

*The Indiana Jewish*

# Post&Opinion

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Indianapolis IN  
*Performance Guide*

## *Called to the Torah*

*Perri Gray  
Bat Mitzvah on  
February 23, 2008*



Perri Gray interview on page IN 4 . Photo by Scott Romer.

# Critics Corner



## The Power of The Producers

By Charlie Epstein

When I first heard that the Beef & Boards Dinner Theatre had the new Mel Brooks musical *The Producers* on their schedule, I said to myself, "Oh no. They can't do that, especially with those elegant sets and extravagant costumes. This is impossible on that postage-stamp stage. And what about the cast? Who are they going to get to play the strange director Roger DeBris, or the effeminate Carmen Ghia, the director's com-

panion, or the sexy blond Ulla, or the insane Nazi playwright Franz Liebkind? All right, who are they going to get to play the two enormous leads—Max Bialystock, the role played by the comic Nathan Lane, and Leo Bloom, played by Matthew Broderick?"

Rest assured, all my fears were unnecessary. The production of *The Producers* at Beef & Boards is absolutely tremendous. Forget that awful

movie of the stage musical. The stage musical is pure entertainment. The music and lyrics are by Mel Brooks. Yes, he wrote the memorable music, while the book is by Mel Brooks and Thomas Meeham. Just to let you know how big this musical at Beef & Boards is, here are the numbers: 69 Swastikas, 8 pigeons, 52 wigs, 64 hats, 13 walkers, 130 elaborate costumes made from 450 yards of fabric, 54 performances, 3 guns, 18 actors, 3 adding machines, and 1 statue of David.

The Beef & Boards cast consists of the Beef & Boards producers, Douglas E. Stark, as Max Bialystock, and Eddie Curry, as Leo Bloom. It is fascinating watching these two wonderful performers working together. Actually, Eddie Curry could play Leo Bloom in any national touring company. As Franz Liebkind, the playwright of *Springtime for Hitler*, resident comic Jeff



After being pressed by Max Bialystock (Douglas E. Stark), left, to make \$2,000 disappear from his books, frightened accountant Leo Bloom (Eddie Curry) concedes in Beef & Boards Dinner Theatre's production of the Mel Brooks smash hit *The Producers*. This is Indiana's first independent production of the Broadway sensation that won more Tony Awards than any other show in history.

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Stockberger was perfect. Curt Dale Clark was good as director Roger DeBris, while Sean Blake was hilarious as Carmen Ghia. The Blond Bombshell Ulla was played by Elizabeth Broadhurst. The special tenor in the second act is beautifully sung by Peter Scharbrough. The magnificent direction and choreography are by the talented Marc Robin whose contributions to this production are hard to be appreciated fully. The whole show is in his capable hands.

Technically it would be hard to duplicate the Broadway production, but Michael Layton

does himself proud as scenic and lighting designer even without the huge mirror. The fabulous costuming is by resident Brian Horton. It is amazing how everything comes together for a great show. *The Producers* plays through Sept. 28. It would not surprise me if more performances were added.

Tickets range from \$33 to \$55 and include Chef Odell Ward's specially prepared buffet. Parking is always free. For reservations, call the box office at 317.872.9664. For more information and show schedule, visit [www.beefandboards.com](http://www.beefandboards.com).

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# Marsh revamps kosher foods section

Marsh at 86th and Ditch has recently revamped its kosher section. The new location for their kosher foods section is just behind the produce section. And Marsh has added many new items.

The newest hot items include a huge selection of chocolates from Israel and Zelda baked goods from Skokie, Ill. Other new items include sauces and marinades, soups, prepared packaged meals for people on the go and for lunches. The number of kosher wines offered has been increased, and champagne has been added.

The department also carries staples like matzo, gefilte fish, and some household products.

The best selling new products are the kosher cold cuts, including a variety of meats such as corn beef, salami, bologna, pastrami, and turkey. These meats are sliced twice a week in the store under the supervision of the Indianapolis Board of Kashrut (IOBK) then sealed and labeled with the IOBK label. The new cold cuts are available in a small section of the regular deli counter. Be sure to look for the IOBK label.

Other kosher meats, including baking chickens and pepperoni, can be found in the kosher cooler in the kosher section of the store.

