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AND MOST WIDELY
CIRCULATED
INDEPENDENT
JEWISH NEWSPAPER
FREE THROUGHOUT
METRO CHICAGO

CHICAGO Jewish Star

למצא דברי-חפץ וכתוב ישר דברי אמת



ויעברו מצרים את-בני ישראל בפרך
"Now the Egyptians started to make the Israelites
do labor designated to break their bodies." (Ex. 1:13)

HAPPY PASSOVER
חג פסח שמח

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Not a Moment to Waste

Tensions rise, heartbeats quicken, wallets empty, and everyone in sight is enlisted in last-minute Passover preparations as Jews worldwide get ready for the holiday, which starts Saturday night, April 19 with the first seder.

At the household of Torah columnist Shaul Wertheimer, even the children get into the act. Outfitted with rubber gloves, sponges, and aprons, Mendel and Shoshi (above) intently scrub and clean, determined to do away with every last vestige of chametz. **J**



—TZIPAH WERTHEIMER PHOTOS

OBAMA FIRM ON VIEWS

► IN INTERVIEW, HE AFFIRMS HIS POSITIONS ON ISRAEL, WRIGHT, AHMADINEJAD, AND MIDEAST PEACE

In an April 9 interview with the JTA news organization, presidential candidate Barack Obama addressed many of the issues that have dogged his campaign among Jewish Americans.

Among his statements:

- Israel: "My belief is that Israel is our strongest ally in the Middle East, one of our strongest allies anywhere in the world."

- Wright, Ahmadinejad: The senator did not shy away from a defense of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright Jr., his former pastor, or from his insistence on reaching out to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

- Peace: Israel will have to "acknowledge that it's going to have to make some territorial modifications to ensure that there is a stable and contiguous Palestinian state that can function". **JTA**

Illinois mulls terrorism, libel bill

"LIBEL TERRORISM PROTECTION ACT" GOES TO SENATE
FREE SPEECH ISSUE ADDRESSED

SEN. I. SILVERSTEIN REACTS TO EHRENFELD
"LIBEL TOURISM" CASE

By GILA WERTHEIMER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Freedom of speech and anti-terrorism issues have come together in Illinois in a bill recently introduced by State Senator Ira I. Silverstein (D-Chicago).

Last week, Senate Bill 2722, known as the "Libel Terrorism Protection Act", was passed unanimously out of committee to be taken up by the Senate.

The bill's purpose is to guarantee First Amendment free speech rights to American writers, journalists and publishers against frivolous libel lawsuits in foreign countries, and pre-



—E. LANCMAN PHOTO



—I. SILVERSTEIN/DEIA VIEWS FILE

Illinois Senator Ira Silverstein (right) adopted the legislation of New York Assemblyman Rory Lancman to prevent harassing libel lawsuits against Americans filed in foreign jurisdictions.

vent negative judgments in those suits from being enforced here.

If the bill becomes law, "it will set a precedent here in Illinois, and I think it will spread to other states."

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Peres: Carter damages Israel

Israel's Shimon Peres told fellow Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter on April 13 that he has damaged Israel and the peace process by vowing to meet Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal and in publishing his book on Palestine.

On April 15, Carter laid a wreath at Arafat's grave in Ramallah (below). **JTA**



—THAYER GANAM/FP0/BPH

HAJ AMIN EL-HUSSEINI

Hitler ally and wannabe, and Arafat precursor

By EDWARD ALEXANDER
SPECIAL TO THE CHICAGO JEWISH STAR

The obscene equation of Israelis with Nazis, without which many of Israel's current legion of enemies would be rendered nearly speechless, seems to have originated in British official circles in 1941.

Years before there was a modern Jewish state, the Foreign Office was using the epithet "Jewish Nazi state" to refer to Jewish Palestine.

Ironically, it was precisely the leadership of Arab Palestine that in 1941 was deeply entwined with the actual Nazis, not the metaphorical ones of fervered British imaginations.

REVIEW
Jennie Lebel,
The Mufti of
Jerusalem

Haj Amin el-Husseini, the universally recognized leader ("Grand Mufti," as he called himself) of Palestinian Arabs and, in the eyes of Hitler, who called him "the Moslem Pope," of the whole Moslem world, was negotiating amiably with the Nazi leadership.

