



THE volunteer CONNECTION

Common Wisdom

Diligence and Preparing for War

The world press is continuously speculating about an active conflict between Israel and her adversaries starting later this year. This is entirely plausible.

Last summer, Israel side-stepped the war-of-attrition trap in Lebanon and chose the air campaign option. However, in doing so, it failed to achieve its main aims; the release of two kidnapped soldiers and destruction of Hezbollah's infrastructure. Moreover, the 4,000 rocket barrage on Israel in 2006 has emboldened militant regional actors.

Now, nine months later, Hezbollah is rearmed to the teeth with new anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. Syria has new Russian ground-to-air missiles, Iran has longer range rockets, and fortified secret tunnels are appearing with regularity. Thus the relatively small 2006 engagement may have set the stage for the next war.

So what can we do other than to wait and to watch this year's international tragedy unfold? We can prepare now. A number of VFI volunteers are motivated to volunteer specifically during time of active war threats.

Here are six specific things you can do to be prepared:

1. Check your passport. Is it current? Is it time to renew?
2. Get yourself in shape. Start a personal exercise program to get yourself ready for the hard work and long hours, in case it is required.
3. Take a first aid course.
4. Submit your complete paperwork to VFI without a departure date. VFI will hold your documents until you activate it with a phone call.
5. Review your will and health and life insurance policies, and take appropriate action, if necessary.
6. Help VFI to be ready. This might include your personal involvement as an Ambassador to recruit additional volunteers and/or financial support to help underwrite VFI's program expenses.

Even if war does not come this summer — all of these steps are worth taking and are good for you!

Some observe that in the Middle East the unexpected is expected. The manifold threats to Israel include Islamic Jihad militants, Syria, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Hamas, and now militant Iran. The threat from a massive deployment of well-entrenched longer range rockets is a strategic concern in Israel. Thus the flash point may come from national actors or surrogates following a script written in Iran.

Some say that diplomacy and not just force is necessary to confront the troublemakers. That may be true. But vigilance and preparation today will ensure the sweetness of life next year.

VFI The Movie

A 5-minute movie short titled *Volunteers for Israel*, emphasizes the values of volunteering and stars recent VFI volunteers. It can be seen at www.vfi-usa.org/videos.html

Also view a Sar-El mini movie (in Hebrew) at the same site.

Sar-El's 25th Anniversary Celebration in Jerusalem

On Thursday, August 9, Sar-El's 25th Anniversary celebration will take place in Jerusalem. Gen. Davidi will be presented with a special plaque and certificate designating a JNF forest in his honor. Plans for the special event point to a meaningful and joyous day for all people involved with Sar-El past and present.



The VFI program so completely changed my daughter's feeling and attitude toward Judaism and Israel.

—VFI Mother



VFI Regional Alumni Meetings

Atlanta – We held our April meeting with 42 participants. Leon Rechtman, Alan Mintz and Amy Brownstein coordinated the evening. Oren Rosenblatt from the Israeli Consulate updated us on the Middle-East and the importance of volunteering. For more info please contact Leon Rechtman at leon2579@mindspring.com.

Illinois – The Chicago/Midwest Region welcomes returning volunteers. See a video of the program on the second Tuesday of every month (May 8 and June 12), at 8610 Niles Center Rd., Skokie, IL, at 8 p.m., there is plenty of parking. For more information, call Charlotte Kaplan at 888.246.3037.

Los Angeles – For the Los Angeles chapter alumni reunion meeting schedule, call Louis Goldowitz at 323.661.7898.

Great Lakes Region – Several volunteers/AMBASSADORS are having reunions two or three times a year. Volunteers from the Great Lakes Region interested in becoming an AMBASSADOR please contact Ed Kohl at 248.788.0551 or michigan@vfi-usa.org. Ed also is a resource for VFI press releases for ADL, Hillel, Jewish newspapers and synagogue newsletters. They all generate interest in our program.

Mid-Atlantic Region – The DC area held a reunion on March 18 at the Rockville JCC with a standing room only crowd. Colonel Ofer Winter, IDF, spoke of his combat experience and how Israeli soldiers work to stay true to their ethics. Col. Winter presented an illustrative movie. We are starting a VFI group for the DC area. The core volunteers are Heidi Daroff, Jill Gessner, Morty Pancer, Marian Sacks, and Razi Yitzchak. They will be in touch with others who have offered to help promote VFI.

Metro New York – A Volunteer Gathering was held on a bitterly cold Sunday, February 4, 2007. About 60 VFI volunteers from the metro-NY area gathered in the VFI office. We heard Ms. Sandra Sasson, a Press Officer from the Israeli Consulate, discuss the current situation in the Middle East. Josef Herz, VFI National President, discussed what VFI volunteers can do to prepare in case of an immediate need for volunteers because of war or a natural disaster in Israel. We also celebrated the 25th Year Anniversary of Sar-El with cakes and refreshments.

