

## EDITOR'S NOTES, May 21, 2008

We visited our children in May this year, thus delaying the 2008 issue of Ketura Highlights by a few months. By North American, European, and even Israeli standards, we were still in spring, but temperatures tended to rise to uncomfortable levels.

It was, however, delightful, and we worked on this newsletter, taught in the after school programs, and enjoyed our children and grandchildren. Visiting with both Susie and Seth helps provide a broad picture of life in Ketura which we're proud to share. We note that so much more is happening that will wait for another year, and, perhaps a younger editor.

Susan, our daughter-in-law, has offered her swimming pool skills in a health-fitness program and has expanded her swimming instruction and pool aerobics to other kibbutzim. Seth is in constant motion as he moves from one repair or construction site to another. As in past issues, we'll try to give only a few examples of his concerns.

The old turkey runs, those long sheds at the southern perimeter, are in the last stages of renovation for new uses. The Arava Institute has fully moved its instruction and management there. The former pub is now well outfitted for relaxation, including billiards, a handsome sitting area, and the auditorium. The space has now been completely rededicated to productive use!

We must report that rooms were in tight supply for family and guests. A Bar Mitzvah guest list required us to spend part of a week in the guest house. Its space, location, and service are tops, and we appreciated the luxury of this experience.

If able to make the long shlep from Rhode Island again, we expect that new housing for members will be underway and that grandparents will not have to be moved during their visit.

We are happy to keep our promise to Florence Yudkin to continue the Ketura Highlights during these past few years. We would like the tradition of a non-member, family view of life in Ketura, continue to inform, perhaps even to entertain.

Greta and Irving Kessler

P.S. We invite comments – may we hear from you: [igkessler@gmail.com](mailto:igkessler@gmail.com)

## KETURA HIGHLIGHTS 2008

Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

A Chat with the Mazkir

New Enterprises

Merkaz Hashachar

The Arava Power Company

Update on the Exotic Swimmers

Ketura Statistics

Help us be Healthy

## ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

All of Israel celebrated its sixtieth year during May in many ways. In Jerusalem and Tel Aviv there were parades, fireworks, and bands. In the Arava, the local municipal council prepared a gala all evening extravaganza which was interrupted by high winds and a whirling sandstorm which postponed the area celebration.

In the kibbutz, however, all chaverim were treated to a lively, well orchestrated presentation put together by Neil Churgin and a support performance group of teens and early twenties. We were treated to good music, clever skits, and, in every presentation, good entertainment!

When the municipal

Show was continued the next evening, our pre-teen granddaughter became our only family representative. The rest of us were satisfied with our local barbecue and a few hours of sunshine and swimming in Eilat.

Happy Birthday, Israel! May you remain our land of Hope and Creativity!

## A CHAT WITH OUR MAZKIR

A year ago Moshe Falkof, then the newly elected mazkir of five months, wrote a hopeful report of Ketura's status and his plans. This May, in a relaxed interview for this issue, he described how kibbutz activity had reached new highs while maintaining its standards. There was a note of regret as he mentioned his failure to increase the overall budget by convincing chaverim to give up a guaranteed 'personal income item'. Members, it seems, care for the comfort of predictable income rather than chance even possible loss of minimal control.

As expected, the membership has grown to one hundred forty chaverim and a new group of five candidates is now in the wings. Among them are a couple with Russian roots and one that is Israel-born. Meanwhile, the kibbutz continues to host a garin of younger potentials, among whom a marriage has already created probable candidates.

When I inquired about any changes in operations, the Mazkir enthused about all the current group of teen-agers. Many were handling adult responsibilities like a full milking schedule. We both recognize their participation in programming the celebration of Israel's 60th anniversary. "This is a generation to watch. Our youngsters are already leaders in their regional activities."

The neighborhood. Current income is steady in spite of set-backs like a quickly solved hitch in algae production. The major concern is replacing government loans which are no longer available. Moshe was confident, however, that a wide range of operations like the Guest House will supplant the stable income from the date orchard and milk production. All of the kibbutz resources are functioning at their best under competent management.

This enthusiasm continued when I expressed amazement at the entertaining celebrations of the nation's birthday we had enjoyed that week. He gave full credit to energetic planning and the participation of the younger generation. "Wouln't it be wonderful" I commented, "if we could only win more soccer matches at the annual tournament Ketura hosts every year."

