

Be an Angel! Support the American Jewish Committee and the Seattle Jewish Film Festival

As the calendar year winds down, many people focus on finalizing their charitable contributions for tax purposes. In an amazing instance of serendipity, AJC is accepting contributions at just the same time. Your gift helps us present local programs including the Seattle Jewish Film Festival, the Block Student Human Relations Awards, and FilmTalks; it enables our chapter and others, and AJC nationally, to counter the anti-Israel divestment forces; and it promotes an AJC presence in key cities around the globe, so that the support of pluralism and democracy are strengthened worldwide.

Besides easing your bottom line, we are presenting donors with a remarkable benefit package that gives you the best of what the AJC and the Seattle Jewish Film Festival have to offer. This year we are experimenting by combining the benefits of AJC membership with SJFF patronage, in effect giving you a “two-for-one” deal. Through this offer, we hope to encourage a healthy cross-over of donors so that those of you who have supported only AJC will attend SJFF events and those of you who have only supported SJFF will come taste what AJC locally and nationally has to offer—and of course those of you who currently support both parts of our program already know the value of each and will want to upgrade!

So lower your tax bracket by donating to AJC. Help fund an organization that works for Jewish survival by advocating for democracy, pluralism and mutual understanding at home and abroad. And be an angel—the Seattle Jewish Film Festival depends on early money coming in to hire staff, reserve venues, and order the films that all of us love to see.

Thank you for your continued support.

American Jewish Committee Seattle Jewish Film Festival News SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 11-19, 2006!

The American Jewish Committee Seattle Jewish Film Festival (SJFF) is thrilled to present our 2006 festival season at our new home: Seattle’s Museum of History and Industry. This centrally located museum will provide SJFF with an unparalleled and versatile cultural gathering space for all the films, events and special programming you’ve come to love and expect, plus a whole lot more. Making our home in one venue allows SJFF to take full advantage of MOHAI’s incredible amenities – such as gallery exhibits, lecture halls and free parking – and maximize MOHAI’s rich heritage of promoting local Jewish history. We know you will share our enthusiasm – and that of festival committee co-chairs Moshe Dunie and Karen Hudesman – for this exciting move! Also, keep an eye out for our new poster design by Stacy Stutz, who we thank for her bold vision and new creative direction.

The American Jewish Committee kicked off its 2006 film festival season on November 2nd with a powerful sneak-peak of the award-winning film, “Campfire,” Israel’s nominee for the 2005 Oscars. Over 100 patrons gathered at the Majestic Bay Theatre in Ballard. Our evening was made possible by a generous donation from Aaron Alhadeff and Elttaes Enterprises.



Set in 1981, “Campfire,” a film by Joseph Cedar, an Orthodox Jew and former Israeli paratrooper, casts a jaundiced eye on the pre-Intifada settler movement and in particular on its callous treatment of women. For these reasons, the film has proven controversial and was boycotted by the religious right in Israel. Still, given all the hype, it seemed in many ways extraordinarily tame. We sympathize with an exhausted widow looking to turn her life around by seeking entry into the clannish and disapproving world of a settlement clique. But it is her adolescent daughters who ignite the film. As two B’nei Akiva campfires burn brightly on Lag B’Omer, the sacred and profane, represented by the idealistic fervor of young settlers and the crude masculine impulses of teenage angst, catch fire. Filmgoers are left wondering if the integrity and future of the settlement experiment can take the heat—and in hindsight given the recent wrenching, newsworthy evacuations of settlers in Gaza—the film questions if colliding passions will blaze or smolder. For those who missed “Campfire,” we expect to screen it again during our March 11-19th festival. Save the date!

Please visit our booth at the community Chanukah celebration on December 18th at the Stroum Jewish Community Center, where we will provide film clips and family programs. For up-to-date festival news, films and ticket sales, check our website: www.ajcseattle.org.

From the Executive Director

Over the course of the past few months, local AJC chapters around the country mirrored the activity of the national office as we all worked diligently to counter the pro-divestment forces within various Protestant Christian denominations.

The issue arose when Sabeel, a Palestinian Christian organization whose leader is opposed to the two-state solution, wanted to undermine American support for Israel and the peace process. Joining forces with some members of mainline Protestant Christian denominations, they launched a divestment campaign against companies doing business with Israel which, in their minds, “perpetuated Israel’s occupation of Palestinian Territories.” One after another, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians and members of the United Church of Christ, took up the issue of divesting from these companies, such as Caterpillar, whose bulldozers have been used in the West Bank.

Ultimately, the proponents of divestment, sprinkled around the country, want to undermine the validity of Israel by painting it as an occupying power and an apartheid state. At its best, our opponents vision for the future is a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which sees Israel being absorbed into a Palestinian Arab state.

