Monday, April 19, 7:30 pm (after ceremony)

Location - B'nai Jeshurun @Community Yom Ha'atzmaut Celebration

SAYED KASHUA - FOREVER SCARED

Tuesday, April 20, 6:30 pm

Location - Siegal College

THE WORST COMPANY IN THE WORLD

Wednesday, April 21, 6:00 pm

Location - Cleveland Hillel

MY FIRST WAR

Wednesday, April 21, 7:00 pm

Location - The Mandel Jewish Community Center of Cleveland

LOD DETOUR

Friday, April 23, Noon

Location - Siegal College

A MUSICAL MELAVE MALKAH & FILM:

THE WORST COMPANY IN THE WORLD

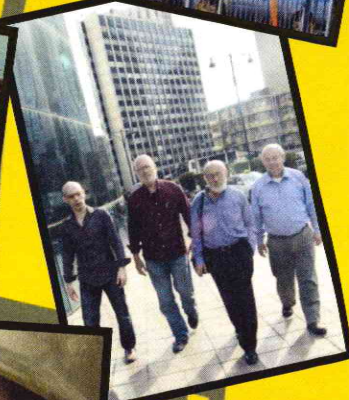
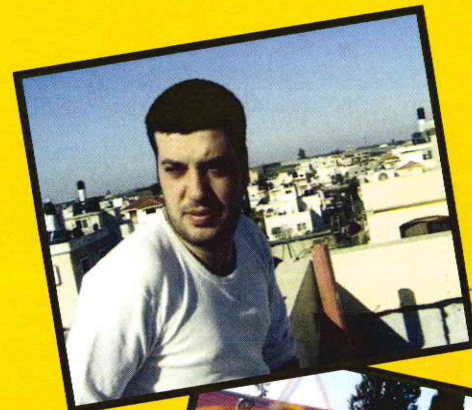
Saturday, April 24, 8:45 pm

Location - Siegal College

MY FAMILY PIZZA

Sunday, April 25, 4:00 pm

Location - The Temple Tifereth Israel



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CLEVELAND
Jewish News



Jewish
Community
Federation
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write on
for israel

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