



THE volunteer CONNECTION

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Sar-El 25th Anniversary in Jerusalem

Sar-El's 25th Anniversary celebration was held in Jerusalem at the Convention Center on August 9, 2007. Over 1,000 attended the event, including representatives from the various countries that have provided volunteers to Sar-El over the past 25 years.



Since the beginning of the program in 1982, there have been 125,000 Sar-El volunteers, including approximately 30,000 volunteers from the United States.

Vade Bolton, National President, and Marian Sacks, Treasurer, represented Volunteers for Israel at the celebration.

The program included music performed by groups from each branch of the IDF and dancing.

Speakers included Major General Avi Mizrahi, Head of the Logistics and Medical Branch of the IDF, Zeev Bielski, Chairman of the World Jewish Agency, and General Aharon Davidi (ret), Founder and Chairman of Sar-El.

A highlight of the ceremony was the honoring of seven individuals for outstanding service and commitment to Sar-El. VFI's Immediate Past National President Josef Herz was one of those honored for his personal dedication and leadership rendered to VFI and Sar-El. Vade Bolton accepted Josef's Certificate of Honor award on behalf of Josef and the VFI Board.



Vade Bolton, Marilyn Brown of CA, and Israel Geva, Sar-El Managing Director

A private dinner was held for guests and Sar-El leaders from all countries and hosted by General Davidi. During the dinner Vade Bolton, VFI National President, presented General Davidi a plaque acknowledging Davidi's Garden of trees planted on a JNF/KKL site. The Garden was made possible by over \$3,000 donated by U.S. Volunteers and the VFI Board.

Marian Sacks and Vade Bolton described the event as memorable, and said they were proud to represent the VFI Board and volunteers at this silver anniversary ceremony.

Annual VFI Photo Contest

Images may be of any VFI-related subject, from any location. The image must be the original work of the entrant who may be of any age and who retains all rights and consents to VFI's use of the image for publicity purposes. The winners will be featured in *The Volunteer Connection* and all entries will be displayed at VFI Headquarters in New York City. Prizes will be announced at the award ceremony. Only color and B&W prints not exceeding 8x10 with titles will be accepted. Images will be judged for technique, interest, and composition. Extreme manipulation of images will be rejected. The decision of the judges is final. Mail entries, with a \$5 entry fee, to Steve Plotkin, Editor, 1340 Brighton Way, Newtown Square, PA 19073, by the deadline of March 1, 2008.



VFI National President's Message

Vade's View

Shalom Fellow Volunteers! This newsletter, the "Connection" is provided to almost 10,000 VFI "veterans" and friends of VFI. This is our way, as the

VFI leadership, to involve you to in the life of the organization. And it must be working, as some of you related after the last issue. That's great. Keep it up and write as often as you want. In fact, please make suggestions on topics. Definitely let us know if you attend or lead a meeting where you promote going to Israel with VFI. A large thanks goes to Steve Plotkin, our editor, who does a marvelous job getting each issue together.

I want to tell you that the VFI leadership will be having a planning meeting on November 4-6 in Reisterstown, Maryland. We will be addressing what the organization will be doing over the next 2 years to keep it viable and strong, and to achieve the mission of sending and connecting volunteers to Israel. If you would like to make any suggestions on topics or issues that should be considered, send them to me at 1.866.514.1948 or e-mail at VadeBolton@Comcast.net.

I was recently asked when and how my deep interest and love for Israel began. In 1982, I went with my father-in-law to Israel for a family bar mitzvah, my first trip to the Land. The simcha was in the northern town of Nahariya, near Rosh Hanikra and the Lebanese border.

This was during the first war in Lebanon and there was a constant flow of IDF soldiers and equipment on the road going north on the outskirts of Nahariya. Each morning, mothers and bubbes would stand on the main road and hand each soldier a bag of sandwiches and fruit. This action was their way of telling these young soldiers that they were loved and appreciated. This was the beginning of my coming to understand the role of the army in Israel and how essential it is that the military remains strong.

Like so many of you, there have been many trips since that first one. Each trip is always unique with something to remember.

