



Rabbi backs off move to ordain women as Orthodox rabbis

NEW YORK — Rabbi Avi Weiss has backed away from the idea of ordaining women as Orthodox rabbis under the term "rabba." Rabbi Weiss, the founder and leader of the Yeshivat Chovevei Torah rabbinical school, had taken heat from the Orthodox community since he made the announcement in January he would use the feminized version of rabbi for his student, Sara Hurwitz, who now has the title "maharat."

The Rabbinical Council of America, an umbrella organization consisting mostly of Modern Orthodox rabbis, reportedly considered revoking his ordination.

But Weiss and the RCA have come to an agreement, issuing concurring statements.

"It is not my intention or the intention of Yeshivat Maharat to confer the title of 'Rabba' upon its graduates," Weiss said. "Each student who completes its course of study in Tanach, Talmud, Halacha and Jewish Thought, and is deemed fit by her faith, knowledge of our Mesoret, ethical integrity and temperament to assume positions of religious leadership in Orthodox institutions will be confirmed as *manhigah hilkhait*, ruhanit, toranit (Maharat)."

Hurwitz has served seven years at the Hebrew Institute, performing some rabbinic duties but not others because of her gender.

Weiss already had been censured by the staunchly Orthodox Agudath Israel of America, which declared that by taking such a step and insisting it was tantamount to rabbinic ordination, Weiss had placed himself outside the bounds of Orthodoxy.

Gefilte fish dilemma not just a lot of carp

WASHINGTON — In time for the Passover season, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton pledged to resolve a trade dispute that is holding up a shipment of American-caught fish destined for Israeli plates as gefilte fish. Getting the Asian carp filets, used to make gefilte fish, from an Illinois fishery to an Israeli processing plant "sounds to me like one of those issues that should rise to the highest levels of our government," Clinton told the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee. Rep. Don Manzullo (R-IL) said Israel had slapped a 120 percent import duty on the fish and requested Clinton's help in resolving the matter before the Israelis sit down for their Seders on March 29.

Early American Jewish books to be auctioned

SAN FRANCISCO — Several rare early American Jewish books will be auctioned in New York. Among the offerings at next month's sale by Swann Auction Galleries is an early Jewish-American cookbook and the first Hebrew Bible printed on American soil. A first edition of Esther Levy's 1871 Jewish Cookery Book is estimated will fetch \$10,000 to \$15,000. This first Jewish cookbook published in North America offers a glimpse into late-19th-century Jewish life and food trends, when mutton was popular and husbands expected special Sunday dinners. Also for sale is an extremely rare Liber Psalmorum Hebraice from 1809, the first Hebrew version of the Bible printed in the Americas. No other complete copy has been seen at auction since 1998, according to the auction catalogue. The book is valued at \$9,000 to \$12,000.

Super Sunday phone-a-thon

300 answer the call 'yes' and donate \$100,000-plus



Milt (above) and Magda (middle) Orkin started their morning with a lot of no answers, but then Magda got two donations. (Right) Seth Forman started the day getting two pledges. It was his first year volunteering.

Campaign: Tzedakah, mitzvah & philanthropy

By ELAINE MARKOWITZ
 Jewish Press

The light airy look of the large room at the Jewish Community Center in Tampa the morning of Feb. 28 gave no clue to the hard work going on as the first shifts of volunteers starting making calls for Super Sunday, the Tampa Jewish Federation's phone-a-thon for its community-wide 2010 "Campaign for Our Jewish Future".

About a dozen volunteers were at their seats early that Sunday, asking community members for their monetary help in meeting Jewish needs here, in Israel and around the world.

The appeal was even more significant than usual as callers asked community members, most of whom have been affected by the down economy, to give as much as they could to help especially those fellow Jews who are jobless, homeless, hungry or otherwise desperate. Adding even more significance was the continuing needs to fund ongoing Jewish social service and educational programs.

"One of the nice things about this event is that people give up their Sunday to come here and help raise money," said Jonathan Ellis, president of the Tampa Jewish Federation.

On Super Sunday, a total of 75 volunteers



Lisa & Ty Gannon and Greg Miller had a special job: researching "lost" donors.

JEWISH PRESS photos
 by ELAINE MARKOWITZ



(L-R) JCC Preschool assistant teachers Lee Ann Lewkowiez and Rennee Spacone were volunteering for the first time.

called more than 1500 donors by phone from the phone-a-thon headquarters at the Tampa Jewish Federation/Jewish Community Center community campus. The calls resulted in 300 donations, about 100 more than last year. Pledge cards were mailed to those unavailable by phone. By the end of the day, more than \$100,000 had been pledged.

Steve Specter, a former Federation president,
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New museum exhibit salutes Florida Jews in the military

By ELAINE MARKOWITZ
 Jewish Press

Since the mid-1800s through present times, Florida Jews have served in the American military every time this nation has gone to war.

Their service to the country began with a fighter in the Seminole Indian wars and continues today with an officer at U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa.

The stories of 300 of these servicemen and women — including 18 individuals from Hillsborough and Pinellas counties — are featured in a new exhibit, "Florida Jews in the Military," at the Jewish Museum of Florida in Miami Beach. The exhibit runs through Sept. 12.

The earliest military man featured in the exhibit is Col. Abraham C. Myers, an 1833 graduate of West Point who fought in the Seminole Indian and Mexican wars. Fort Myers, then literally a fort, was named in his honor by his father-in-law, who was the commander of Fort Brooke (Tampa). During the Civil War, Myers was appointed quartermaster general of the Confederacy in 1861.

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(Left) Lt. Gen. David P. Fridovich, current director of the Center for Special Operations, U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base. (Above) Passover Seder for military personnel and families, hosted by Congregation Schaarai Zedek, Tampa, at the Hillsboro Hotel in 1943.

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Earthquake in Chile destroys synagogue Jewish groups again pledge disaster aid

JTA news service and staff reports

The Masorti synagogue in Concepcion was reported destroyed in the destruction caused by the 8.8 magnitude that rocked Chile Feb. 27.

Chilean casualties were estimated to total 800 as of March 4, but no casualties were reported among the 16,000 members of the Chilean Jewish community and damage to other Jewish institutions was minimal, according to initial reports.

"In Concepcion, close to the epicenter of the earthquake, Rabbi Angel Kreiman told us that he went to the synagogue, and 'it was like the *hurban habayit* (destruction of the temple), the walls were all cracked and the roof had fallen down. I couldn't stay there, so I got the *sifrei* Torah and left,'" said Rabbi Tzvi Graetz, the head of the international Masorti Olami (Conservative movement).

Chabad-Lubavitch, which has an outpost in Santiago, saw some structural damage to its building, but the organization wrote on its website that the Jewish communities along the Pacific coast of Chile "emerged largely unscathed."

Marcelo Lewkow, the national director of ORT Chile, reported that while he was unaware of any casualties within the Jewish community, it has been impossible to assess the damage to any of the

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