Although some other stores have a smattering of kosher foods, this Marsh location has the largest selection of kosher

foods of any single chain grocery store in central Indiana. Store manager Mike Soliday says, "During the holidays, especially Passover, shoppers come from as far as Terre Haute and Lafayette for supplies."

## Indianapolis kosher food coop

The Indianapolis Kosher Food Coop is taking orders for a delivery on Sept. 17. The order deadline is Sept. 3rd. Please visit the website, [www.kckoshercoop.com](http://www.kckoshercoop.com), for detailed information about delivery and to browse around and shop 24/7 at your convenience. Virtually all of the details including payment, detailed product descrip-

tions, sale items, sharing of orders, and substitutions are taken care of automatically on the site. The next order will

be in December. For more information or to add your name to the email list, contact [indykoshercoop@gmail.com](mailto:indykoshercoop@gmail.com).

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## Condolences

The *Indiana Jewish Post & Opinion* extends condolences to Shoshana and David Harper and their son, Nadav, on the death of Shoshana's mother, Anne Watkins. The funeral took place on Aug. 24, 2008 in New Jersey.

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# Perri Gray bat mitzvah

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Perri Gray, daughter of Scott and Barbara Gray, became a bat mitzvah on Feb. 23, 2008. Rabbis Dennis Sasso and Sandy Sasso were both in attendance.

Perri's Torah portion was Ki Tissa, which she explains is the story about when the Israelites melted down their golden jewelry to make the golden calf. They did this because Moses had gone to Mount Sinai to get the tablets, and it took him a long time to return. The Israelites were becoming impatient and feeling like their god wasn't paying any attention to them, so they melted their gold to make a golden calf, which would be their new god.

As part of her studies, she learned that the women of

Israel didn't aid in giving or melting the gold jewelry to build the golden calf. Perri shared: "As a women, that makes me feel very proud. There are many lessons that can be learned from this. During my life I will be faced with many decisions. Sometimes it will be easy to follow the crowd. However, it will be important to know when following the crowd isn't the right decision. I pride myself on being an independent thinker and I am confident that I will make the right decisions, not necessarily the most popular ones."

She explained that "if you believe strongly in something you should not be afraid to stand up for it. Whether it's your close friends pressur-

ing you to do something, or a disagreement with family members or classmates, your opinion always matters and you should always stand up for what you believe in."

When asked about being nervous on the bima, Perri talked about the fact that every bat mitzvah candidate must be a bit nervous, but that her nervousness lasted only the first day she met with the cantor to go over her prayers.