He offered, with typical bravado, to destroy the 30,000 to 40,000 British soldiers stationed in Palestine.

In return, he wanted Hitler's commitment to "solve" the problem of Jewish minorities in all Arab countries by applying the same racial ideology and methods being used to "solve" the problem in the territories controlled by the Nazis.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 13



—HARRY HOUDINI/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

HOUDINI

Magic and the movies

By MICHAEL WILMINGTON
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The most famous stage entertainer of his age, the early 20th century, was a mysterious and often mind-bending magician named Harry Houdini.

Houdini (1874-1926) — born Erik Weisz in Budapest, Hungary, and raised in Appleton, Wisconsin — specialized in elaborate and seemingly impossible escapes, squirming loose in minutes or seconds from handcuffs, strait-jackets, "water torture cells" and locked, chain-wrapped trunks.

Above: Harry Houdini, the master of the impossible escape, at around the age of 25, in a promotional photo c. 1899.

PLEASE TURN TO BACK PAGE

PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL DISCARDS ITS PLO-STYLE LOGO

► WELCOME CHANGE FOR ANNUAL CHICAGO EVENT, BUT PROVOCATION CONTINUES

By GILA WERTHEIMER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Some things do change. Years after complaining that the PLO-resembling logo of the Chicago Palestine Film Festival obliterated the State of Israel (JEWISH STAR, June 11, 2004), organizers have now come up with something different.

This year's festival logo — the 7th annual Chicago Palestine Film Festival opens April 25 at the Gene Siskel Film Center — instead is made up of a reel of film, with its celluloid frames seemingly resembling the kaffiyeh head dress, but it now encircles a Chicago elevated train.

With that change, organizers appear to have decided

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Fun songs to enliven your seder and add to your Passover traditions, page 15.

—MISCA ILLUSTRATION

NEWS



NEWS BRIEFS

A former Jewish inmate in Vermont denied Passover food and holiday items will receive \$25,000. Gordon Bock, 53, settled his lawsuit with the Vermont Department of Corrections earlier this month. The prison system also agreed to modify its policy regarding prisoners' religious rights. Bock said that during his incarceration in 2004 and 2005 he was not allowed to receive kosher-for-Passover food, a Chanukah menorah or gift baskets for Purim. All had been offered to him free by the Aleph Institute, a Chabad-Lubavitch organization that works with Jewish prisoners, the military and their families. "The U.S. Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court have said very clearly that prison officials must meet the religious needs of inmates. That's the law of the land," said Rabbi Mendel Katz, Aleph's director of prison outreach. "Even more, from a Jewish perspective, every Jew has a soul, and regardless of whether they've made mistakes in life, that soul needs spirituality. Every mitzvah that they can do in prison is part of the process of bettering themselves."

Holocaust survivors and world dignitaries convened to mark the 65th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Polish President Lech Kaczynski hosted his Israeli counterpart, Shimon Peres, scores of Holocaust survivors and other dignitaries in Warsaw April 15 for commemorations of the 1943 revolt by the city's doomed Jews against Nazi German occupiers. The day began with a candlelighting ceremony at the Warsaw square where 300,000 Jews were shipped to concentration camps. A separate commemoration was held at the ghetto bunker where uprising leader Mordechai Anielewicz and his comrades fought to the death.

Italy's pro-Israel ex-prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, will return to power for a third term. Berlusconi's center-right coalition beat out the center-left coalition led by former Rome Mayor Walter Veltroni, polls showed. The election was called two years after Berlusconi lost the premiership to center-leftist Romano Prodi. Berlusconi, a conservative billionaire, won in an Italy beset by social and economic woes. He has been accused of corruption but has won praise from Jewish groups for his support of Israel.

Microsoft's CEO Steve Ballmer will visit Israel in May. Ballmer will make his second visit to the Jewish state to open Microsoft's new research and development center in Herzliya Pituach, the Israeli business daily *Globes* reported. He had visited Israel in 2004. Microsoft Israel is becoming a strategic arm of the company's holdings.