But we also realized that this objective was NOT shared by the majority of American Protestants who, like most American Jews, generally support the two-state solution proposed by the “road map” and every other plan since 1947.

With our expertise in Jewish-Christian relations, the American Jewish Committee, other Jewish organizations, and our Christian friends in these denominations argued in support of “constructive investment”—the idea that we should join together to support and invest in those programs in Israel and Palestine that build trust and cooperation in spite of the continuing conflict. This, we believe, will ultimately help build peace over there and rebuild good Christian-Jewish relations over here. Through behind-the-scenes meetings and continued dialogue, we have been able to slow and even reverse the emphasis on divestment at the national level. Many denominations are either re-examining the issue or have instead adopted our concept of “constructive investment.” What remains is the slow, hard work of maintaining relationships with local Protestant leaders, meeting them regularly one-on-one, denomination by denomination, to encourage change on the local level. There is a real window of opportunity now because Protestants in the Greater Seattle area are meeting and wrestling amongst themselves on this issue.

Stay tuned for further developments.

Rabbi Anson Laytner

Speeches Available

Rabbi Anson Laytner presented two major papers recently, one to an audience at Seattle University, commemorating the 40th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the document which revolutionized Christian-Jewish relations, and the other to members and guests of the Acacia Foundation, a Turkish American Muslim group, on the subject of interfaith dialogue and cooperation. If you are interested in receiving a copy of either speech, please contact laytner@ajc.org or 206 622 6315, ext. 2.

They will also be posted on our website: www.ajcseattle.org.

Did you know that AJC’s Hurricane Katrina Fund has received more than \$900,000 in donations. The AJC is identifying relief and reconstruction projects with a focus on houses of worship.

The Hurricane Katrina Relief Act of 2005 offers you a special opportunity to enjoy unprecedented tax benefits from your generous support of the American Jewish Committee by making unlimited, 100% deductible cash gifts, including distributions from your IRA or other qualified plan, at no tax cost to you if you act on or before December 31, 2005. **Your gift to AJC does not need to be allocated for relief efforts to receive this benefit.** After December 31, 2005 the prior law will resume and withdrawals from your IRA or other qualified plans to public charities will again be included in your taxable income.

Let Us Know How To Contact You!

If you have not heard from us in a while or if you are interested in receiving electronic publications from National and updates for upcoming events and programs please email the office at seattle@ajc.org.

Leslie Rosen

President

Andrew Harris

1st Vice President

Michele Tesler

Secretary

Rabbi James Mirel

Treasurer

Carol Gown

Immediate Past President

Vice Presidents

Diane Aboulafia-D’Jael

Hannah Douglas

Moshe Dunie

Karen Hudesman

Ted Klastorin

Deborah Rosen

Carlyn J. Steiner

Board of Directors

Kenan Block

Shirley Bridge

Bryan Cohen

Shelly Crocker

Rochelle K. Goffe

Adam Goldblatt

Steven Gottlieb

Gloria Gottesman

Shannon Gottesman

Jerry Hahn

William Hochberg

Wendy Kaplan

Ruthann Kurose

Rosanne Lapan

Michael Levin

Marc Levy

Lisa Mandel

Pip Meyerson

Ron Ralph

Janet Rosenblatt

Mark Sidran

Art Siegal

Shelly Shapiro

Jon Staenberg

Ronnie Stangler

Bob Sulkin

Fredric C. Tausend

Marilyn Weissman

Rabbi Anson Laytner

Executive Director

Julie Hammer Mahdavi

Seattle Jewish Film Festival

Program Director

Andrea Walker

Administrative Director

The New 2005-2006 Luncheon Lecture Series

Under the leadership of Jerry Hahn, this year's luncheon lecture series has been given more structure and zip. Kicking off the series on **Tuesday, December 13th is Dr. David Elcott, AJC's national director of Interreligious Affairs, who will discuss the anti-Israel divestment campaign in the Protestant churches.** On January 18th, local leaders will share their impressions of Israel and Palestine following their joint trip there. On February 8th, former Senator Slade Gorton will talk about the 9/11 Commission, on which he served, and the implications of its report for our country. And on April 10th, Jeff Siddiqui, a local Muslim leader, will educate us about Islam in America and about the diverse Muslim community in Seattle.

All events will be held at the College Club, 505 Madison, Suite 100, Seattle 98104, on the corner of Fifth and Madison. Subscription for the series, which includes lunch, is \$100 per person for members. Tickets for individual lectures may also be purchased, on a first come first served basis \$25 for AJC members and \$30 for non-members.

