

0:00:03:01: Well, I think I mean there's exceptions of individuals. I mean that's the thing, no one's saying don't interact with their community. Don't ya know, this person's going to be bad because of such and such. I think the overlay of organizations and politics make it sometimes tough because you don't always know what's going on and you start to question what people's motives might be. I know people who are less likely to go to middle eastern restaurants because they're not sure who the owners particularly what went on after la Shish (sp?) and the alleged support of Hezbollah went on as well as the business practices that turned people off. Um, if they don't know. There's an Iranian restaurant for example and no one identifies them as Iranian government. I mean people go there. There are Middle Eastern restaurants who are Lebanese Christian and even Muslim owned who people go to because they build relationships. It's sort of like the thing with your congressman. Everyone believes congressmen are corrupt and are bad, but everyone votes for their own congressman, because it's the one you know. We know people in the community, we interact and we don't put politics in between us all the time, I mean you just don't. So it doesn't hurt interpersonal relationships when there's relationships. It may more likely, hurt the ability to create new relationships or the willingness or desire to do so and I think it retards our connections in those sort of ways. But um, I think relationships on a personal level can be very good as their doing it as long as you don't start trying to look and see well what's that person doing on particular issues. You know, there's been a political polarization in this country between republicans and democrats and there's some people who feel the same way, they don't want to deal with someone outside their political prospective. But you don't ask people. You interact, you make friendships and while for organizations politics can be at the forefront, not everyone's political. My wife keeps telling me that because she's not. And while I engage in political issues, she's not, so it doesn't have that overlay. But there's always that concern about what am I getting myself into in different sort of ways among some people and that's a problem, in terms of holocaust survivors I'm not sure what you mean...

0:02:41:04: Geri explains what she means about Holocaust survivors

0:03:29:22: I don't know. I guess it could be. A lot of holocaust survivors are connected to Israel. Maybe if you did a study, and I don't know if it's been done, but their connection to the state of Israel and the importance of the state of Israel might be higher than the general population. There might be other factors beside them being holocaust survivors and it's also probably a generational thing where you'll find people who are older generally stronger in connection for a variety of reasons so there may be different factors at work there. But when people talk about destroying the Jewish state because of the Jewish state I can understand how holocaust survivors antennas, I mean I can understand how a lot of Jewish antennas would go up and I can try to understand how that would resonate particularly with holocaust survivors and their children and others. But the experience of that in the Jewish community, among a lot of us, are antennas are sensitive and that can play both ways. Sometimes we can be too sensitive I guess you could say, but at the same time that's a price we have to pay because we've paid a price in the past. So being sensitive to these issues and not dismissing them as "lunatic or ravings of a mad man, or he doesn't really mean it," or those sort of things. It's harder to put those things to the side or believe that sort of excuse wherever it comes from in terms of apologists for these folks and it relates to the local community, we see a lot of folks as apologists and they tell us, don't worry about it, ya know "I don't support that part of it, I only support this part of it." That's pretty much a non-starter, and I mean I've seen it when I read press releases out of the Arab community

when it comes to their issues it's a non-starter. I see it in the African American community among their organizations. There's just certain things you can't dabble in and you can't pull one aside from the other.

0:05:31:28: Geri's next question and battery change

0:06:02:22: No, I don't know of any incidents of violence breaking out. The rally during the war, the rallies that went on in Dearborn... the Jewish community didn't go out there, ya know to protests or whatever. There was a community rally that went on at Congregation (Shara zetic??) that brought out some Arab protestors while really riled people particularly because they carried signs with swastikas on them comparing Israel to Nazis and again, that would be something in particular that would get to a lot of Jews, but again holocaust survivors in particular. In terms of individual violence, no, I think there were some issues internal in the Arab community where they had some issues. But no, thankfully not. Everyone speaks against it; it becomes that sort of tension, if you dehumanize the other side than you might think you should do something. People are always considered about that. But in our local community that doesn't play that way. I mean some of it is a geographical division, which, uh, but folks who up here, who live together don't have that problem. Schools were not reporting particular issues, there were some sensitivity issues and schools are particular settings that can be dealing with teenagers and others that can have a whole lot of factors. But there wasn't even a big issue of that going on, and I think that speaks well of both communities.

0:07:42:15: Geri's next question about internal conflicts in Arab American community

0:07:47:04: Well over the last couple of years there was that Shiite Sunni issues. Somebody through something at Siblani's building, a firebomb or something. When I say firebomb, someone through a malitav at like five in the morning or something and it broke, it didn't do anything. And there were some issues at the stores along warren. Again, they've been pretty hushed up. But when I read about someone throwing something at siblani's place... this was before or after the war... I don't remember, I dropped him a note, saying, ya know "sorry to hear that."

