Milk Street on Wall Street
The kosher café is opening a branch in New York City. Meanwhile, it’s working to resolve a kosher matter back in Boston.

Life after high school

**Sander shoot packs shul on Shavuot**

Bar mitzvah scene filmed in Brockton’s Beth Emunah

By Elise Kigner

Advocate Staff

Rabbi Arye Berk was leaving the parking lot of Temple Beth Emunah in Brockton right before Passover when a location scout for a new Adam Sandler movie pulled in. He told the rabbi he was looking for a sanctuary to use for a bar mitzvah scene.

The scout toured the Conservative synagogue, loved the place and told his bosses about it. Soon, Berk was getting calls from people working on “I Hate You Dad,” who were hoping to rent the space.

This all sounded great to Berk — he even started thinking he could play the rabbi.

But when he got a call about the date of the shoot, he paused. “Don’t you know that is Shavuot?” he asked. Berk needed some time to think. He first considered his congregation. As almost all the members drive to shul, he felt that switching locations would not be a problem for the 30 or so who typically attend Shavuot services.

He then thought about the two days’ rental fee the synagogue would receive from Columbia Pictures — and how the shul’s strained budget could use the money.

So the 30 Beth Emunah congregants joined with Rabbi Loel Weiss and members of Temple Beth Am in Randolph for Shavuot. Berk said it was nice davening with a bigger group.

“As Rabbi Weiss and I joked, we would have loved if Adam Sandler

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Have a news tip or story idea? Email us at: editor@TheJewishAdvocate.com

SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Parnas Shleich

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Daniel Kurtzer: ‘It’s time to start worrying’

By Leah Burrows
Advocate Staff

They came to Brandeis from India and Argentina, from China and Lebanon, from Russia and Mexico. They came to Brandeis from all over the world, hundreds of scholars, to discuss one thing—Israel.

This week, Brandeis University hosted nearly 400 scholars at the 27th annual International Conference of the Association for Israel Studies.

The conference signals the growth and diversity of Israel studies, according to Ilan Troen, director of the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis.

“It reflects the enormous interest in Israel studies all over the world,” Troen said. “They are in countries [represented here] in which there aren’t a lot of Jews, which should tell you that the study of Israel is not just a Jewish subject and not just the study of Jews.”

The size of the conference is nearly double that of last year’s, which was held in Toronto, Troen said.

“The fact that there are all kinds of crises and problems only enhances the interest, but the interest isn’t only in crises and problem,” Troen said.

Many of the scholars presented papers on the subject of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state—a controversial issue that has great interest in Israel studies all over the world.

Alla Zakharchenko came to Brandeis this week from Odessa, Ukraine. A professor of Middle East politics and Israel studies at the Odessa National University, Zakharchenko said she is the only Israel studies professor in the Ukraine.

She said came to the conference to learn how to develop a stronger Israel studies program at her university. “It is a very important topic [in the Ukraine],” Zakharchenko said. “There are many historic ties between Odessa and Israel. We can’t close our eyes to that.”

Israeli Channa Pinchasi is a scholar-in-residence at Boston College, where she studies midrash from a feminist perspective. Pinchasi said the conference was an interesting way to learn how others perceive her country and its people.

“My life has been transformed into a conference,” Pinchasi said, with a laugh. “It’s interesting to see how people see you, everyone brings their own view.”

But the whole point of a conference is to share those different views and learn from them, Troen said. “The prime function of the conference is to stimulate more scholarship and ultimately to create another conference.”

They Don’t Just Make Honey!

It’s the time of year when stinging pests are looking for food and increasing their colony size. These stinging pests include Bald-faced Hornets, European Hornets, Yellow Jackets, and Honeybees.

Yellow Jackets, Bald-faced and European Hornets will build paper-like nests containing 2,000 to 6,000 cells and up to 4,000 workers. Nests will often reach the size of a basketball by late summer.

Nesting sites are often located in some protected area, like a wall void, attic or within the branches of a bush. The entrances are guarded and workers can quickly become aggressive if their nest is disturbed, resulting in painful and sometimes repeated stings.

If you notice a colony of these insects around your home, call A-1 Exterminators, and let our trained experts quickly eliminate the problem.