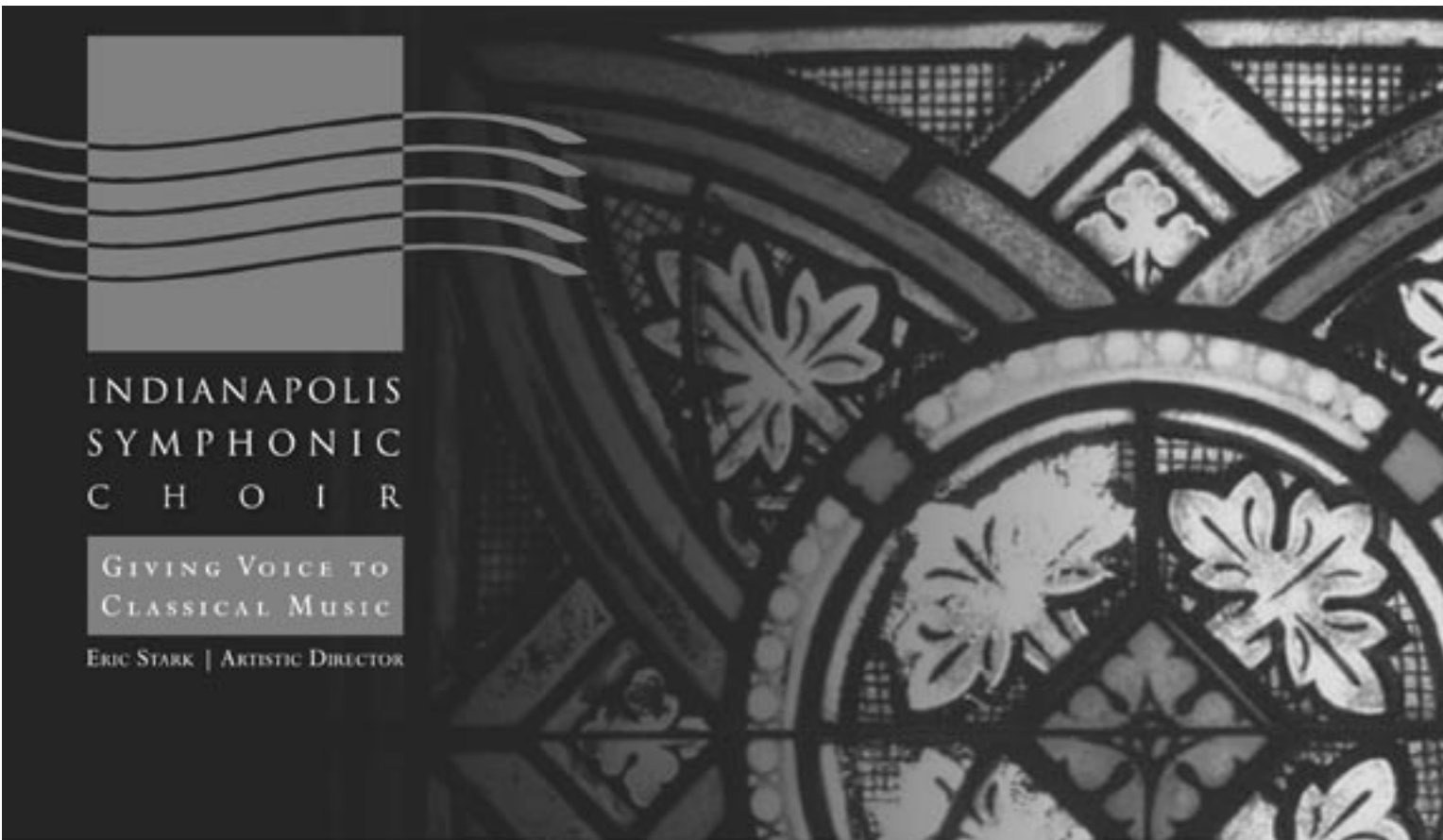
She felt like she practiced and practiced and practiced so hard and that her efforts paid off, that she gained confidence. In fact, Perri really felt proud to get up in front of the entire congregation. "I've watched others do this - my older brother, Spencer, and my friends and cousins - but I had no idea about how it would be when it was the real deal. There's a lot on your shoulders. But I felt prepared."

Perri especially appreciated how Rabbi Sandy helped her dig deep when she was considering what she learned from her portion. She also felt she couldn't have done without help from Rabbi Dennis and Cantor Meyersberg, and she wouldn't have known what to read or chant and when to stand and when to sit without Cantor Sharon. "The work you do before hand means everything." She also mentioned Mr. Cohen from Hebrew School at the BJE who she particularly liked because he encouraged her.

Perri and her family had lots of out-of-towners come to support her and help her celebrate. She had cousins, and friends of her parents and grandparents from Calif., Wisc., NY, Fla., and Texas.

When asked what the easiest part was, Perri said strongly: "No part was easy. It was a lot of work." But she went on to say that she felt successful. "I learned a lot. And I'm happy that I'm welcome as an adult Jewish woman now, and I'll be proud to wear the tallit during the holidays."

Perri attends Carmel Middle School and belongs to Congregation Beth-El Zedeck. Perri has an older brother, Spencer Gray, 17, who became a bar mitzvah at Beth-El a few years back.



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# Abigail Matt bat mitvah

Abigail Matt, daughter of Bruce and Rhonda Matt, became bat mitzvah on April 12, 2008 at Congregation Shaarey Tefilla in Carmel, Ind. Rabbi Bienstock presided.

Abigail's torah portion was Metzora, which is about leprosy. Abigail shared, "It reinforced the idea of not judging a book by its cover. People are all different, by abilities, intelligence, and appearance and my torah portion demonstrated this concept."

She says that she was nervous only on Friday because she wasn't as familiar with that service and it was the start of the process. She went on to say that everything turned out fine and the service went very smoothly. In fact Abigail felt like the most surprising thing about her bat mitzvah was how smoothly everything went and how beautiful the shul looked. "All the planning and preparations turned out nicer than I even expected."