0:08:27:25: Geri asked if they found out who was responsible

0:08:29:07: No

0:08:32:11: Geri asking about schools

0:08:36:16: oh that's a whole other... you want to go there? I don't know. I don't want to speak to it; I don't really remember the details that much. I know there was some kid, one of the high schools wore a IDF T-shirt, Israel Defensive Forces T-shirt, and some of the Arab students found that offensive and there were some other issue. It was in Bloomfield hills I think, I mean, they dealt with it. I mean, we wrote about it in the Jewish news. But it was you know, obviously a very emotional time. I mean, there were teens who had either been in Israel and had to come back early because they all came back early after they saw the bombing they were out of Israel in 48 hours, where they were supposed to stay for a couple more weeks. And again, the personal

relationships, ya know, people had family in the villages of southern Lebanon and had friends in the north of Israel. Ya know, a lot of emotion in that regard. But in terms of real problem or last problems, no.

0:09:39:14: Geri question about hostage exchange

0:09:54:09: The reaction to the hostage exchange and uh ... let me rephrase that. I wouldn't call it a hostage exchange. The reaction to the deal with Hezbollah to exchange, to free, a Hezbollah member. Well actually it wasn't a Hezbollah member, I'll rephrase that, too. The reaction to what went on between Hezbollah and Israel in the local community was pretty muted. I think there was a general sense of resignation that there's good reason not to do this sort of thing to say there's a murderer who Hezbollah's been championing for years, but in order to put the Israeli families at rest, it needed to be done. People really didn't know if the Israeli soldiers were alive or dead and Hezbollah, as is their way, made it clear they weren't going to tell anyone, so the only way to find out if they were alive was to go through an exchange. The fact that they came in afterward, the fact they were dead, there's still something to bring the bodies back and some people said (\*something I couldn't understand\* for bodies...) The biggest concern is will this just be a spur to more kidnappings and hostage taking by Hezbollah and Hamas because they see there's a payoff and there always has been because Israel's done a lot of deals where they have exchanged large numbers of people for one or two Israelis. And people realize at one level I think that that's not a good negotiation. It's not a good thing. But at the other time, you got to move on. And I think on some level that's the microcosm of the whole thing. I mean, we have to move on at some level, we have to remember, we have to be true, but we have to be able to go on with our lives. You mentioned earlier about the Jewish news. The Jewish news editorialized in favor of the unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza strip, which Ariel Sharon promoted and carried out. The Jewish news editorialized in favor of the \*(name I can't understand)\* he was going to have unilateral withdrawal from the west bank. That that was his idea, that he was no longer going to wait for a peace partner and couldn't create one and couldn't continue to live the same way so they were going to have to withdraw and it was going to be in Israelis' interest so we knew a lot of reasons it could be problematic; Israel needs to move on and hopefully with that sort of thing we create some sort of change in the Palestinian- Arab society to accept Israel and live peacefully. I mean, the Jewish news has been for those sorts of things, but there's a good argument, particularly these days, that says that's not going to provide security for Israel. It's not going to move people beyond it. People in support of Hezbollah and Hamas in the local community underscores those who say, why are you stupid, how can you give up these tangible assets in the hope philosophies will change. We know where these philosophies are coming from so it's a real hindrance. And some people in the Jewish community didn't like the Jewish news editorialized that way. "What are you, naïve, you can't do it. But there's that optimism, that inherent belief that things are going to get better, that people can live in peace together. I mean, it's what keeps us going, it's what keeps me going that you've got to be able to look in the context of Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary now that things are going to better, to look back and say it's been amazing what's been accomplished by the state of Israel, for all its citizens as well as the Jewish people. And there's this spirit, this belief, in the future that people want to move beyond conflict and it will happen and there's going to be a partner for peace. I mean, nobody wants to hear that this is an intractable situation even if we sometimes fear that it is. You can't live that way. You can't live in the past. You have to hope you're going to have a partner and there's