## NEW ENTERPRISES

I had the privilege as well as the honor of interviewing Ed Hofland, the kibbutz member who has done his utmost to develop and protect its income. In most cases this has required extraordinary judgement, as well as the planning know-how and contacts to carry out decisions. In a far ranging discussion we covered a fair number of current and planned enterprises.

The Ardag fisheries, which introduced many of us to the delectable Denise fish, has been moved, almost completely, to Ashdod. Negotiations with the government are underway to increase production to what could reach previous levels. Today the fish production is forty percent of its Eilat operation. Equally important to Hofland is a recent partnership with Kibbutz Dan in raising sturgeon for caviar. According to Roy Kagan, kibbutz Business Manager, its quality is now at the next to highest stage, and is showing excellent return in the market. While the number of salaries are not equal to the earlier situation, investment income is becoming significant.

Both Ed Hofland and Roy Kagan shared relief at solving a production problem which shut down algae production for three months. A degradable pump component had created serious problems. Fortunately, discovery of the culprit returned production to levels, allowing sales to go to the buyers in Japan, Europe, and the United States. Within the year, both feel, further expansion of the facility should be considered.

Kagan explained that Ketura's date plantations are its major income producer. In the past few years, 1500 more trees have been planted, and 2000 additional trees are planned for. Water needs, of course, must be considered.

The dairy's production of milk is next. This early source of income remains tied to government regulations which allows for changes as costs increase. Stability is one of its many virtues!

We closed the interview with a look at the kibbutz debt. The major loans, from the Jewish Agency, were finally resolved by reduction and repayment. For this writer, who watched the financing program develop, then begin to be repaid, as well as forgiven, this is a welcome fruition of years of collaborative effort.

MERKAZ HASHACHAR, MAY 14, 2008

Irving Kessler, Seth's father, served for many years as Executive Director of the United Israel Appeal in the United States. He retired his position in 1990 and was surprised and honored to receive an announcement from his lay board. In appreciation of his 45 years of Jewish communal service, a fund was created and used to provide young Jewish professionals who had never visited Israel, the opportunity to travel and to learn about the place and projects for which they were raising funds.

In recent years it came to the attention of the Kesslers that a nice sum of unutilized funds still remained in the Kessler Fellowship. For the past three years, both Irv and Greta worked tirelessly to get permission to have these funds transferred to Merkaz Hashachar. Just a week ago we received the funds to the amount of \$45,000!

This donation came in a timely fashion. We have been working with the government Ministry of Tourism on plans for renovating the Rose Halprin Center, which as you all know, serves as our community center, synagogue, classrooms, and meeting space for Keren Kolot, the Arava Institute, and the entire kibbutz. The funding which we received was sufficient to implement the renovation we need. Fortunately, the Tocker Foundation of Texas provided an additional \$120,000 and this \$43,000 of the Kessler Fellowship will help us complete the physical renovation.

Many of our friends and family members have donated funds throughout the past few years to the Florence Yudkin Synagogue Fund. As soon as the physical renovations are completed we will begin purchasing new furniture, both for the synagogue and for the classrooms, kitchen, and meeting rooms.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Kesslers and all of you who have helped us and who continue to help us with this important project. We hope to see its completion soon!

Leah Kayman

## THE ARAVA POWER COMPANY

"The Arava Power Company" is being brought to life in Ketura with the involvement of the kibbutz planners, including Ed Hofland and a temporary resident, Yosef Abramowitz. They have concluded that, "The Arava Valley represents a unique, untapped asset to create power from the sun." Here solar panels are able to produce 2,200 KW hours a year per square meter and realize up to 50% more solar productivity than much of Europe or elsewhere.

The question is how to use 'sunlight, the Arava's natural asset'. The company's public statement notes that: 'photons in sunlight which will hit the solar panel...convert into a usable amount of (DC) electricity' This in turn 'enters an inverter...converts into 120 or 240 volt alternating current'. AC power is already for consumption and is supplied to the national grid. This joint project of the new company, "The Arava Power Company and The Arava Institute for Environmental Studies" is testing a range of technologies. So far, the intense Arava sunlight has exceeded the panel manufacturer's standard test condition guarantees by 7.5%. Global Sun Partners (GSP) expects that kibbutzim could "provide 5% of Israel's energy).