Philadelphia – Our March alumni meeting was attended by 50 people. Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 9, when Andre Key presents "In Every Tongue," an exploration of Jewish and ethnic diversity. VFI will help celebrate Israel Independence Day on Sunday, May 6, in Fairmont Park. Call 888.473.6527 for more details.

San Francisco Region – Come meet us at the fair! The San Francisco Region will have a table at "Israel in the Gardens" in San Francisco on Sunday, June 3. We are also planning two reunions this summer in celebration of 25 years of service to Israel. We will host one reunion in **Las Vegas** on Wednesday, June 13, and another in San Francisco on a weekend in August. Both reunions will be open to the public. Contact us for details at 510.339.0183 or at vfi5000@hotmail.com.

VFI National President's Message

Why Do YOU Do It?



Why do I volunteer? Why do I spend so much time working to revitalize VFI? Why work so hard to connect people to Israel? I have been asked this question many times. The answer, for me, is simple.

I have learned that in every generation we are challenged or confronted with a situation or an event that needs to be addressed. We look around hoping that someone else would step forward and do the work that must be done. Then you realize that it is YOUR TURN to step forward. In their time, my parents stepped forward to face the challenges of their time, as have many others.

I do it to honor the memory of my parents, Susan and Samuel Herz, who fought and struggled to maintain their Jewish identity, struggled against evil in war-torn and post-war Europe, and emigrated to Israel in 1948 to help build the Jewish state. Although the work is arduous, I am in good company.

Why do YOU do it?

— Josef Herz, National President

Planting Trees in Israel

In celebration of Sar-El's 25th anniversary, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) is to plant a forest in honor of Sar-El founder, General Aharon Davidi. You can help build the forest located in the Galilee region of Israel, the area most affected by last year's war with Lebanon. Established in 1901, the JNF has built 162 water reservoirs and organized the planting of more than 220 million trees throughout Israel during the past century.

Each tree costs US \$18. If you wish to contribute to Davidi's Forest by planting a tree, you can choose to plant either one or more trees. Please enter your order on the form at the bottom of this page.

Join VFI as a Full Member

VF I membership is growing with over 200 volunteers recognizing the benefits.

Membership at the Chai level of \$18 includes a free 1-year subscription to *Moment Magazine*, personalized VFI business cards, a membership card, this newsletter, and other benefits. The Meir level membership at \$50 also includes VFI luggage tags. At the Sharon level of \$100, you receive a tee shirt. The Dayan level is at \$250 and adds a duffel bag to the Chai-level benefits. For \$500 and above, the Ben-Gurion level

provides you with a jacket also. Join our growing VFI chaverim community and become a VFI Member now!

We'd like your ideas about better connecting with your fellow volunteers, such as an online Members' Forum, special Members' Events, etc. Send your suggestions to info@vfi-usa.org.

Use this form to plant JNF trees in Israel or to order your new VFI Travel Journal, an easy-to-carry 40-page informational book for travelers.

VOLUNTEERS FOR ISRAEL MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

Please check your desired level and return registration form, with your check payable to: "Volunteers For Israel," to Marian Sacks, Treasurer, 13801 Bonsal Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20906

Ben-Gurion (\$500 and above) Dayan (\$250) Sharon (\$100) Meir (\$50) Chai (\$18)

VFI Travel Journal (\$15.00 x QUANTITY = \$ TOTAL) / JNF Trees (\$18.00 x QUANTITY = \$ TOTAL)

Total amount enclosed \$

FIRST NAME: LAST NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY STATE ZIP

TELEPHONE: E-MAIL

VFI Respects Your Privacy and will not share your information with other organizations.

New!! VFI's Travel Journal Is Now Available

Once you're back home, will you really remember all those VFI experiences you said you'd never forget? You will if you bring along VFI's handy new *Travel Journal*.

This easy-to-carry 40-page spiral-bound book has plenty of space for you to record your volunteer experiences. You'll also find pages filled with useful Hebrew vocabulary, travel tips, maps, charts, and pockets for keeping your *VFI Handbook* at your fingertips, as well as for saving important mementos from your trip.

The *Travel Journal* is available through the VFI regional offices for only \$15.00 per copy. You can also buy it using the coupon on the bottom of page 2. Anyone traveling to Israel will appreciate this book. Get one for yourself and one as a gift for a friend or family member.



In Memoriam Hamilton Pitt

Hamilton Pitt was a valued VFI volunteer who also actively worked with the VFI Midwest region, the VFI National Board, the VFI Executive Committee, and the VFI Honorary Board. He died on Feb. 20, 2007, at his home in Texas.

Hamilton was a Christian who fell in love with Israel and its struggles. He found the VFI/Sar-El program as a path to show his support. For the many who knew him, he will be sorely missed.

VFI at the NYC Salute to Israel Parade

The Salute to Israel Parade is the single largest gathering in the world in support of Israel and takes place on Sunday, May 6, 2007, on Fifth Avenue in New York City. It begins at 57th Street and Fifth Avenue and continues north to 79th Street. The Parade runs from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., rain or shine. If you are interested in joining VFI and marching in the parade, there is still time register! RSVP to Jaclynm@vfi-usa.org for more information.

