

The Charlotte JEWISH news

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Just a Little More to Set a New Record! Federation Campaign 2000 Tops \$2 Million

"We are moving towards another record," remarked Eric Sklut, the 2000 Federation Annual Campaign Chair, at a recent gathering. "There are many appeals currently in the community, all important, but our community understands the needs and has responded once again to the Federation."

Currently, the total is \$2,029,411, and the campaign is expected to end June 2. Funds raised in the campaign are used to meet the needs of Jews in Charlotte, Israel and in 60 countries around the world.

Eric went on to say how the campaign serves as a wonderful instrument to build the community. "I became the Campaign Chair late, but have realized how important the campaign is to the future of the community, and how pleased I am to be involved." ✪



Orchestrated Arrests Rabbis' Way of Showing Solidarity with "Iran 13"

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — It's not every day that eight rabbis break the law en masse.

Yet, because quiet diplomacy, public condemnation and prayer vigils have yielded dubious results - the apparent show trial of 13 Iranian Jews accused of spying for Israel continues — a group of New York City rabbis felt they needed to take more drastic measures.

Led by the activist Rabbi Avi Weiss, eight rabbis and two lay leaders draped in tefillin plunked themselves down before midday Manhattan traffic on Wednesday.

Within minutes, the protesters, singing and praying, got what they wanted. The two dozen police officers standing by politely whisked them into a large patrol wagon, and traffic moved on.

The site for this act of civil disobedience was chosen because it sits in the shadow of the 11th floor offices of the Iranian mission to the United Nations.

"It's so different to be arrested here in New York, in a free country," Weiss, president of the Coalition for Jewish Concerns, Amcha, told a crowd of 70 or so

First Plea of Not Guilty Entered by Iranian Jew

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — Six of the seven Iranian Jews who have gone before Iran's Revolutionary Court have "confessed" to spying for Israel.

The first plea of not guilty came May 8, as 31-year-old Farzad Kashi, a religion teacher, told the judge he did not pass sensitive material to the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence agency.

Earlier in the day, Kashi's brother, Faramarz, 35, reportedly admitted he was guilty of such activities.

American advocates for the accused, however, remain adamant that the allegations against all 13 of the Iranian Jews on trial are unfounded. They maintain that the hearings are a scripted political show trial.

That Farzad Kashi pleaded innocent was either part of the script or perhaps a small act of defiance, said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"It means Farzad didn't bend to

the pressures being applied," said Hoenlein, who has closely monitored the hearings.

Advocates like Hoenlein have a new concern: that the string of admissions which were broadcast on state television, along with pleas for forgiveness and leniency, may be provoking persecution of the community of 25,000 Jews.

There are signs that many Iranians are reacting negatively to the aired confessions.

Media reports from Iran state that Jews, even Jewish children, are now experiencing harassment on the streets, in the workplace and in the schools. There are reports of anti-Jewish graffiti and fears of an economic boycott of Jewish-owned shops.

One Jewish woman, the wife of one of the suspects, reportedly pleaded with photographers outside the courtroom to not take her photo.

"I work at a health clinic, I don't want any problems," she said. "I don't want people pointing fingers at me." ✪

For more articles and an opinion on the situation with the "Iran 13," please turn to page 32.

Federation Helps Record Number of Teens Travel to Israel in Summer 2000 Federation's Teen Israel Experience Supports 20 Charlotte Teens This Year

By Amy Krakovitz

"It's every Jew's homeland, no matter where you live," says Benjamin Kweskin, a rising senior at Providence High School who will be going to Israel, as well as Eastern Europe, with BBYO. Benjamin is just one of the many teenagers scheduled to go to Israel this summer from Charlotte with many different programs and youth groups. His trip, and those of 19 other area teenagers, is being supported by Federation's annual Teen Israel Experience.

Phillip Brodsky, who will be attending Alexander Muss High School in Israel this summer, sees this trip as fulfillment of a long-held dream. "I attended Camp Judea for four years," he explains, "and everyone there always said how great it was to visit Israel...Because I'll be going to school there, I'll have an opportunity to learn more about the history and get a better understanding of what I see while I'm there." Students at Alexander Muss High School earn school credits that can be transferred to their regular high school records. Joining Phillip at Alexander Muss this summer, with the help of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, are Michael Borresen, Sara Bryan, Matthew Gordan, Jordan Klemons, David Krusch, Jessica Levine, and Aaron Weiner.

B'nai B'rith Youth Organization is also sending a large number of teens from Charlotte to Israel. "This is the largest number of kids from Charlotte to go to Israel on BBYO sponsored trips," says Ellen Goldstein, Regional Director of BBYO. "They are going on diverse trips, including Eastern Europe, France, adventure trips, and more... I hope they bring back a love for Israel to the rest of the community and instill a desire to see Israel in the people who haven't been there."

In addition to Ben Kweskin, other BBYO'ers visiting Israel this summer with the support of the Teen Israel Experience include: Scott Friend, Mitchell Gartner, Adam Goldfarb, Rachel Orange, and Michael Osborn.

Another local organization that is sending a large group of kids is Young Judaea, the American

Zionist youth group. "This is just a natural progression for me," says Emily Rotberg, who is president of the local Young Judaea chapter. "I hope to meet lots of new people (1200 YJ'ers will be in Israel this summer), get to know Israel, and heighten my leadership skills." Emily is especially excited about her trip, as she is signed up to go on an archaeological dig while in



Sara Bryan and Phillip Brodsky are going to the Alexander Muss High School in Israel this summer thanks to your pledge to the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte.

Israel. Other Charlotte YJ'ers that have benefited from Federation's Teen Israel Experience are Daniel Block, Mark Sussman and Aaron Wroblewski.



Amanda Raflo's Teen Israel Experience trip is with NFTY (without the cat).

The National Federation of Temple Youth, the Reform movement's youth group, also has a summer trip to Israel. Federation has extended its support to Amanda Raflo to go to Israel this summer. "I hope to learn more about Judaism," Amanda says. "I want to get more in touch with my Jewish identity. And maybe I can encourage others to go to Israel."

Natalie Sterling, a rising 9th grader, is going to Israel with "Metrowest Goes Israel."

It is your campaign contributions to the Jewish Federation of

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SHALOM PARK

Campaign Surpasses \$25 Million Mark!

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