Notice is taken that Israel energy needs should double every eight to ten years. Citizens can expect blackouts due to power shortages; Israel is vulnerable and overly dependent on foreign sources of energy. Equally important is the fact that its conventional power plants are within missile range of rockets from Lebanon. Global Sun's plan is to concentrate on building its power plants in the south. Its hope is to produce electricity on local kibbutz fields and sell the energy to the Israel Electric Company, which, by law must purchase at subsidized rates.

Ed Hofland, representing Ketura in many investments, feels confident that the projected plan will be implemented.

More information may be found on the website  
[Friends@GlobalSunPartners.com](mailto:Friends@GlobalSunPartners.com)

## UPDATE ON THE EXOTIC SWIMMERS

A visit to the expanded exotic fish hatchery now has doubled the holding tanks since 2007. Every size of the different mollyfish as well as the Turig catfish are growing in these large circular tanks. More important, Michah Eshchar, the hatchery's expert manager reports rising sales of the product.

During the past year the market has recognized the Ketura plant as a competent source of these fish. Families interested in adding these colorful swimmers to the décor of their homes through their local pet shops can count on the Ketura product. The reputation has been established and Michah foresees a profitable year ahead.

We have counted on the usual Keturah, or even Arava kibbutz staples: dates, a milk herd, and vegetable garden for income, and now add another very colorful product to the algae farm which graces the kibbutz entrance.

KETURA STATISTICS  
BIRTHS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS 2007-2008

BIRTHS:

Roi David, son of Yizhar David and Karen Ling  
Lee Schveber, daughter of Adi and Siggi Schveber  
Niv Osman, son of Gail and Sandy Osman

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Yael Marom, daughter of Ari and Danielle Marom

BAR MITZVAHS / BAT MITZVAHS

Eli Harris, Anava Tiyar, Adir Finklestein, Hallel Abramovitz, Gonen Reimer, Itai Schliesser

WEDDINGS

Three have been announced for the next twelve months

NEW MEMBERS

Erez and Cathy Granit and their two children

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP, MAY 15, 2008      135

-----Original Message-----

From: Roy Kagan (Ketura Manager)  
Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 4:00 PM  
To: 'תקוה קגן'  
Subject: RE: בבקשה לתרגם

Dear Parents and Friends of Ketura,

In the past years, we are witness to a growing awareness of living a healthier life style the world over as well as on Ketura.

This includes both proper nutrition and exercise. We have made efforts in improving our nutrition and the results can be seen in the meals in our dining room.

Regarding exercise, we have decided, this year, to build an exercise room that will encourage the members to exercise. We have started by renovating an old turkey run(!) to which we will move the existing equipment from the current fitness room which is in a bomb shelter. Nevertheless, the existing exercise equipment is antiquated and needs to be replaced.

We turn to you, friends and parents of Ketura to help us complete this project. Any contribution, via Mercaz Hshachar (please earmark it for the fitness room) will be greatly appreciated.

Wishing you good health

Kibbutz Ketura

-----Original Message-----

From: תקוה קגן [mailto:tiki\_kagan33@hotmail.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 11:52 AM  
To: Roy Kagan (Ketura Manager)  
Subject: בבקשה לתרגם

להורים  
ואוהבי קטורה יקרים!

בשנים האחרונות גוברת המודעות בעולם, בארץ, ובקטורה.  
לקיים אורח חיים בריא יותר, הכולל תזונה נכונה, וספורט.  
בנושא תזונה כבר השקענו ואנחנו כל הזמן משתפרים, ורואים את זה  
בארוחות בחדר אוכל.  
ובספורט החלטנו להשקיע השנה ולשפץ מקום נעים כדי לדובב חברים  
לעשות ספורט.  
התחלנו לשפץ לול ישן ולהעביר לשם את הציוד הישן שיש לנו במקלט.  
אך כל זה עדיין טיפה בים חסר לנו לא מעט מכשירים ואביזרים כדי שנוכל  
להשלים את ההשקעה שכב התחלנו.  
אנו פונים אליכם הורים ואוהבי קטורה לעזור לנו להשלים את ההשקעה בכל דרך אפשרית.

כל תרומה דרך מרכז השחר(לציין עבור חדר כושר.  
תתקבל בברכה  
שנהיה בריאים

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