

THE JEWISH STAR

Serving the Orthodox communities of the South Shore

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SHE IS REMEMBERED

Shloshim for Naomi Levenbrown, a"h

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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Your letters about the ALPS "Orthodox" ads

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IN MY VIEW

Setting the record straight

BY ASHER MANSDORF

I can understand why parents with children in the public school system would initially question my motives for running for a seat on the Lawrence school board. However, I firmly believe that the facts speak for themselves. I am proud of my record of fairness, and my absolute conviction that the ability to receive a superior public school education has been the linchpin in helping Americans achieve greatness. I found that belief to be completely compatible with the certainty that I had much to offer the public sector. I have met some great teachers, administrators, students and parents and hope that I have positively impacted their lives.

I write to set the record straight.

Before I was elected in 2001 there was complete fiscal mismanagement by the majority of the board. It was covered up by lies or naive wishful thinking.

The then-superintendent said the new teachers' contract would cost the district nothing, as a result of union efficiencies and give-backs. In actuality, the contract cost 8 percent a year compounded by a \$700,000 cover-up in budget calculations. The result was a 14 percent budget increase that was never approved by a public vote. The increase was adopted solely by

the Board of Education.

■The prior board authorized the purchase of software called Learning Landscape for \$750,000. The software was never installed, it is now obsolete, and taxpayers' money was poured down the drain.

■In 1999, the middle school slate roof was repaired but immediately began to leak. Nothing was done to compel the contractor to fix the problem under his warranty.

■In 2000, 90 Palm Pilots were purchased for staff at a cost of almost \$40,000, but never distributed. They were accidentally discovered in a closet during an audit and are now useless.

■The student population of our pub-

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Dr. Asher Mansdorf is the president of the District 15 school board.

The parade after the parade



After the Salute to Israel parade on Sunday, as thousands of parade-goers kept the party going with a four-hour concert in Central Park, some two and three-wheeled elements of the parade took to the FDR Drive on the East Side of Manhattan. Members of the Chai Riders, a Jewish motorcycle club, were heading to a dinner picnic off the Palisades, according to Juda Englemayer

of 5W Public Relations, a member of the group. Rabbi Dov Emerson, who snapped this photo, watched as some 200 motorcycles rode by, sporting license plates from New York, Florida, Georgia, Canada and elsewhere. For photos of the real parade, and the concert that followed, see page 12.

Politics without policy: the 17th Knesset

BY DR. NICOLE BRACKMAN

Anyone following Israeli domestic politics would be correct to make two quick observations about current events: Israel lives up to its reputation as a vibrant, participatory and intensely vocal democracy, and — more depressingly — under the surface of all the debate about the recent Winograd Commission findings, there is little in the way of creative policy thinking going on in the government.

It would be easy to dismiss the highly public,

and embarrassingly volatile, maneuverings and manipulation as politics as usual but that would be wrong. The debacle surrounding the release of the Winograd Commission report, the subsequent 150,000 person-strong protest in Kikar Rabin, and the blatant refusal of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to resign all highlight the shallowness of this government's record and its inability to overcome political considerations in the interest of planning and executing policies that build, protect and

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PARSHIOT BEHAR-BECHUKOTAI

Chock full of Mitzvot

BY RABBI AVI BILLET

The concluding verse of Chapter 26 and the concluding verse of Chapter 27 seem almost repetitive.

26:46 — "These are the chukim (statutes), mishpatim (judgments), and torot (doctrines) that G-d placed between Him and the children of Israel through Moshe's hands at Mt. Sinai."

27:34 — "These are the mitzvot (commandments) G-d commanded to Moshe to [instruct] the children of Israel, at Mt. Sinai."

A priori, the former seems to sum up the declaration of the tokhacha, the curse that comes upon those who do not follow G-d's word, the law as written in the Torah, while the latter seems to round out the book in general.

Are these minute divisions really the explanation for why the Torah seems to repeat itself? Or is something deeper running in the river?