going to be a compromise because everyone knows there's going to be a compromise, but as an Arab?? Used to say, Israeli diplomat, he'd say, you can only make peace with your enemies, but you can only make peace with your enemies who are going to make peace with you. And that's where I think we're still stuck. Our enemies will not make peace with us. I was in Israel in 1977 and Anwar Sadat came to Jerusalem and the polling before that if you were to ask Israelis, would they give up the Sinai peninsula, which was won in the 1967 war after Egypt broke international law in that area, would you ever give up the Sinai peninsula to Egypt, the answer was 70-80 percent, no. And the guy shows up in Jerusalem even before any real talks, but of course it was a very significant event and even before they really started talking 70-80 percent of the Israeli population within days said, we'll do it, ya know, under the right conditions, this is what we want. If we get peace for this, ya great. There's still that peace. The Palestinian leadership was forthcoming enough, if Syria was forthcoming, they'd get back territory. For peace. But what is that peace? We all know what the ground stuff will look like, it's the intangibles. It's what's peace mean? What's acceptance mean? What does coexistence mean? Those are the things that are so tough because the attitude, those are the things that go to the core of people's emotions in certain ways that are the toughest things. No peace plan on paper is going to be able to say that. How are people going to feel? Are they were going to want to continue to live in a particular way and that's what's continued to miss. Because they've got all the papers out, all the maps and they can be defined here and there. It's just the willingness to make it happen. My belief is that the Israeli told the \*Sadat\* story and the Israeli side, a sincere, committed leadership to control things, toward Israel will go an awful long way. But on the Palestinian side, the leadership's not there. And the Israeli concessions that have been put on the table, many Palestinians don't even know about it, or are so skeptical about Jews and Israel that they just won't even retain it. It's just got to be a myth; it's just got to be a ploy. But uh, anyway...

0:17:37:10: Geri's question about a column about Hezbollah

0:17:50:08: well I wrote an op-ed and it was published in a couple papers and a letter was in the free press from me underscoring that same thing. I thought it was a great column, because I think there's a difference in how things are seen, and we continue to, the whole idea of the \*Oslo??\* peace process and our optimism and belief as Americans is that everyone can be convinced to believe the way we do and everyone at heart is just like us and that's the great thing about the American spirit, although it can veer into nasty things I guess if we try to impose ourselves on others. But we often don't see it as imposing because we know they really believe that way, we just want to open it up because at the root, they're just like us, which they are, at the root. But when you live in a society that's so different or indoctrinated in certain ways, it's not the same. So Hezbollah, even the Palestinian authority, \*Abbas??\* Welcome the release of \*Kumftar?\* and that was something that wasn't published in the papers as much and that's the feeling in that community, even if they don't believe it, they feel they have to say this guy is some sort of hero and Israelis see that and Jews see that here. They say, 'what's going on with that.' How can we, we're not ready for peace, they've got all the papers, no they're just going to do a shelf release, how long if they come to an agreement will they have to sit on the shelf? Because the society's just not ready. But um, I mean, the Mitch Albom column was very good because it expressed how people in this country see this sort of celebration and highlighted what's going on. It's not just a matter of maps and borders, it's a matter of acceptance and ideas and Israel's partners in that part of the world, who are going to have to be their partners, the representatives of the folks

who are going to be their adversaries is not there. As long as they feel they have to celebrate this sort of stuff...

0:20:23:16: BOB asks if the gap he talks about extends from Middle East to Detroit

0:20:34:25: I think it's probably different here. I think there are more people willing to reach across the divide locally, because there are so many other factors. Part of it is the socialization. Some folks are bombarded with this information, but not like they are in the middle east and some if it I want to say, are just legalities, but people know can go too far in their support of Hezbollah and hamas or they shouldn't; they know there's ramifications. That's a tough issue, that's why the media has to report really what's going on and what's being said, because in an American society, there are ramifications for supporting Hezbollah, there are ramifications for saying nesrallah's not a terrorist, George bush is a terrorist in terms of how you're seen in the larger society. And those sort of things need to be put out, but that doesn't necessarily mean people are going to change all their internal beliefs, but how people act is important. If you don't act these things out, you're less likely to continue in this regard. There's less likely, you know, there's no violence in those areas. There's a whole range of things better to be kept in. it's like hate crime laws... you can have an attitude toward somebody but you can't act it out. You know the law says you can't. In this area, you have the freedom to do whatever you want, but there's still sort of a societal context that you just don't go around saying those sorts of things. And that society is in the media, it's on TV, it's promoted. There's streets named after suicide bombers. It's a whole different sort of thing. So I don't believe the local Arab American/ Muslim community, believe the same sort of things. There's pockets likely, but they also don't understand by giving support to those organizations, how it resonates in our community, in the general community. Because again, I don't believe, people tell me, we're going to get problems at the synagogue, or this year they're going to come at Rosh Hashanah, or whatever it's going to be, I really don't generally believe is going to happen because this is American society. But if I was over there, might have an armed guard at the front of the synagogue, or on the street, or I'd close the borders for the holiday like they do which is a bad thing, but what are you going to do. It's a different type of society.