Scholars descend on Brandeis

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many similarities to circumstances today. Both sides were led by politicians who were reluctant to enter negotiations; the United States had a liberal president, Jimmy Carter, who was not trusted by many supporters of Israel; and the shah of Iran, Israel’s primary ally in the region, was fast going down the tubes.

Some people told Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin “that there is instability in the region, it is no time to negotiate peace,” Makovsky said, but the treaty Israel made with Egypt at that time—with significant American help, cajoling and prodding—offset all other factors, “and Israel enjoyed 30 years of peace.”

There was plenty of cajoling and prodding a dozen or so years later too, when President George H.W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker brought the two sides together in Madrid for what proved to be the beginning of the Oslo process.

At that time, Yasser Arafat was in no position to say “no” very strongly, as he had disastrously supported Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir did try to dig in his heels, but Bush and Baker responded with hard-nosed financial pressure— for which some supporters of Israel will never forgive them.

Sometimes, to accomplish the very difficult work of world-leading statecraft, you’ve got to refuse to take “no” for an answer.

“Would we have got to Madrid if Arafat was in no position to say ‘no’ very strongly, as he had disastrously supported Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War? Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir did try to dig in his heels, but Bush and Baker responded with hard-nosed financial pressure— for which some supporters of Israel will never forgive them.

Sometimes, to accomplish the very difficult work of world-leading statecraft, you’ve got to refuse to take “no” for an answer.

what’s happening in the region?”

Kurtzer asked. “Does it have the will and the smarts to see the policy through?”

He suggested that the correct answer to all these questions was “no.”

The veteran diplomat, now a visiting professor of Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution (in addition to teaching at Prince- ton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, was particularly critical of President Barack Obama, whom he said had failed to act powerfully, resolutely or presiden tally.

Obama articulated a clear policy in his May 19 speech, Kurtzer said. One could argue about whether the president’s idea—that Israelis and Palestinians should address security and ter ritorial issues first, refugees and Jerusalem later—was the best idea, but having a vision and pursuing it is what presidents are supposed to do. And Benjamin Netanyahu had a parallel right, as prime minister of Israel, to reject what Obama said.

What was inexplicable, in Kurtzer’s view, was Obama’s nonreaction.

The prime minister of one of our deepest, friendliest allies put our president down, in the Oval Office and then in front of Congress,” Kurtzer said “The president did not react. He did not act presidential.”

Maybe he was afraid of the Republicans, whom he surely side with Netanyahu and will accuse Obama of throwing Israel under the bus on the slightest pretext. Maybe he was worried, with the long presidential election campaign just beginning to get underway, of how a spat with Bibi would play with Jewish activists and donors.

The problem is, if he allows an ally—any ally—to flick away his initiatives like so many mosquitos, why should anybody take his policy seriously?

“If you’re a big power, you’ve got to act like a big power,” Kurtzer said, “and we don’t.”

He faulted the United States—starting well before the Obama administration— for failing to do the day-to-day diplomatic work necessary to turn policy visions into action. “We haven’t been able to get into hot water with a foreign government for pursuing our policy in at least 10 years,” Kurtzer said, suggesting that lack of persistence and toughness, and the fact that new aid money to enhance US way is not available to do the kind of the end of the era of great American influence in the region.

Deepening divisions in the American Jewish community and in the United States in general may also play a role in that reduced influence. People are less and less interested in using American power as a club. Many polls since the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt show that Americans feel friendlier toward the people of these countries and would support the rise of democracies in the Middle East, even those democracies were unfriendly toward the United States.

Shibley Telhami, a senior fellow of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution and a leading pollster on Middle East issues, said his surveys show that if Americans are asked whether they want their country to tip toward the Is raelis, the Palestinians or neither, about two-thirds say neither.

Of the remaining third, people advocate favoring Israel over the Palestinians by a 5-to-1 margin. Still, that means only about 25 percent overall want a tip toward Israel. And the big majority of that group are Republicans and evangelicals, Telhami said.

Let’s see. Incompetent Foreign Service. Meek president. Declining influence: Shifting atti tudes in the American public. Like the man said: “It’s time to start worrying.”