Join VFI's Premier Jewish Singles Trip

VFI is planning a Jewish Singles trip for this summer. Before finalizing plans, we would like to know who is interested in participating in this program. The trip will be between 2-3 weeks long. If you are interested in joining the VFI Singles trip, please RSVP with your name and age to Jaclynm@vfi-usa.org.

Editor's Corner

Drumbeats for the Next War



The drumbeat of war in the Middle East is incessant and with discomforting regularity. Every day a mini-conflict pops up here and settles down there. "Imminent" and "survival" are popular jumping off words used all too frequently.

We have learned that readiness counts. Disregarding outward threats and menacing signs has never been a valued option, particularly in the Middle East.

VFI's focus involves readiness and commitment. The number of VFI volunteers has steadily increased in each of the past 3 years, and in 2007 participation is looking good. Thank you to the 271 new members who have recently joined VFI using the registration form on the previous page.

VFI's national newsletter is dedicated to your life-changing experience as a volunteer in Israel. SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE FREE UPON REQUEST to info@vfi-usa.org or toll-free 866.514.1948. To receive e-mails updating you on VFI activities, just send an e-mail to info@vfi-usa.org.

—**Steve Plotkin**, Editor, steveplotkin@erols.com, 1340 Brighton Way, Newtown Square, PA 19073, 610.358.5366, Fax 610.361.8896.

Purim Project – Mishloach Manot for IDF soldiers



Volunteers and friends of VFI generously raised \$3,000 for the Brooklyn ZOA Mishloach Manot (Purim food baskets) project in just 2 weeks. The donations purchased Mishloach Manot in Israel. Sar-El and VFI volunteers, and volunteers from other countries distributed 2,100 packages to IDF men and women on bases all over the country. This is just another way that VFI connects people to Israel. Kol Ha'Kavod to the people who participated in this drive.

Donations Received by VFI

In Memory of Hamilton Pitt, Jr.: Ed and Shelly Kohl, VFI Board of Directors: JNF through VFI

In Memory of Ben Simons: Exxon Group, Gail Rubin, Marie Mickus, Shirley Horblit, Mary-Thomas Turnock, Barry Yoss, Jacob Alter, Robina Leibman, Brenda Kraus, Barry Bier, Natalie Savage

In Honor of Sam Barcover: San Francisco Area Board of Directors: JNF through VFI

In Memory of Alan Feinberg: Marion Taub, Anna Adler

In Honor of Samuel and Susan Herz: Josef Herz: JNF through VFI

In Honor of Amnon Natif: Joan and Jerome Solomon

In Honor of William and Mollie Rosenberg: Josef Herz: JNF through VFI

Jewish National Fund Donations for Trees: San Francisco Region received a donation for 132 JNF Tree certificates, which were purchased by Marilyn Brown and Stephen Cornell.

In memory of Nate Ratner: 100 trees

In honor of the May 5, 2007, Kiddushin of Marilyn Brown and Stephen Cornel: 10 trees

In memory of various family and friends: 22 trees

Volunteer Program Schedules for 2007

Programs start only on the specific Sunday and/or Monday shown below. Volunteers can join for 2, 3, or more weeks.

2007 — 25th Anniversary Year

May 6/7-22, May 6-10: 1-week group
 May 27/28: June 14
 June 17/18-July 5: (Ulpan option)

June 24-July 12: International Youth Program
 July 8/9-26: (Ulpan option)
 July 15-Aug. 2: International Youth Program
 July 29/30: Aug. 16
 Aug. 9: 25th Anniversary Celebration Party

Aug. 19/20-Sept. 6: (Ulpan option)
 Sept. 16/17-26
 Oct. 7/8-25: (Ulpan option)
 Oct. 28-Nov. 1: 1-week group
 Oct. 28/29-Nov. 15

Nov. 18/19-Dec. 6: (Ulpan option)
 Dec. 9/10-Jan. 3: (Ulpan option)
 Dec. 23/24-Jan. 11

See our web site at www.vfi-usa.org for frequent special programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

The SAR-EL work program includes:

FREE accommodations, plus

FREE kosher meals, plus

FREE work uniforms, plus

FREE lectures, possibly guided trips,

PRICELESS immense personal satisfaction.



VFI Officers and Board for 2007

Josef Herz, National President, WA, 425.235.8280, jaherz@vfi-usa.org

George Iversen, Vice President, NJ, 973.761.0549, george@vfi-usa.org

Marian Sacks, Treasurer, MD, 301.603.9099, mbsacks@vfi-usa.org

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—Steve Plotkin, Editor, steveplotkin@erols.com

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—Colin Powell

“Persistent optimism is a force multiplier.”

For unique adventure, the travel chance of a lifetime, and a frugal way to sample Israel, join the VFI Program. Get an insider's view of Israeli life, and make a difference.

THE VOLUNTEER CONNECTION
 SPRING 2007

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