

# Kol Ya'akov קול יעקב

*The Voice of Beth Jacob Congregation*

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## Engaging Shabbat

### Shabbat and Social Action

Friday and Saturday  
January 27-28, 2006

## SERVICE SCHEDULE

Daily Minyan  
Saide Chapel  
7:15 a.m. Monday through Friday  
9:00 a.m. Sundays

Kabbalat Shabbat  
Saide Chapel  
5:30 p.m. Fridays

Shabbat Morning  
Schechter Family Sanctuary  
9:00 a.m. Saturdays



Beth Jacob Congregation

## Coming and Going

The immigration and emigration stories of Beth Jacob congregants

BY MICHAEL BLUMFIELD

### Feeling more at home in Israel

JESSICA FISHMAN TALKS ABOUT THE SPONTANEITY AND warmth of Israelis. Ari Rosenstein talks about their “forwardness.” For both of them, the qualities of Israeli culture are so appealing, they’ve decided to leave their homes in Minnesota to become permanent residents of Israel.

“I feel more comfortable there,” says Jessica. “I feel that I fit better there.” Ari echoes her sentiment: “I realized in Israel how much happier I was—speaking the language and enjoying it.”



Jessica Fishman, center, with her parents Susie and Leslie.

Jessica moved there in July 2003 after graduating from Indiana University with a degree in journalism and business. Otzma, a volunteer program after college led her to work in an absorption center working with new Ethiopian immigrants children, helping high school students with their English and working with underprivileged youth.

Realizing she wanted to immerse herself deeper in Israeli society, she joined

the Israeli army and served in the IDF Spokesperson unit. Friendships with Israelis grew, including a renewed friendship with an Israeli woman, Karen, who her family hosted while she worked at Camp Butwin through an exchange program five years ago.

Her two-year stint in the army recently ended, and she has been visiting her parents, Leslie and Susie Fishman, in Mendota Heights. Her parents, Jessica says, are the only thing keeping her connected with Minnesota. She doesn’t particularly miss the standard of living she had grown up with as an American. “When you don’t have material comfort, you learn to find happiness in other ways,” she says.

Both Jessica and Ari had visited Israel as teenagers and got a sense of the country. Ari

Immigration is a hot topic these days, and Beth Jacob will convene a panel later this month to look at the challenges immigrants face. (See page 9). For some perspective, we present profiles of Beth Jacob members who have picked up stakes and changed countries—immigrants from the former Soviet Union as well as a pair of young St. Paulites who are making or have made aliyah. Rabbi Allen comments on the topic in his column (page 2) and shul member Linda Schloff provides an historical perspective on the immigration that established St. Paul’s Jewish community in the first of a two-part series that begins this month on page 5.)

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*Coming and Going, continued from front page.*

studied at Alexander Muss High School in Israel in 1997 and was haunted by a question asked by a teacher: "If Israel is ever in trouble, would you come back?" Friends of his had made aliyah during the intifada. Ari felt he wasn't doing enough.

Ari had excelled in Hebrew at Talmud Torah Day School, and spent all of last year in Israel—so engrossed in the country that he was dreaming in Hebrew. He plans to study more extensively at an Ulpan for six months, then attend graduate school so he can work in children's television—a field in need of Israeli-based programming, he says.



**Ari Rosenstein**

Ari, who made aliyah last month, knows as well that it will be harder to keep in touch with all of his family members, particularly his grandmother, who won't be able to travel to visit him. But she knows he'll be happier there, so she's all for it, Ari said. And he's comforted that his parents, Marty and Betty, will visit him frequently.

Still, it is on the other side of the world, and—as Les Fishman says—"you can't fly over for the weekend." The Fishmans have found some comfort in a tech-

**Ari was haunted by a question asked by a teacher: *If Israel is ever in trouble, would you come back?***

nological solution—a video camera attached to Jessica's computer that allows her parents to stay in touch with her remotely via the Internet. "That makes it easier," says Susie Fishman. "We can communicate with her and see that she's all right."

**Escaping the "wonderful paradise" of the USSR**

They had heard the propaganda all their lives about the supremacy of the Soviet Union over all other countries. But when the propaganda was directed at their young daughters, Serafima and Vladimir Lamin decided it was enough. Time to leave.

In 1979, that wasn't such an easy task. Leonid Breshnev was in charge and the country was in its pre-perestroika days. Applying to immigrate was a gamble—you lost your job immediately for



**Elizabeth Lamin at her graduation from law school, with sister Anna, left, father Vladimir and mother Serafima.**

applying. If they said no, you were stuck.

But life was grim enough for the Lamins to take the risk. As Jews, they were subject to the worst of both worlds. Not free to practice or learn much about their heritage, they were Jews largely in name only.

(Attending a nearby shul meant getting on the KGB's list as a

dangerous person.) But because they were identified as Jews, they could not get jobs available to non-Jews. After graduating in engineering, Serafima was scoffed at when she looked for a position in a firm working in the defense industry. Jews were automatically disqualified as security risks.

"We were constantly discriminated against," Serafima says. "My parents said you have to be better, you have to perform the best. And still they can reject you—there always was some quota on the Jews."

By luck, they managed to get out, taking young daughters Anna and Elizabeth and picked Minnesota because its climate resembled that of their hometown of Leningrad. (Vladimir says he enjoys the four seasons, Serafima now wonders if they might have picked one of the other 49 states.) It was a struggle at first, but with some assistance of the Jewish community of St. Paul and a lot of personal initiative, they made it. Both Serafima and Vladimir ended up with jobs in the engineering positions they had trained for after starting at lower-level positions.

Of particular delight to them is that their children have become strong Jews. Elizabeth, who was three when they immigrated, in particular was able to get a solid foundation in Judaism because she came of age just as Talmud Torah offered a day school.

And like many immigrants before them, the Lamins have been part of a group of people who have seen their children do well in their new country. Elizabeth, a lawyer, recalls a picnic of immigrants from the former Soviet Union and their grown children.

"Every single one of their kids were successful," she says. "There were lawyers, doctors, MBAs. There are a set of expectations (on the immigrants' children), but this is not a burden. The fact that we're able to do these things that they weren't able to do was great."

Vicki Itzkowitz contributed the material on Ari Rosenstein.