0:23:05:20: Geri asks about the fair

0:23:09:17: the fair to remember is going to be, and I'm not an official spokesperson, this is just my sense, I'm going to the fair to remember because I value the existence of Israel and the connection and I'm just amazed at what Israel's accomplished over 60 years in the face of such adversity. I'm very well aware of internal, societal problems in Israel, I'm aware very much of the issues with Israel's neighbors and conflicts, and differences. But the fact that a nation was born after the holocaust by people who were demoralized and depressed who said ya know, we're going to build something for ourselves and knowing what the world was like back then in terms of anti-Semitism and knowing the pressures that were on them, the fact that is has succeeded to the point that it has is just amazing. I view it as a Jew very important, and as an American very important. I tend to believe there is going to be a change in the Middle East someday and it's going to have to do with democracy and human rights and values. Israel gets beaten up on those points for not being perfect in those regards and gets so much criticism in those areas; the reality is so much different. Israel has been able to keep a free and independent judiciary, a free press and so many things in adversity. I mean, people criticize this country since

what's happened since 9/11. If you look to see how free and open Israel is after what they had happen to them for 60 years, it's just amazing. And it makes me proud. So I'm going to celebrate. I'm going to be able to say this is something a part of myself, with all differences of opinion I might have with Israel, I'm very close with a lot of Israelis, a lot of different institutions and in Israel, the year was sort of subdued, even with the celebration because of what's going on. But you've got to be able to look beyond it. Ya know, segue way that to a political point, just say that that's what I think needs to be done in the Palestinian community. There's been problems, they've suffered, there's been things dealt with unfairly by Israel, by their own leadership, by the international community, by the Arab countries, there's a lot of blame to go around to say why there's no Palestinian state today. But if the Jews after the holocaust were able to say, we have to move forward, we have to build, yes the world owes us this, they were wrong to us thought way, or whatever it might be, but ya know what, we're going to move on, we're going to build a new future. We're going to take all we can get, which wasn't all of what Israel wanted in terms of territory or recognition and we're going to take what we can get and build for ourselves a future for our people. It can be done. We're not any more special than the Palestinians... it's just a matter of that idea. Because again, they've suffered from a variety of different forces, internal, external, but it's that idea of "ya know what, we're going to take what we can get at this point and we're going to move on and build." That can be done. And that has to be done. And again, I hold out that hope. We're no better. That hope can still be there, that can still happen and that's what's going to have to happen. I don't know how long it will take

0:27:05:28: Geri's question about protestors.

0:27:09:26: Yeah, there will be folks protesting the Israel fair for a variety of reasons but basically what they believe is the illegitimacy of the state of Israel and I've seen their stuff and it's very nasty but it expresses the sentiment of that community. Stuff was being published in the Arab American news, again, the main newspaper in that community urging people to come out and protest and saying inaccuracies about our community, playing on anti-Semitism. There always seems to be a play on anti-Semitism. Someone always seems to say, "that's anti-Semitic," and they'll say, "see, whenever we criticize Israel, you say it's anti-Semitic." And it puts us in the Jewish Community in a tough position. Do we ignore the anti-Semitic aspects of it, because we know they're going to say that, or do we point it out when we know it's there? So for example the thing that was printed talks about why are these rich Jews coming to the state fair grounds where poor people live of color, and ya know, they don't belong there. And then it talks about the average income of the Jewish community. I mean, what the heck does that have to do with anything? But this is how it's all played in amongst some segments of the criticism of Israel and they go a lot further and get away with that sort of stuff. But the misinformation about what's going on in Israel is there, too. I mean, there are just all sorts of horrendous things. It would be interesting to see how many people actually show up to that. But there's a belief in that cause, and I'll go back to Nolan Finley, it's again a question of how much they'll look to the future to build their own society and how important that is or how important it is to demonize and destroy the state of Israel. I mean, we can argue politics with these folks if we wanted to, but at the end of the day, it doesn't promote peace, it doesn't promote peace in our community, it doesn't promote understanding and it doesn't promote forces in the middle east who will have to sit down and compromise and live together. These forces are anti all of that. So it's not just a

front to the Jewish community, it's a front to all Americans because it's our policy to try to create two states and have people live in peace. And this is just... I mean it's a small thing here in a segment of Detroit. But it's just a setback in that whole idea. People need to be speaking out and saying ya know what, we need to move forward.