A cursory glance has us notice the difference between different kinds of laws in the

See PARSHA, Page 5

Skelos calls ALPS ad 'inappropriate'

Greenbaum claims critics are 'playing the religion card'

BY MAYER FERTIG

A newspaper advertisement that asked, "Should the Lawrence Public School District Be Run By An Orthodox Majority?" drew a visceral, furious reaction from Orthodox residents of School District 15. The ads were perceived as so objectionable that it seemed they would backfire and draw enraged Orthodox voters to the polls in droves on Tuesday.

A torrent of outraged phone calls and letters to the editor were received at the Nassau Herald, which published the ad in its May 3-9 issue, along with a second one claiming that "the current Orthodox-controlled board" is "dismantling our public schools."

Compounding the angry reaction, the ads were inadvertently published without any indication of their source, leading some readers to the belief that they indicated the editorial opinion of the Herald. The ads were placed by the group Advocates for the Lawrence Public Schools (ALPS). The Herald is owned by Richner Communications, which is also the parent company of The Jewish Star.

The ads referring to the religious beliefs of candidates Nahum Marcus and Solomon Blisko were "inappropriate," said state Sen. Dean Skelos (R-Rockville Centre) in an interview. In his opinion, they crossed a line. When asked, he said, "No, I would not vote for somebody that did that." Marcus and Blisko are running on a ticket with David Sussman, who is not Orthodox and currently has children attending Lawrence public schools.

"My feeling is that when you run for office, whether it's the president of the United States, state Senate or school board, it should be about issues — certainly, there's no place in elections to bring up religion," Skelos

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FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH

I began as a young lawyer

BY DAVID SEIDEMANN

I have been practicing law for 20 years now, and I must tell you that the same rush I felt 20 years ago, when I tried my first case, I still feel today when I stand before a judge and jury.

I was nervous back then, and admittedly feel at bit jittery even today when I plead my client's case before the court. So much is at stake — sometimes money, sometimes ownership of property, sometimes custody of a child and sometimes a person's freedom. No, I haven't tried any death penalty cases (nor do I ever wish to), but I have represented clients who were facing significant jail sentences for charges from attempted murder to assault to robbery to possession of controlled substances.

The first case I ever tried was when I had just passed the bar and I was working for a law firm in New Jersey. My boss called me in and asked me if I had any trial experience. I, of course, answered "no," as I had just fin-

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Shabbat

Candlelighting: 7:42 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends: 8:49 p.m.
Torah reading: Parshiot Behar-Bechukotai



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A Salute to Israel

HAFTR students (above) formed an impressive line of march on their way up Fifth Avenue in Manhattan in the Salute to Israel Parade last Sunday. They were joined by HALB (above, right) and dozens of Yeshivot, Day Schools, Shuls and organizations from across the spectrum of the Jewish world, marching, and riding floats in salute of the State of Israel's 59th year. Soldiers, recruiting-poster perfect, rode a float sponsored by the Jewish Agency (far right).

Among the tens of thousands on Fifth Ave., EMT Meir Shubowitz of the Woodmere Fire Dept. (far right, inset).

After the parade thousands and thousands of parade-goers (below, right) retired to the Summer Stage in Central Park for the 14th annual Dr. Manfred R. Lehmann Memorial Israel Day Concert. Dr. Meir Abittan performed, joined by Gershon Veroba, Pey Dalid, Shloime Dachs, Shlomo Katz, Yood, Chaim Kiss, the Piamenta Band, Hazzan Moshe Tessone, and "Except Saturday" in a more than four-hour show host by "JM in the AM" radio host Nachum Segal (m-f 6-9a 91.1 fm, www.jmintheam.com). Dovid and Leora Fertig (below,



left) enjoyed the show and lunch provided by a Dougies concession.

Concert Organizer Dr. Joe Frager and Chairman Dr. Paul Brody did a great job seeing that their thousands of guests left entertained and energized about Israel after a big day in Manhattan.



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To arrange a private tour contact
Rabbi David Leibtag
at **(516) 569-3370**