

# Trip offers cultural insights

■ The birthright israel program gives Jewish students a chance to connect with their culture

By Robin Weber  
Oregon Daily Emerald

University students from Jewish lineage have the chance to expand their cultural horizons through the birthright israel program, which offers free, 10-day trips to Israel, the Jewish holy land.

Israeli Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Rabbi Michael Melchior addressed 18 college newspaper reporters from across the United States about what Jewish young adults can learn from the birthright israel program in a conference call Wednesday.

"Students have a birth right to be connected with Israel," he said. "Birthright israel has changed lives and given more insight and feeling on what being a part of the birthright community means."

The program, now in its third year, is aimed at connecting young adults of Jewish heritage with their culture free of charge. The \$210 million in funding for the trips is provided through a three-way equal partnership of the government of Israel, united Jewish communities and prominent phi-

lanthropists awarding this gift of more than 28,000 trips in the past two years.

The program's goal is to send 100,000 Jewish young adults to Israel by the time it reaches its five-year mark.

Although the trip is essentially free, a \$250 deposit is required.

Those eligible for the program are 18- to 26-year-olds who never have visited Israel on a group trip, birthright israel spokesman Joe Wagner said. Applicants then need to fill out the online application and be interviewed. In 1999 alone, there were 25,000 applicants, and birthright israel representatives have been aggressive in visiting campuses nationwide to recruit new participants.

Birthright israel offers more than 20 different trips to choose from, but all have a common thread — an emphasis on culture. Every tour group spends a "Shabbat," the Jewish holy day in Jerusalem. There is also a "Mifgash" exchange with Israeli peers to compare lifestyles and a rally and party at the Jerusalem convention center, Wagner said.

Safety is a priority on the trip, Melchior said. Participants travel in groups of 40 on private buses and the one airline that the organi-

zation considers safer than other commercial lines. Trip itineraries and travel routes are also modified annually to meet the safety situations. In addition, each group is accompanied by guards.

Senior Geordie Vanderbosch traveled to Israel with the program last spring. He said while the trip was enjoyable, it was also educational. Vanderbosch said he applied because of his interest in travel and international politics.

"The trip is half vacation and half learning," he said.

His said his experiences in the birthright israel program led him to join a Jewish fraternity and become more involved with the Jewish community at the University when he returned.

Not only does birthright israel influence individual lives, it is also important for the maintenance of a rich Jewish heritage, Oregon Hillel student life coordinator June Sedarbaum Harris said.

"If culture is going to survive, we need to educate, or the culture will start to diminish," she said. "There are a lot of students with no Jewish connections. This opens up a whole world to them of old and new cultures," she said.

E-mail reporter Robin Weber  
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# Yates claims Satan told her to do it

By Terri Langford  
The Dallas Morning News

HOUSTON (KRT) — A leading expert on parents who kill their children fended off the prosecution Tuesday, maintaining that Andrea Yates thought drowning her five children was the right thing to do even though she knew it was illegal.

"In spite of knowing it was legally wrong ... what she perceived as right was to take her children's life on earth to preserve them from eternal damnation," said Dr. Phillip Resnick, who held fast to his assertion that Yates was insane despite an intense grilling by prosecution attorneys.

Resnick and the defense say Andrea Yates could not tell the difference between right and wrong at the time of the killings — the legal standard that must be met for a successful insanity defense.

"I think she qualifies for the Texas insanity defense," Resnick said.

Lead prosecutor Joe Owmbly tried in vain to get Resnick to abandon or at least back off his conclusion that Yates meets the requirements for legal insanity.

Dr. Resnick testified that Yates, 37, believed she was faced with the choice of seeing her children go to hell or going in their place by killing them herself and send-

ing them to heaven.

Voices began penetrating Yates' world after the birth of her first child, Noah, in 1994. The voices urged her only to "get a knife, get a knife" according to psychiatrist reports in 1999.

The hallucinations became stronger after the birth of her fourth child, Luke, in 1999. And they returned after the birth of her fifth child, the couple's only girl, Mary, born on Nov. 30, 2000.

Four months after each of these births, Andrea Yates had to be hospitalized. Before she killed her children, doctors were convinced she was suffering from major depression, possibly a psychosis brought on by post-partum depression.

She called police June 20 and told them to come to her Clear Lake, Texas, home. When they arrived, she told them she had drowned Noah, 7, John, 5, Paul, 3, Luke, 2, and 6-month-old Mary.

"I'm saying, considering her dilemma, she chose the conduct she thought was right," said Resnick, a psychiatrist who has examined Yates' case. He has studied filicide, or parents who kill their children, since 1965.

Resnick agreed with the prosecution in saying that Yates knew that she was committing an illegal act

when she drowned her children.

But he said she was so entrenched in her strange belief system populated by Satan and other hellish voices that told her that her children weren't developing correctly, both academically and spiritually, that she felt she had no other choice but to kill them.

After she was jailed, government and private psychiatrists concluded that she is schizophrenic and that the mental illness did not manifest itself until after the births of her children. The prosecution agrees that she is mentally ill but says she knows right from wrong.

In an attempt to thwart Satan's wish to torture her children, Yates decided to act as a decoy for Satan. If she killed the children, they would go to heaven. That would leave an angry Satan to pursue Yates, according to Resnick.

But in her mind, it was the perfect plan for mankind, because she would be punished by "Governor Bush" and executed by the state of Texas. When that happened, mankind would be rid of Satan forever.

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## News briefs

### Man visiting campus rushed to hospital

Paramedics rushed a man from Lawrence Hall to Sacred Heart Medical Center on Wednesday evening because he said he couldn't breathe. The man said he was in his 40s, and was not a University student or a member of faculty or staff.

A nursing supervisor at Sacred Heart said hospital officials admitted the man and were examining him. The supervisor said at 9:35 p.m. she did not know if the man would be treated and released or be held for overnight supervision.

A 20-year-old University student phoned the Department of Public Safety at 7:59 p.m. to alert them to the man's condition. DPS Sgt. Sean

Strahon said the department sent two units to the scene at 8:04 p.m. to assist the medical team, which arrived two minutes later. He said the officers took a defibrillator in case the man's heart had stopped, but they did not use it.

Paramedics checked the man, decided he should go to the hospital and placed him on a stretcher to carry him to an ambulance waiting on the east side of Lawrence Hall, Strahon said. The man said he was visiting the school.

— Eric Martin

### LTD plans to cut routes

Lane Transit District is planning to recommend cuts to five bus routes at its March 20 board meeting, including the consolidation of the 78 West-Eugene-to-campus route into existing routes that indi-

rectly serve the University.

LTD finalized a plan of action after reviewing public input at its Feb. 28 open house.

Spokeswoman Cosette Rees said the bus company received more than 150 comments from the community at the open house, including "at least a dozen" comments from students.

In addition to the five route cuts, LTD wants to make schedule changes to 13 routes, including the 11, which connects the University to Springfield and Thurston. It also wants to make this bus's last evening run at 10:40 p.m., instead of 11:40 p.m.

The board meeting, which will be held at LTD's 3500 E. 17th Ave. office, is open to the public and will start at 6:30 p.m. on March 20.

— Brook Reinhard

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