

As this issue of *The Michigan Israel Observer* marks the end of its second year in existence, our contributors have continued to address the important topics of the day with an interesting and different perspective. While the past issue could not avoid politics, this time, we have turned again towards history and culture in an attempt to push discussion about Israel away from the standard tropes. By expanding the arena of debate, we strive to move away from the more polarized arguments and show that Israel is more than a one-note country.

Remaining true to this wider arena of debate, our contributors have provided in-depth critical analysis of unique and significant Israeli issues. Our in-depth pieces consider the problem of Israeli poverty, a critical analysis of Israeli deterrence policy during the 1950's, and the infighting between Fatah and Hamas in the Palestinian territories. Our interview showcases former Ambassador Dennis Ross's views on the important Middle Eastern topics of the day. This issue also features reviews of David Grossman's and Michael Oren's latest offerings and a feature piece exploring sustainable landscapes in the Negev.

Our staff has come together to produce, and in many cases provide, outstanding content for this issue. I hope this issue will continue the debate, and maintain awareness of the complexity of Israeli politics, culture and history. Enjoy the read, and, as always, your feedback is appreciated.

Yevgeny Shrago
Editor-in-Chief