

# B'Yachad

Sivan 5758 • 1998

TOGETHER

## Bringing You the Count From Ohr Somayach

By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

**O**n the way from Pesach to Shavuot, Jews the world over count out the fifty days of Sefiras HaOmer, hopefully moving upwards everyday towards Kabalas HaTorah, with new growth to new heights.

This year at Ohr Somayach also finds us growing to new heights. We are counting upwards both numerically and qualitatively, with more talmidim in new programs and new facilities.

The numbers are, *baruch Hashem*, growing in all departments. In our English-speaking section this has compelled us to break down the Beis Medrish level to several focused components in which former *talmidim* are playing important roles :

Dovid Speyer and Avrohom Connack on the Advanced Level; Avrohom Rockmill and Aaron Brodie on the new Intermediate Level; Shlomo Wiener, Saul Mandel and Yacov Asher Sinclair in the one-year "Center" Program; and Nachie Brickman in the "Derech" Program for high school graduates scheduled to begin in the fall.

The population explosion in the Israeli Department has forced us to

rent broader facilities for it on Rechov Shmuel Hanavi, but we are quickly running out of room there as well. (The old "Mi Li" building is occupied by our Russian "Ohr-Dessa" High School for the products of our highly successful program in Odessa serving some 700 kids!)

Former *talmidim* are playing important educational roles in our constantly expanding Hebrew, Russian and Spanish-speaking departments.

This is the continual march forward at Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem — *talmidim* joining the ranks of their *rabbeim*.

But not only in Jerusalem.

In London, the new Jewish Learning Exchange center in Golders Green, headed by Danny Kirsch, received an important boost for its explosive expansion of activities with the arrival of Brian Rubenstein. Gary Gilbert is the newest addition to the great Johannesburg team led by Larry Shain. A major dinner for our Miami branch highlighted the great work being done in Florida by Shmuel Kalos, Jonathan Ried and Yacov Zier.

Our Ohr Lagolah Leadership Training Program has placed a score of

graduates in rabbinic, educational and outreach positions. Zev Kahn, who was a coordinator while in the Program, is joining Yehoshua Karsh in outreach for the Chicago Community Kollel, and Yisroel Koval is taking an outreach position in the Chicago community of Buffalo Grove.

Speaking of reaching out, the Internet outreach program led by Moshe Newman, and enjoying the talents of Reuven Lauffer, Mordechai Becher and Reuven Subar, is setting new records each month with its Ohrnet service. (Getting close to 600,000 "hits" a month!) The newest addition is a university-style course in Chumash now in its second semester with plans for a Jewish Holiday Handbook series in the fall.

These are but a few of the latest leaps and bounds that Ohr Somayach and its alumni have taken this year. We hope that this *zman* of Sefiras HaOmer is a *zman* of Aliyas HaTorah for you and for all the Ohr Somayach family.

*Kol Tu,*

*Rabbi Mendel Weinbach*

# SPOTLIGHT on an Alumnus

## RABBI SETH MANDEL

**R**abbi Seth Mandel, one of the more colorful alumni with one of the longest running relationships with Ohr Somayach, has filled a variety of different roles actively serving Klal Yisrael.

In 1976, after graduating from the University of Connecticut and writing for a small daily paper for several years, Seth found himself in Israel, taking a kibbutz ulpan and working in a community center in Afula for six months. When spring came, Seth packed up to head back to the States before entering the Peace Corps in the fall. He and a friend decided to drive south to a beach town near Eilat for a few last days in Israel.

On the way south they decided to stop in Jerusalem for a visit to the Kotel. There Seth met none other than Rabbi Meir Schuster, who brought them to Ohr Somayach. After meeting Rabbi Schiller, Rabbi Weinbach and Rabbi Bulman, they did eventually make it to the beach, but Seth soon decided to return to Ohr Somayach and learn. He stayed for almost four months, and finally took a flight home.

Back in America, Seth began preparing for the Peace Corps. He met Ohr Somayach staff in the US, and through them re-encountered Rabbi Schiller. To make a long story short, when fall came, Seth didn't go to Africa, but back to Ohr Somayach to learn full time.

In 1981, Seth and another O.S. alumnus started up a magazine for a small publishing firm, called "Stay Kosher in Israel." Seth later took over as Managing Editor, and kept the presses rolling for two years. From there he was sent by Ohr Somayach to help build the Jewish Learning Exchange network back in America. Every three months in America, however, he flew back to Israel to learn for a month, and eventually he decided just to cut out the three month trips to America and stay in Israel.

Next, R' Mandel took a position as the Public Relations Director for Porat Yoseph, a Sephardi Israeli yeshiva in the Old City. During this phase of his life, he

met his wife, with whom he now has four lovely children, aged 3 to 10.

Shortly after the wedding Seth returned to Ohr Somayach to enter the Ohr Lagolah Program, simultaneously receiving his Smicha. These two in combination took him and his family back to the States, where he served a 2-year term at Penn State University as Hillel Director, and five more at the University of Maryland.

One and a half years ago, they returned to Israel. R' Mandel raised funds for Ohr Somayach for many months, and last September became a recruiter for the JLE programs in the East Coast and here at Hebrew University. Often he can be seen in the early afternoon in the Ohr Somayach Beis Medrash, a place obviously dear to his heart, learning with boys from Hebrew University and elsewhere. Through the years and the many positions he has capably filled, R' Mandel has proven himself to be both a dedicated servant of Klal Yisroel and a big fan of Ohr Somayach.

## Mazel Tov to...

MR. AND MRS. SHMUEL KATZ  
on their wedding

MR. AND MRS. MOISHE LEVINSON  
on their wedding

SHMUEL BLALOCK  
on his engagement

ARI KATZ  
on his engagement

RABBI AND MRS.  
MICHAEL ROVINSKY

on the birth of a son  
MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH ZAHAVI

on the birth of a son

MR. AND MRS. SHLOMO LEVINE  
on the birth of a son

MR. AND MRS. YONI TEREBELO  
on the birth of a girl

RABBI AND MRS.  
NACHUM BERGOS

on the birth of a girl  
MR. AND MRS. KALMAN WOLFE

on the birth of a son  
MR. AND MRS. LYLE WEXLER

on the birth of a girl  
ZALMAN ROBINSON

on his engagement

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