Her favorite part was the Saturday morning service: "I got to see how everything turned out. I was proud of the job I did. And my least favorite part was having it end so quickly."

Abigail had relatives come from Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Florida, northern Indiana, New York, and Ohio to attend her bat mitzvah. She shared that it was amazing to have all her relatives there on her special day.

When asked about preparing for her bat mitzvah, she explained, "I attended the Hasten Hebrew Academy up till the 4th grade and then attended BJE for two additional years. My Hebrew was pretty good with all that training." She went on to say that Rabbi Bienstock spent an amazing amount of time with her in one-on-one instruction. "We studied together for a year before my bat mitzvah. He was very patient with me even when I had problems with difficult portions. Spending all this time with Rabbi Bienstock helped make my bat mitzvah more meaningful and special. I really appreciated all his help."

Abigail also talked about



Abby Matt holding the Torah.  
Photo by Goldberg Photography.

the volunteer activities she did for her bat mitzvah project: "I volunteered my time in a homeless shelter, food bank, and nursing home."

Looking back on the whole process, Abigail decided the most difficult part for her was mastering the Friday night service. She shared that they tackled the Friday night service last and ended up having the least amount of time to study it. She explains that the easiest part, on the other hand, was helping the rabbi move to use MP3 recordings from his standard tape recorder. Then she said with a straight face, "The rabbi worked really hard to make this change. My dad came to the shul and worked one-on-one with the rabbi. The rabbi was really a good student."

Abigail says she will strive to be a good Jew. "I know that I will not be perfect but will work to improve myself. This was a wonderful and meaningful experience. I think all Jews, even if they are older should have a bar or bat mitzvah."

Abigail was featured on the cover of the Aug. 6 issue.

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## Documentary film festival brings films and filmmakers to Bloomington

Student-initiated and Indiana University sponsored event assembles a weekend of Jewish-themed documentaries featuring two visits by internationally renowned filmmakers.

BLOOMINGTON—Graduate students Devorah Shubowitz and Jessica Alpert came up with the idea over a year ago. Now it is a reality. From Oct. 11–13, the Indiana Memorial Union (IMU) will host a free documentary film festival *Jewish Women in Global Perspective*, featuring ten films from around the world. Two award-winning directors, Faye Lederman (*A Good Uplift*) and Jennifer Fox

(*Flying: Confessions of a Free Woman*) will be on site to discuss their films and answer questions.

*The Celluloid Ceiling*, a study of women's employment in the American film industry, reported in 2006 that the number of women working as producers, directors, writers, and cinematographers on top-grossing Hollywood films had decreased from 19% in 2001 to 16% in 2004. Martha M. Lauzen reported this and other facts in *The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women in the Top 250 Films of 2005*. She and others believe that women are still marginalized in the

film industry, but documentary films remain one critical site of women's creative independence, an avenue through which women can explore the intersections of feminism and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class-consciousness.

By showcasing these films and bringing some of their directors to Indiana University, *Jewish Women in Global Perspective* aims to increase the visibility of independent films by and about Jewish women, to bring international documentary films to a wider American audience, and to demonstrate the professionalism and achievement of women filmmakers

from around the globe.

The two featured directors, Jennifer Fox and Faye Lederman, have produced two award-winning documentaries. Ms. Fox, director of *Flying: Confessions of a Free Woman*, has been featured at festivals around the world including the Sundance Festival, International Documentary at Amsterdam, Hot Docs, Vancouver, Thessaloniki, and Edinburgh Festivals.

Ms. Lederman, an educator and filmmaker, is the director, producer, and writer of *A Good Uplift*. Her films have been screened around the world and her work is supported by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Funding Exchange. Both directors will be

present to discuss their films at length with the public.

Ten films will be screened throughout the weekend, addressing subjects such as homosexuality, body image, Jewish comedienness, sex and reproduction, race, and class. Carefully assembled panels of university scholars and community leaders including local midwives, lawyers, professors, and physicians will conduct open discussions after each screening.

The film festival begins Saturday evening October 11 from 6 p.m.–11 p.m., and continues Oct. 12 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Oct. 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The festival contains multiple screenings and is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Jessica Alpert at jalpert@indiana.edu or 713-822-5546.