Donors to AJC/SJFF at the \$1,000 level or higher may attend for free, but reservations are required.
To subscribe, please contact seattle@ajc.org or call Andrea at 206 622 6315, ext. 3.

Strategic Planning Update

In multiple meetings over the summer months, members of the Board of Directors and staff hammered out the details of the Greater Seattle Chapter's strategic plan.

- Current programs were reviewed and evaluated based on their connection to national programs, their budgetary or fundraising impact, and their role in promoting the AJC's mission. A comprehensive calendar was constructed and work began on creating timelines for each event.
- New committees were formed and existing ones revised so that all local programs fit under one umbrella or another. The major committees are: International Relations; Intergroup Relations; Seattle Jewish Film Festival; Development; Board Operations and Executive Committee. All committees, except Board Operations and the Executive, are open to any AJC member in good standing.
- Board member responsibilities and matters pertaining to board service were clarified. Bylaws will be revised at a later date.
- Work continues on integrating the SJFF with the other programs of the Chapter, creating a unified database, common reporting structures, and shared accounting procedures.
- To promote donor support, another sub-committee developed giving levels and benefits for both AJC and the SJFF. To encourage cross-pollination—so that AJC donors support the SJFF and SJFF donors support AJC—we are experimenting this year with combined benefit packages.

Spearheaded by Chapter President Leslie Rosen and chaired by the able Andy Harris, the Strategic Planning Committee also included Carol Gown, immediate past president, Michele Tesler, Ted Klastorin, and Hannah Douglas. The Development Sub-Committee comprised Deborah Rosen, a past president, Carlyn Steiner, and Leslie Rosen. Rabbi Anson Laytner, Andrea Walker, and Julie Mahdavi participated on the staff side.

All this may seem frightfully dull but it is essential work, designed to get everyone moving in the same direction according to a clarified sense of purpose and mission. *To receive a copy of the Final Report, please contact Rabbi Anson Laytner at laytnera@ajc.org or 206 622 6315 ext. 2.*

"AJC helps sustain Jewish life by protecting the rights of all people." -Seattle Board Member

The art exhibit, **"The Smallest Witnesses: The Conflict in Darfur Through Children's Eyes,"** co-sponsored by the Greater Seattle Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, as part of the Save Darfur Coalition of Washington, will be on display **February 1st through 22nd at the Odegaard Library at UW.** Plans are in the works for an opening night reception with a keynote speaker and other educational programs designed to bolster American and UN efforts to end the genocide there.

AJC Greater Seattle Chapter Update

1402 Third Avenue
Suite 1415
Seattle WA 98101-2100
phone (206) 622-6315
fax (206) 622-3015
email seattle@ajc.org
web www.ajcseattle.org

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SEATTLE WA
Permit No. 276
Return Service Requested

"AJC stands for human rights - both Jewish and universal." -Seattle Board Member



The American Jewish Committee

Advancing democracy, pluralism and mutual understanding

seattle chapter update fall 2005

AJC Calendar of Upcoming Events

date/event/time/location/about

December 13, 2005 / Luncheon Lecture Series: Divestment in the Protesant Churches / 12 -1:30 pm College Club
Dr. David Elcott, AJC's Director of Interreligious Affairs, analyzes the anti-Israel campaign.

January 18, 2006 / Luncheon Lecture Series: Where is the 'Holy' in the Holy Land? / 12 -1:30 pm College Club
A report on an interfaith trip to Israel with Rev. Dr. Don Mackenzie, Univeristy Congregational Church of Christ; Rabbi Ted Falcon, Bet Alef Meditative Synagogue; Rev. Jamal Rahman, Interfaith Community Church.

February 8, 2006 / Luncheon Lecture Series: Slade Gorton on the 9/11 Report / 12 -1:30 pm College Club
Former Senator Slade Gorton will talk about the 9/11 Commission, on which he served, and the implications of its report for our country.

March 13, 2006 / Luncheon Lecture Series: Topic To Be Announced / 12 -1:30 pm College Club

March 11-19, 2006 / 11th Annual Seattle Jewish Film Festival / Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI)
Now in its eleventh year, the Festival has grown to become the largest and most important annual Jewish community event in the Northwest. Over 10,000 people will attend this year's Festival to be moved, informed, and to laugh out loud at some of the finest films from around the world. We hope to see you there!

April 10, 2006 / Luncheon Lecture Series: Being Muslim in America Today / 12 -1:30 pm College Club
Jeff Siddiqui, a local Muslim leader, will educate us about Islam in America and about the diverse Muslim community in Seattle.

Call or email to learn more about any of these events at seattle@ajc.org or 206-622-6315 ext. 3