

Chairman's Message



By Gerald M. Schreck

Jewish Action has always strived to present in-depth, important articles on topics of interest to the Orthodox world. Indeed, it is to the credit of Joel M. Schreiber, the previous chairman of the Jewish Action Commission, and to the Jewish Action staff, both past and present, that the magazine is cherished by thousands of readers in Orthodox homes throughout the world.

As chairman one of my goals is to ensure we address topics that are on the front burner of contemporary Jewish life. In our last issue, we tackled the tuition crisis afflicting Jews across the country and raised some difficult questions about who should shoulder the burden of Jewish education. That very timely issue generated much interest, and we are still receiving requests from day schools and *yeshivot* around the

country for additional copies of the publication.

In this issue, we focus on an equally timely issue in the age of Enron and other corporate scandals: Jewish business ethics. Drawing on his experience as a high-profile criminal defense lawyer, Benjamin Brafman conveys the sense of responsibility the yarmulke-wearing Jew has in the workplace, reminding us that at every turn, there is an opportunity to make a *kiddush Hashem*. Building upon this idea, Rabbi Dr. Aaron Levine, a known expert in the field of Jewish business ethics, details some of the often disregarded *halachot* of the marketplace.

Hurricane Katrina nearly destroyed a city and a Jewish community that is more than 300 years old. In the aftermath of the hurricane, people are picking up the pieces, either trying to start over elsewhere or to rebuild their former lives in New Orleans. One unanticipated outcome of the devastation, which writer Bayla Sheva Brenner insists will not easily be forgotten, is the extraordinary acts of kindness, the *chesed*, that enveloped the Jewish refugees. In her thoroughly researched article, Brenner, senior writer in the OU Communications and Marketing

Department, very movingly describes the *chesed* of the Memphis Jewish community in particular and how it reached out to its traumatized Jewish brothers and sisters.

Now that some months have passed, it is important to take the time to reflect on and analyze one of the most traumatic events in the history of the Jewish State. Did Religious Zionists in America react appropriately to the disengagement? Should they have done more? Rabbis Emanuel Feldman and Yosef Blau, who take strikingly different approaches, answer these and other critical questions in a stimulating debate about American Orthodox Jews and their response to the disengagement.

Finally, our feature on people who live in Israel but commute to the States is sure to get some of our readers to reconsider *aliyah*. "The Transatlantic Commuter" by Dr. Dodi Tobin, a psychologist, and Dr. Chaim I. Waxman, a professor of sociology, explores the growing phenomenon of "commuter *olim*" and the impact such a lifestyle has on families.

I hope you enjoy this thought-provoking, information-packed issue, and I invite all of you to send your comments to ja@ou.org. 