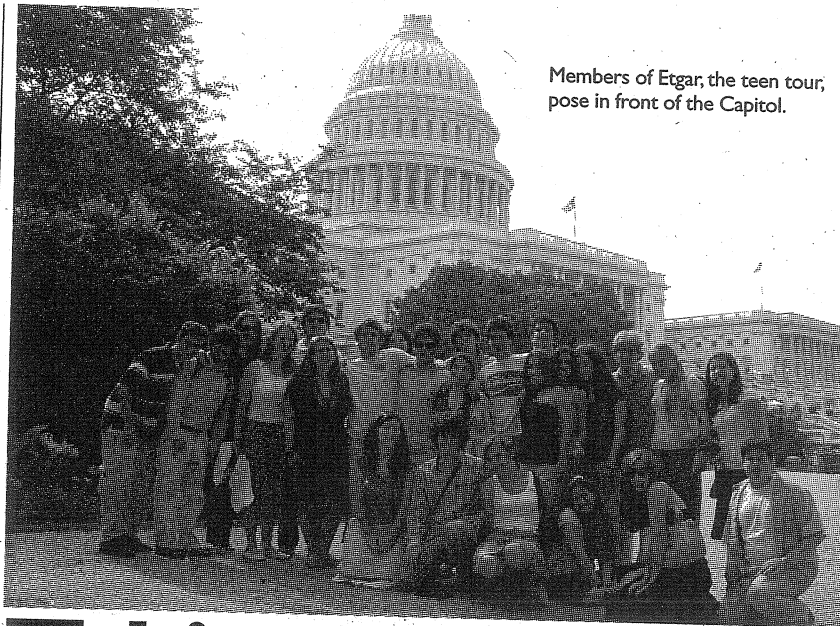


ETGAR 36 IN THE NEWS BALTIMORE JEWISH TIMES - August 25, 2006



Members of Etgar, the teen tour, pose in front of the Capitol.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Taking The Challenge

Two Baltimore teens are back from a 36-day trip that confronts the nation's diverse issues through Jewish eyes.

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Staff Reporter

It was a cross-country trip two Franklin High students don't plan to forget soon.

This summer, Dan Ring and Eric Feldman signed up for Etgar 36, a 36-day teen tour across the country. Etgar, which is Hebrew for challenge, begins in Atlanta and includes travel to major cities and national parks, as well as a chance to see Broadway shows and bond with peers.

But for these two Baltimore high schoolers, and the 41 other Jewish teens from around the country who joined them, Etgar became a whole lot more than a typical cross-country experience. It was also a chance to meet and engage social activists from all political spectrums and, through personal interactions, become exposed to the multi-cultural fabric that comprises America.

For example, take Chicago. During their visit there, the teens visited all the typical tourist sites — the top of the Sears Tower, the Chicago Art Institute — and took in a comedy at the Improv Olympix. But they also met with Bill Ayers, a former member of the Weather

Underground, a radical group from the late '60s and early '70s that believed in using violence to protest the Vietnam War. After seeing a movie on the group, the teens sat down with Mr. Ayers and heard his side of the story.

Having formed opinions from the movie, the teens were ready for a debate. And yet, they were surprised with what they found.

"He said he probably had regrets, was maybe a little too radical," said Eric.

During the conversation, Mr. Ayers also discussed the current war in Iraq. "He talked about how things aren't so crazy today. Since there is no draft, there is less impact on the public," Eric recalled Mr. Ayers saying.

This five-week journey included visits to more than 22 cities such as San Francisco, Denver, New York and Memphis. In addition to exploring the sites, seeing shows and enjoying the culture, the program included visits with Jewish political organizations, such as American Israel Public Affairs Committee as well as both liberal and conservative organizations, from Amnesty International to the Dallas Pro-Life Committee.