I hope you will return soon to Israel as a VFI volunteer and/or that you will influence and "coach" someone else to go! Let us know if we can help.

Vade Bolton, National President

VFI Treasurer's Report

Here are some highlights of activities during the first 9 months of 2007.

- VFI has collected \$35,000 in donations and is very fortunate and grateful to our numerous wonderful supporters.
- In addition, generous supporters also provided \$2,446.83, which was sent directly to Israel for Purim baskets for the soldiers.

- VFI collected donations to plant 590 trees in Israel in a special forest area in honor of General Davidi.
- As a result of our National Membership Drive, 325 people have joined as members.

—Marian Sacks, Treasurer

Donations Received by VFI

(July 1 – September 30)

In Honor of Carol and Izzy Hananel: Golda Brill, Stan and Carol Smith, Susan Feldman, Ray and Harriet Briant
 In Honor of Rabbi Justus Baird: Alvin and Barbara Darvin
 In Honor of the Parkwood Gang: Teri Markson
 In Honor of Marcia Selz and Eduardo Subelman: Leslie Mereminsky, Agnes Harris, Gerhard and Marcia Schwarzblatt
 In Honor of Rabbi David and Debbie Kornberg: Leslie Mereminsky
 In Memory of Shira Silverman: Alvin and Barbara Darvin
 In Memory of Shirley Wendroff: Ernest Lawton, IV and G.R. Murray, O'Gorman, and Young

Jewish National Fund Specific Donations planted trees for the following:

In Honor of Benjamin, Jacob, and Rachel: Jennifer Negley
 In Honor of Pamela Lazarus's Daughter's Wedding: Cookie Koblin
 In Memory of Ethel Sagetta: Infinity Consulting
 In Memory of Simon Liez: Linda Brenner
 In Memory of Ira Winokur: Marian and Shelly Sacks
 In Memory of Howard Cherta: Marian and Shelly Sacks
 In Memory of David Wasserman: Bernice Cornelissen
 In Honor the Bat Mitzvah of Sasha Schap: Renee Bassell
 In Honor of Various Family and Friends: Marilyn Brown and Steve Cornell
 In Honor of the State of Israel: Murray Milkman, Alan Cornblatt

YOUR VFI TRAVEL JOURNAL

Will you really remember all those VFI people you said you'd never forget? How about all those fantastic experiences? You will recall them if you bring along your handy *VFI Travel Journal*.



This comfortable, spiral-bound, 40-page book has space for you to record your volunteer experiences. The book also contains pages filled with useful

Hebrew vocabulary, travel tips, maps, charts, and pockets for saving important journey mementos.

The *VFI 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 5. Anyone traveling to Israel will appreciate this book. Get one for yourself and one as a gift for a friend or family member.

Golan Gig

We were placed in the Golan, on the Syrian border. Though fun and exciting, we had very challenging work to accomplish. Our mission was to set up barbwire and concertina wire fences around the Israeli outposts, and we also cleaned up all the trash in the outposts to make them liveable in the event the IDF needs to use them in a moment's notice.



— Amy Ridenour



VFI Volunteers on a work site repairing fortifications in the Golan Heights.

The Situation Room

A surprise Israeli air raid on a small but vital target deep inside Syria took place on September 6, 2007. The back story is an unfolding tapestry of intrigue and jigsaw mystery. And most of it is true.

Dayr-az-Zawr, deep in eastern Syria, Summer, 2007

Elite Israeli commandos somehow penetrate an “agricultural research station” suspected to be a nuclear site and secretly seize samples of nuclear material later confirmed to be from North Korea..

Port of Tartus, Syria, September 3, 2007

The Al Hamad, a 1,700 ton cargo freighter, flying the flag of North Korea, enters the port of Tartus on the Mediterranean and unloads her “cement” cargo. Israel views the cargo with great suspicion and suggests the it is actually nuclear equipment for Syria. The ship's cargo is transferred inland to an “agricultural research station.” near Dayr-az-Zawr.

