

Hi everyone,

Since some of you claimed that they actually enjoy my tedious reports, you will ALL have to go on and get more reports.

The 10th Israeli Film Festival ended here last week. It was in a theater complex in Sunset blvd and it was very nice to mingle among our own and see our own products. We all know how "good" are usually Israeli films, and how even today it still looks so provincial (especially with the list of sponsors which usually contains as many names as the whole budget in shekels), but since most of the audience was Israeli, it wasn't that embarrassing. I saw the film "black box" which was even worse than the surprisingly acclaimed Amos Oz novel, and the 1988 film "Nisuiim Fictiviim" with Bar-aba, Irit Sheleg etc., that was good and funny. The film "Sipurey Tel-Aviv" is even better in the second time. We (Amnon - my flat-mate, Sarah - a friend from Israel and me) were interviewed by a girl for a documentary film about Israelis in LA; the girl was amazed by the fact that we are only one month here, and that we are at UCLA (USC) working in mathematics (neuro-psychology) and actually never thought or think to leave Israel. We refused to be photoed (we are so timid) but we allowed her to tell about us and use our wise comments. . .

I had my first talk in a seminar in front of a distinguished panel. I was a little bit tense before, but it went just fine and some of the people actually responded to what I said (questions, compliments etc.). At least that is off my chest now.

More Yappi than ever - I finally got my American Express card and the membership in the frequent flyer club of TWA. I plan to fly next week to San-Francisco and pay for that, on the phone, by... American Express, of-course. Disgusting, ha?

On Friday was the first midterm exam in my course. I've reached the stage of acting in class *exactly* as I did in Israel. If at the beginning I was afraid to joke too much or to tease them or to come to class with sandals - that's behind me. Also them - besides calling me "Prof", they are very comfortable with me and really seem to like me. That means of-course that they come in crowds to office hours and feel so good that they stay much after the office hour is over. They did OK - 77.16 average.

We had a very traditional weekend here: The homecoming queen and king parade of UCLA which looked like a much-less-impressive-but-still-nice version of the carnival in Rio-de-Janeiro. It was in the Halloween weekend and many wore costumes. Halloween is an American holiday being celebrated on 31/10. The tradition considers 1/11 as the All Saint's day - the holliest day of the year; according to the folklore, one day before that is the day when the evil spirits celebrate. Therefore, children wear costumes of witches, goblins, werewolves etc., and go from door to door and ask for treats. They ask the famous question: "Treat or trick?". If you have treats - you give them; if not - they'll play a trick on you. The many sweet kids who knocked on our door had no tricks prepared and therefore we had to give them the candies that we bought. That night was especially funny because the TV showed all the Halloween episodes of the Simpson from the dawn of this series.

Keep in touch,  
Tamir.