Ariel Sharon's son Gilad is writing a memoir about the former Israeli prime minister. The HarperCollins publishing house announced last week that it had commissioned him to write a book titled *Sharon: A Leader and a Father*. Gilad is the younger of two sons born to Sharon and his late second wife, Lily. Omri Sharon is a former Israeli lawmaker serving a prison sentence for violating election finance laws. Until suffering a stroke in early 2006, Ariel Sharon's sons were among his closest confidants. ❏

— Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Illinois "Libel terrorism" bill

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Silverstein told the JEWISH STAR last week. He said that it could become law this fall and effective in January, 2009.

Silverstein was prompted to introduce the bill when he learned of the case of American author Rachel Ehrenfeld, who in 2005 was sued for libel by a Saudi citizen in a British court, which ruled against her.

Her book, *Funding Evil*, examined the Saudi role in the funding of terrorism. It was not published or distributed in Britain, but could be purchased online.

Ehrenfeld was ordered to pay \$225,000 in damages, and the British court is trying to have the judgment in *Ehrenfeld v. Mahfouz* enforced in New York, where she is based. A new edition of her book was published in Chicago.

Articles about the case have recently appeared in Jewish newspapers, including in Chicago in the JEWISH STAR ("The Circuitous Route of 'Libel Tourism'", March 21).

New York legislation

New York was the first state to introduce legislation to protect American writers against "libel tourism" suits, in which plaintiffs "tour" courts around the world to select venues where they think they will be successful. The New York law (A09652) was introduced by state Assemblyman Rory I. Lancman (D-Queens) earlier this year.

In the United States, lawsuits whose purpose is to intimidate or harass opponents — and which are therefore considered vindictive or frivolous from a

legal standpoint — have increasingly been countered with anti-SLAPP legislation. Over half of the states have such laws; the one in Illinois was first applied last month in a case stemming from a ban on mezuzah placement in a Chicago condo (JEWISH STAR, April 4).

"Unfortunately, SLAPP [legislation] is useless against the libel tourist, who lodges his claims before foreign tribunals," according to former federal prosecutor Andrew C. McCarthy, of the Center for Law and Counterterrorism in New York.

McCarthy's talk at a New York conference April 10 on the subject of "libel tourism" was entitled "It Takes the Marketplace of Ideas to Win the War of Ideas."

The New York legislation became necessary because foreign libel suits could not be warded off by SLAPP laws, and after the New York Court of Appeals declined to take up Ehren-

feld's cause.

Lancman told the JEWISH STAR this week that he drafted his bill after reading about the Ehrenfeld case in the *New York Jewish Week*.

He said he hopes it will be signed into law by New York's governor in the next few weeks. It would become effective immediately, and will be retroactive, Lancman said, and thus applicable in the Ehrenfeld case.

Sen. Ira Silverstein told the JEWISH STAR that he wrote the Illinois bill based on Lancman's legislation, and gave it the same name.

Lancman was not aware of the Illinois bill until told about it by the JEWISH STAR. He knew of no other states to date that have introduced similar bills, and said he was very pleased to learn of the Illinois initiative.

He added that he would like to see it adopted nationally.

According to Andrew McCarthy, Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY) is examining



YOU BE THE JUDGE

"Seder nights are magic with their own memories and significance. We cannot return to the lessons of that first Seder night in

Egypt without being enriched by the

memories of our own Seder celebrations." ❏

— Ron Wolfson

Source: *Seder Stories* (2008), JEWISH STAR review (April 11)

JEWISH STAR QUOTE OF THE WEEK

the possibility of introducing federal legislation.

A federal law, wrote McCarthy, "would revitalize the national purpose to defeat our enemies just as decisively in the war of ideas as in the war on the battlefield." ❏



תה פסח שמחה!

"And you shall tell your child on that day ..."

Wishing You a Happy & Healthy Passover



SENATOR IRA I. SILVERSTEIN and Family



תג פסח כשר ושמח
May we find inspiration today in the Passover story of Freedom

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Happy Passover

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Chag Sameach

Happy & Healthy Passover

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