Western Syria, evening of September 6-7, 2007

Seemingly out of nowhere, a sortie of Israeli F-15I (Eagle) and newer F-16I Sufa (Storm) warplanes from over 600 flight miles away invade Syrian air space. The jets appear, surgically attack the “agricultural research center” nuclear site near Dayr az-Zawr, obliterate the target, and quickly flee creating

unmistakable sonic booms. They are under the guidance of high flying observation aircraft and tanker aircraft.

Tel Aviv, September 7, 2007

Israel is uncharacteristically mum, unlike its destruction of the Iraqi Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981 as Israel's media is officially muzzled. A month later the censorship is lifted and the Syrian site is identified as a partially completed nuclear reactor of a North Korean design suitable for weapons. Washington remains officially silent.

The incident reverberates world-wide but without an international outcry. Syria is unhappy and embarrassed but makes little noise. The Arab world is strangely quiet. Russia is displeased and embarrassed because their expensive advanced radar systems sold to Syria and Iran were completely blinded and defeated. North Korea is embarrassed having been caught red-handed disseminating nuclear technology and having technicians killed. Iran is displeased as this interrupts their nuclear ambitions.

Israel has reestablished the credibility of her deterrent power. More to come.

—Steve Plotkin

Officers and Board Members for 2007/08

Officers:

Vade Bolton, National President, VA, 703.860.0504, vadebolton@comcast.net

Larry Feldman, Vice President, MD, 410.486.6876, lf730@aol.com

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

Ed Kohl, National Coordinator, MI, 248.788.0551, michigan@vfi-usa.org

Board Members:

Renee G. Bassell, CA	Ed Koplin, CO	Barry Stein, PA
Mila Bensonoff, MA	Steve Plotkin, PA	Carol Stein, PA
Beverly Cohen, PA	Jeanne S. Schachter, PA	Kay Warren, CA
Josef Herz, WA	Gilda Shani, NY	Carol Weir, NY

Volunteer for Sderot or Table to Table

Volunteer for a day or two before or after your VFI/Sar-El session to work in Sderot to assist that community as it copes with frequent attacks. Or, volunteer with Table to Table which provides food for the homeless and those hungry in Tel Aviv. Check the VFI website, www.vfi-usa.org regarding these opportunities.

A Note from General Davidi

To all of our VFI volunteers,

We had a very full summer here at Sar-El. Hundreds of volunteers served at bases from the South to the North of the country. Our 25th Anniversary celebration in August was a big success and was very memorable for all those who attended. Next year we will be celebrating the 60th birthday of the State of Israel. We know that many of you will want to

volunteer at that time and join in all the festivities.

However we need more volunteers during the rest of the year when there are no special holidays or events. Please plan your trips to Israel as soon as possible. Sar-El needs you!!

—General Aharon Davidi (Retired, Sar-El Founder)

VFI REGIONAL ALUMNI MEETINGS

Atlanta — VFI has become a formal project of the Marcus Jewish Community Center Atlanta, MJCCA, and is listed on their website. VFI participated in the Jewish Festival on August 26, which attracted over 10,000 people and is called "The Best Community-Wide Event" by Atlanta Jewish Times.

Leon Rechtman, Amy Brownstein, Myriam Relis and Alan Mintz met dozens of potential volunteers with handouts and a VFI media show. A number of attendees have signed up for VFI for 2008.

For further information and schedule update, please contact Alan Mintz at agmintz@mindspring.com.

Chicago/Midwest — The next meeting is Tuesday, November 13, at 8 p.m., at 8610 Niles Center Road, Skokie, IL. We will be showing a VFI video and have plenty of parking. We need some volunteers for the Israel Experience Programs Day on Sunday, December 9, 2007, from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m., at Ezra Habonim Niles Township Jewish Congregation, 4500 W. Dempster St., Skokie. For more information, call Charlotte Kaplan at 888.246.3037.

Los Angeles — Lou Goldowitz, long-time Regional Director, is phasing down his activity and Carol Hananel, along with her husband Isaac, are taking over. Lou has been active since 1985 and has inspired many volunteers. He was moved by the need to connect the Jewish Diaspora and the State of Israel. Lou first

served in the office, later on the Board, and then as Vice President and President. We thank Lou for his past services to the VFI community and wish him well. Carol and Isaac are strongly committed to the well-being and the importance of cementing ties to Israel. They recently returned from a tour there. For the alumni reunion meeting schedule, call 866.345.3352.