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## Fall 2008 Purdue Jewish Studies Events – West Lafayette

All members of the Purdue University community and the general public are cordially invited to attend events offered by the Jewish Studies Program. For more information about these and other events go to [www.cla.purdue.edu/jewish-studies/](http://www.cla.purdue.edu/jewish-studies/).

**How Tevye Learned to Fiddle** – Mon., Sept. 22, 8:00 p.m., at Purdue's Stewart Center, Rm 310.

Anita Norich will speak about Sholem Aleichem's most well-known work, *Tevye the Dairyman*, which has been adapted for stage and screen in various languages and countries. The most famous of these is *Fiddler on the Roof*. But in addition to this English film, there are extraordinary adaptations in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian. Using screen clips from each of these four films, Anita Norich explores why this story continues to haunt the modern Jewish imagination and how it has been reinterpreted throughout the 20th century.

Anita Norich is professor of English and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. She is the author of *The Homeless Imagination in the Fiction of Israel Joshua Singer* (1991) and co-editor of *Gender and Text in Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literatures* (1992).

**The Larry Axel Memorial Lectureship in Religion** – Mon., Nov. 10, 8:00 p.m., at Purdue's Krannert Auditorium.

Michael Berenbaum, professor of Jewish Studies and Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute for the Study of the Holocaust and Ethics, American Jewish University, will speak on "Jewish Life Under Attack: The Role of the Synagogue in Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1938."

**The Search: A Graphic Novel for Teaching the Holocaust in Europe**

Wed., Sept. 3, 12:30, at Purdue's Stewart Center, Rm 320. Wendy Flory, professor of English at Purdue University will speak on *The Search*

**The Story of Shofar: An Editor's Personal Account**

Wed, Oct. 22, 12:30, at Purdue's Stewart Center, Rm 320. Joseph Haberer, professor emeritus of Political Science at Purdue University will speak on *The Story of Shofar*.

**Land of Anti-Semitism? Home of the Brave: The Transformation of Jewish America during World War II**

Wed., Nov. 12, 12:30, at Purdue's Stewart Center, Rm 214D. Ashley M. Hebda, winner of the 2008 Edward Simon Barzillai Lodge No. 111 Prize in Jewish Studies will speak about the transformation of Jewish America during WWII.

# Critics Corner

## Waiting for Goffman

By Charlie Epstein

**G**ary Cohen, distinguished and talented stage director, is directing the new play *Me Too* at the Mud Creek Players Barn. It is written by his son-in-law, Mark Goffman, a well-known writer from Los Angeles. Mark will attend the first weekend of performances, starting Sept. 5. The performances will continue through two more weekends, with a matinee Sun., Sept 14, which incidentally will be signed.



Gary Cohen

The Mud Creek Players community theater was established some time ago by Sol Blumenthal and has flourished ever since. The barn is located at 9740 E. 86th Street, at the corner of 86th and Mud Creek Rd.

This is the first play written by Mark Goffman, whose writing credentials are extensive. Currently he is a supervising producer for A&E's new series *The Beast*, starring Patrick Swayze. He also was a supervising producer for *Law & Order: SVU*. Mark wrote for *The West Wing* and *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*.

He met Gary's daughter Lindsay in L.A., and they have been married for approximately two years. Gary's other

daughter, Risa, is to be married soon.

*Me Too*, a comedy drama dealing with relationships, premiered in Los Angeles at the Stella Adler Theater in 2006 and ran for six weeks. Mark's father-in-law, Gary Cohen, coproduced the show. The play revolves around a hopeless romantic who meets the girl of his dreams. However, the path of true love and happiness proves to have some bumps in the road. *Me Too* deals with adult subject matter. Among the local actors performing in *Me Too* are Betty Bullis, Brenna Campbell, Robb Day, David Pittman, Anne Phelan, and Paul Burton. Gary Cohen is extremely proud of this cast.

For more information, call 290-5343. Many people have been waiting for this play to open. *Me Too*.



Getting to Know You: Flipping your date onto the ground may not seem to be the best way to get acquainted, but it seems to work for Lucy (Brenna Campbell) and Andrew (David Pittman) in the Mud Creek Players production of the Midwest premiere of *Me Too!*

The *Indiana Jewish Post & Opinion* is now available at four locations in Indianapolis: **Marsh** at 86th and Ditch, **Northside News** at 54th and College, **Nora Library** and **Shapiros in Carmel**.



