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News & Features  
 Editorial  
 Commentary  
 Letters  
 Obituaries  
 Socials  
 Sports  
 Submissions

---

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# Washington JEWISH WEEK Online Edition

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## Bantering on bias

Two Jewish newspaper editors and a former editor-turned-media watchdog discussed whether the media is biased against Israel at an EyeOnThePost-sponsored forum last Thursday in Rockville.

*Washington Jewish Week* editor **Debra Rubin** argued that many Jews look at news regarding Israel through the prism of their own Jewish experiences and knowledge, and are therefore likely to perceive flaws in reporting. She said the Jewish community cannot expect mainstream journalists to be Zionists.

She also said she does not believe there is a "systematic attempt" to present Israel in a bad light, but that carelessness, ignorance and deadline pressures sometimes result in unfair coverage of Israel and the Middle East.

**Eric Rozenman**, a former editor of *WJW* who now is Washington director of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), emphasized that one day's coverage is never enough to prove evidence of bias. But when positive stories about Israel repeatedly appear in one paper and not in another, that can be evidence of a problem.

**Jonathan Tobin**, editor of the *Jewish Exponent* in Philadelphia, does see "something deeply wrong about the way the secular media covers Israel," although he said that, unlike in Europe, that bias could not be explained by anti-Semitism. Sloppiness, laziness and lack of knowledge of the Middle East are all more likely culprits, he said. He noted that news coverage of Israel in the U.S. does not seem to have affected the generally positive view of Israel held by many non-Jewish Americans. But support for Israel among American Jews has weakened.

"When Israel is constantly bashed and unfairly portrayed [in the media], it hurts our self-esteem," Tobin said. "A lot of us internalize it."

Rally for convicted murderer

Washington Wizards' star **Etan Thomas** was scheduled to join community leaders, former death row inmates, death row attorneys, and activists last night at a Takoma Park rally calling on the state to stop the execution of **Steven Oken**, a Jewish man who was convicted for the sexual attacks and murders of three women in 1987. Attorneys for Oken filed a petition for clemency with Gov. **Bob Ehrlich** last Friday.

[Return to Front](#)

### Local News

- **'Still in hell'**  
**Argentine Jews continue to suffer, say local expatriates**

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- **Sowing scrolls**  
**Local man finds homes for sifrei Torah**

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- **Virginia's Warner seeks Jews' assistance**

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- **'It's part of the DNA'** Stern takes helm of JCCouncil, seeks to increase agency's profile

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- **Hoffman reflects on highlights**

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- **Generation to generation** Etz Hayim youngsters prepare oral history project

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- **She wanted to do it all -- and did** Rodef Shalom's administrator retires

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- **Site geared to area Israelis**

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[Return to Front](#)

#### Cinema funds memorial trips

A Berlin movie theater stepped in to save a school trip to death camp memorials outside Germany. **Jurgen Paster** of the Kinocenter Spandau said he was moved to act after he learned that the Berlin Senate did not want to subsidize 15 students from the Spandau school for the educational trip to Majdanek and Sobibor in Poland. The cinema has supplied the necessary funds with one stipulation: The students must make a film about their visit, to be shown at the theater. Paster said the theater will supply a video camera and will help with editing.

#### Rabbis, the Navy wants you

The U.S. Navy is looking for a few good rabbis. The Navy's Chaplain Corps recently sent a letter asking for rabbis to make a three-year commitment to serve. The 11 "active-duty Navy rabbis serving from Okinawa to Italy, backed up by a handful of reservists, simply can't do the job," the letter said.

#### Argentina gets Wallenberg school

A lifelong learning school named after World War II hero **Raoul Wallenberg** was dedicated in Buenos Aires. Following the May 14 dedication, there are now Raoul Wallenberg Schools in four Latin American countries, including Brazil, Uruguay and Ecuador. Wallenberg, who is believed to have died in a Soviet prison after being captured in 1945, saved tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the war by issuing them Swedish passports.

#### Girl Scouts march for Israel

The national organization of Girl Scouts denied that a local troop's participation in Sunday's Salute to Israel parade in New York sparked controversy. *The Jerusalem Post* reported that the Girl Scouts of Westchester Putnam had been warned against marching because it might insult Arab scouts. But **Ellen Christie**, spokesperson for Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., said that wasn't true.

"We would never tell the girls that they couldn't participate in a parade," she said. Christie said scouts are prohibited from marching only in parades endorsing political candidates. Two years ago, local parents expressed concern about the safety of girls marching in the parade because of tension in the Middle East, she said. Tens of thousands of people joined the annual march in Israel's honor through the streets of New York City.

#### Heartfelt honor

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America has won the Wenger Award for Excellence in Public Policy from Women Heart, the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease. Hadassah's department of women's health earned this distinction for its programs "Healthy Women, Healthy Lives" and "Women Take Heart," community outreach efforts designed to educate women about risks to their heart and their health. Accepting the award on behalf of Hadassah was national chair of health advocacy, **Estie Lipsit** of Bethesda.

#### AJCommittee on the air

The American Jewish Committee launched an Internet radio station. The station, available at [www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org), features interviews with world and Jewish leaders about anti-Semitism, terrorism and other issues facing Jews around the world.

#### Greece pressed on anti-Semitism

The Simon Wiesenthal Center called on the International Olympic Committee to press Greece on anti-Semitism. The center made its call in a letter to the president of the IOC, **Jacques Rogge**, two and a half months before the 2004 Olympic games are scheduled to get under way in Athens. Unless Greece takes action against anti-Semitism and racism, the center said its travel boycott against Greece will remain in place.

#### Happy birthday, Elie

The Anti-Defamation League assembled a star-studded lineup in honor of **Elie Wiesel's** 75th birthday. Celebrities at Monday's dinner for the Nobel laureate included U.N. Secretary-General **Kofi Annan**; Sen. **Hillary Clinton** (D-N.Y.); Gen. **Wesley Clark**, actors **Jon Voigt**, **Ellen Burstyn** and **Lynn Redgrave**; Bush/Cheney '04 official **Ralph Reed**; and **Cameron Kerry**, brother of Sen. **John Kerry** (D-Mass.), the presumptive Democratic nominee for president.

Wiesel, who turned 75 last September, is "an irresistible moral force on a global scale that transcends governments and institutions," Ambassador **Richard Holbrooke** said. "I cannot imagine the world understanding the Holocaust without him."

*Compiled with reports from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Eric Fingerhut and other sources.*

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