Great Lakes Region — Volunteers from the Great Lakes Region interested in becoming an ambassador, please contact Ed Kohl at 248.788.0551 or eskohl@comcast.net. Ed also is a resource for free press releases for ADL, Hillel, Jewish newspapers, and synagogue newsletters. They all generate interest in our program.

Mid-Atlantic Region — For further information and schedule update, please contact Marian Sacks at 301.603.9099, or Vade Bolton at 703.860.0504 or vadebolton@comcast.net.

Metro New York — For further additional information and schedule update, please contact Jaclyn Mishal at the NYC office at 212.663.4848.

Philadelphia — The Fall meeting was held at 7:00 p.m. on October 24 at the Klein Branch JCC at Red Lion Road & Jamison Ave in Phila. Rebecca Schwartz, a singer and award-winning songwriter lead us through Hebrew and English songs. Upcoming meetings are January 9 and March 19, 2008. Call Jeanne Schachter 610.647.4048 for more

schedule details.

The Philadelphia Region invites all volunteers to participate in Israel's 60th Birthday while in Israel, starting April 27, 2008, for a 2- or 3-week program. This auspicious time includes both Israel's Memorial Day and 60th Independence Day. If you have friends, acquaintances, or relatives who might be interested, let them know, and ask them to get in touch with Beverly Cohen via e-mail at bevcohen@comcast.net or 610.584.0468.

San Francisco Region — San Francisco holds its Annual Winter Reunion and Informational Meeting on Sunday, January 13, 2008, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., at Congregation Emanu-El, 2 Lake Street (at Arguello), San Francisco, CA. Please join us and share refreshments, stories, photos, and hear the latest VFI news. Bring a friend who would like to learn more about VFI. For more information or if you wish to help with the reunion, call Kay Warren at 510.339.0183 or e-mail VFI5000@hotmail.com.

Las Vegas News — VFI Ambassadors Fran and Jerry Gardberg are holding an informational meeting in their home in Henderson, NV, on Sunday, November 4, for all prospective volunteers. They are organizing a group (or groups) to go on the program this Fall and later. Contact them at 702.914.6863 for details.

Table-to-Table Volunteers

During October, I had the pleasure of spending the Succoth holiday on vacation in Israel. I enhanced my trip by combining it with a volunteer experience on my one free day. With the help of Anat Rom from Ruach Tova, I was able to spend that day picking vegetables that had been harvested specifically to donate to the poor. The vegetables were gathered and distributed to various non-profit agencies throughout Israel that feed the needy. This experience was just what I needed to make my trip complete.

I went by car to Kvuzat Schiller, near Rehovot, a 45 minute drive from central Tel-Aviv where I was met by a project coordinator. I was directed to a field where the excess food had been harvested and joined Israelis', tourists, youth groups, and new immigrants, all volunteers, from ages 12 to over 70.

We spent the next few hours picking squash and loading crates and containers with the produce. The containers were transported to a warehouse and from there delivered to the various food-rescue agencies. More volunteers joined us throughout the morning and a good time was had by all. All you need is a hat, gardening gloves, and plenty of water. Prepare to have a great time.

Gleaning was the perfect volunteer experience for me. The physical labor left me totally fulfilled. By 2:00 p.m. I was back in my hotel room, dusty and tired, but satisfied that I had given back a little to the country and people who have given me so much.

— Gilda Shani

Holiday Shopping at Amazon.com can Support VFI

If you holiday shop on amazon.com you can simultaneously support VFI. The VFI web site (www.vfi-usa.org/links.html), under Support/Contribute has a link to Amazon.com. When you click on this link, then do your shopping, then VFI gets some money and it costs you nothing. To receive this benefit, you must shop amazon.com by using the link on vfi-usa.org.