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## Duke Energy Yuletide Celebration

December 7, 2008, 6pm  
December 14, 2008, 6pm  
Jack Everly, Music Director  
Ann Hampton Callaway, Host

## You Make the Call

February 22, 2009, 1:30pm or 4pm  
Sean Newhouse, Conductor

## Cinderella

April 26, 2009, 1:30pm or 4pm  
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Sean Newhouse, Associate Conductor

# Mazel Tov!



Simcha (Eddie) Margolis, of Indianapolis, is engaged to Sarah Feldman. Sarah is the daughter of Joe and Ann Feldman of Toronto. Simcha is the son of Mary Ann Margolis and Sam Margolis, of blessed memory. Both Simcha and Sarah made aliyah and now reside in Jerusalem. The wedding will take place there on Nov., 30, 2008.

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# NATIONAL NEWS

## Big Hug of Jerusalem and peace building in Jordan

By Eliyahu McLean

On June 24, we hosted the second Big Hug of Jerusalem event that brought together 800 "lovers of Jerusalem" – Palestinians, Israelis and internationals around the walls of the Old City. We started at two meeting points at the Gan HaBonim garden below Jaffa Gate, and at Shuk il Falahin, the market area above Damascus Gate. Under the palm trees, we started with a small listening circle that grew as many passersby – Israeli, Palestinian, and internationals – joined us. Musicians played peace songs, then we formed a large circle and did a spiral dance and chant for unity.

At the same moment 200 people were forming a line to "Hug" the Old City near Jaffa Gate, we formed a chain of sev-

eral hundred between Damascus and New Gates. Arab and Jew, young and old, we stood on the green lawn overlooking the Old City Walls, holding 10 minutes of silence for the peace of Jerusalem. At that moment children flew kites right in front of us, it seemed as if the soaring kites were carrying people's intentions upward to the heavens.

We then guided the line of people down to the steps of the Damascus Gate. As we filled the area above Damascus Gate, many more people – Palestinian shopkeepers, children, religious Jews, hippies, soldiers and police – joined us. We led hundreds in a chant and *zikhron*, chanting "Shalom, Salaam, Hu Hu." Spiritual leaders Rabbi Menachem Froman, Sheikh Bukhari, a Hindu woman teacher from India, Haj Ibrahim and a guest from Jordan offered blessings. After drumming, singing and praying, we lifted our hands in unison with an intention for healing the divisions in Jerusalem, honoring our shared love for this Holy City. The event ended with a large drum circle, led by Eyal Davidov, on the lawn above New Gate. Orthodox Jewish yeshiva students and Palestinian youth drummed and danced together into the night. The Big Hug is planned now to be an annual event. Thanks to organizer Dvora Pearlman.

Great pictures of the Big Hug of Jerusalem are posted here: [www.flickr.com/jerusalem\\_peacemakers/sets](http://www.flickr.com/jerusalem_peacemakers/sets).

Jerusalem Peacemakers has been involved in many other peace initiatives that are described below.

### Iraqi and American youth meet in Jordan

Forty American and Iraqi teenagers met for one week at the King Abdallah Academy near Amman, Jordan. On July 16–17, Sheih Bukhari and I were invited as keynote speakers to talk about our work. The teenagers were chosen from a wide variety of backgrounds and regions in both countries. It was amazing to see how fast they were able to bond, and speak so openly about different points of view concerning US-Iraqi relations. The conference organizer, himself only 19 years old, has initiated a project to pair American universities with Iraqi high schools, supplying them with used computers and other equipment.

In Amman I also attended a leadership course at the United Nations University on Nonviolent Approaches for Conflict Resolution, Negotiation, Mediation and Peace Building: "Promoting Peace Through Dialogue: An International Conference with a Focus on the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict." There we spent a week, July 28 – Aug. 3rd, with young adult activists and scholars from all over the world, including Jordan, Palestine, Japan, England, Yemen and Bahrain. Jordan is now seen as an island of stability in the Middle East and has become the central meeting point for people from all over the region.

### The Abrahamic Reunion meets in Zichron Yaakov

We held a two-day retreat for the Abrahamic Reunion, a group of Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Druze religious

*Continued on page NAT 4*



Hedva and the youth dance.



Declaring "Allah-hu akbar," which means "peace will prevail."