In Memoriam

Henry Mosbacher from the Chicago area passed away in September, 2007. He was previously honored by VFI at a New York dinner about 5 years ago. At his funeral, they recalled his love of Israel and how much he enjoyed his VFI volunteer service.

Join VFI As a Full Member

VFI membership has grown to over 325 volunteers. The basic annual membership at the Chai level is an \$18 contribution. This provides you a membership card, our newsletter, and VFI business cards for your use. Also, the Meir level membership is a \$50 contribution and provides you the Chai benefits and VFI luggage tags. The Sharon level membership is a \$100 contribution and provides the Chai benefits and a VFI baseball cap. The Dayan level membership at a \$250 contribution provides the Chai benefits and a duffle bag.

For a \$500 contribution and above, the Ben-Gurion level membership provides you the Chai benefits and a fleece vest.

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 Member's Forum, special Member's Events, etc. Send your suggestions to info@vfi-usa.org.

Also, you might want to order your VFI Travel Journals, an easy-to-carry 40-page informational book for travelers, or memorialize someone with a contribution for JNF Trees.

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 $\frac{\text{QUANTITY}}{\text{TOTAL}}$ = \$ $\frac{\text{TOTAL}}{\text{QUANTITY}}$) / **JNF Trees** (\$18.00 x $\frac{\text{QUANTITY}}{\text{TOTAL}}$ = \$ $\frac{\text{TOTAL}}{\text{QUANTITY}}$)

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.

Volunteer Program Schedules for 2007-08

Programs start only on the specific Sunday and/or Monday shown below.. Volunteers can join for 2, 3, or more weeks. Programs projected to offer the Ullpan Option are shown with a *Ullpan*.

2007 — 25th Silver Anniversary Year

Nov. 18/19-Dec. 6: *Ullpan*
 Dec. 9/10-Dec. 27 *Ullpan*
 Dec 23/24-Jan. 11, 2008 *Ullpan*

2008 SCHEDULE

Dec. 30/31-Jan. 17 *Ullpan*	June 29-July 17, International Youth Program
Jan. 20/21-Feb. 7 *Ullpan*	July 20/21-Aug. 7 *Ullpan*
Feb. 10-14, 1-week group	July 20-Aug. 7, International Youth Program
Feb. 10/11-Feb. 28 *Ullpan*	Aug. 10/11-Aug. 28 *Ullpan*
Mar. 2/3-Mar. 20 *Ullpan*	Aug. 31/Sept. 1-Sept. 11, 2-week Program *Ullpan*
Mar. 23/24-April 10 *Ullpan*	Sept. 14/15-Sept. 25, 2-week Program *Ullpan*
April 13-17, 1-week group	Oct. 5/6-Oct. 23, The bases are closed during the holidays
Apr. 27/28-May 15 *Ullpan*	Oct. 26-30, 1-week group
May 18-22, 1-week group	Oct. 26/27-Nov. 13 *Ullpan*
May 18/19-June 5 *Ullpan*	Nov.16/17-Dec. 4 *Ullpan*
June 10-June 26, begins Tues. *Ullpan*	Dec. 7/8-Dec. 25 *Ullpan*
June 29/30-July 17 *Ullpan*	Dec. 28/29-Jan. 15, 2009 *Ullpan*

The Ullpan Beginning Hebrew Option

Ullpan is a voluntary beginners practical Hebrew class (Aleph level) for English speakers offered in conjunction with volunteer service. Classes are held on the base in the evenings and feature a language immersion environment. Classes meet two nights per week and require a minimum participation of 10 members and a maximum of 15 members, and are subject to cancellation. So bring a friend.

Taught by experienced professionals, the one-time fee of \$50 covers up to 3 weeks of classes. Sign up for Ullpan at the time of your volunteer registration.

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

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www.vfi-usa.org • 1-866-514-1948

VFI VOLUNTEER, SUMMER 2007
 — MICHAEL PECULLAN,

*Do it again? YOU BET I WILL!!
 felt more useful or appreciated.
 Iftime. I have rarely, if ever,
 was an experience of a
 in Israel with VFI's program
 it was wonderful! Two weeks
 it was dirty. It was frustrating.
 It was hot; it was exhausting.*

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