

Mission to Israel

cont'd from preceding page

We then went deeper and deeper into the desert. Masada loomed before us. The sad, but glorious, history of 900 committed Jews was unveiled for us in the unrelenting heat. The zealots of Masada are not forgotten. Here we saw and somehow felt the sacrifice of these brave and determined people. Sunday afternoon was spent at the Dead Sea with its pillars of salt and healing mineral waters. The group swam and relaxed for several hours, happy to have a few quiet moments.

Refreshed, we boarded the bus for a bedouin experience. At a predetermined spot in the desert, we met our camels. Seventeen of us rode the camels. (I could not get on my camel. Matt pushed and pulled, but no way, so I walked behind the camels.) This was a sight to behold, Sam, Emily, Morey, Matt and all the rest, a scene from Lawrence of Arabia. The only mishap of the trip occurred here. Julius fell off his camel, but undaunted, we traveled into the land of the bedouins. Under a huge tent, they prepared and served us dinner. At first a little squeamish we got into the spirit.

Monday morning, Howard

Weistand, the secretary general of the Jewish Agency, spoke to us about the changes in Israel today, the influx of Soviet olim, the effect of the Intifada, the needs of the Ethiopians. No doubt the challenge is tremendous, but these are historic times. We have the opportunity — we accept the responsibility.

We then visited Beit Byer, a Joint Distribution Committee geriatric facility. Fourteen percent of the Soviet olim are elderly in need of care and kindness. Beit Byer has 136 beds. In addition, they offer day care for the elderly. The patients receive nourishing food. They can get a bath, bring their laundry, enjoy companionship. We saw, once again, our money at work — Jews helping Jews.

The next stop was Kfar Adunim, a settlement in the Judean hills. This settlement has 110 families with 415 children. We looked out upon the hills of Samaria, uninhabited for 2,000 years, a scene of incredible desert beauty. This was the border between the Tribe of Judah and the Tribe of Benjamin. It did not take a military strategist to see how these settlements form a line of defense for Jerusalem. Our

host was a rabbi formerly of Scarsdale, NY. He and his family made Aliyah six years ago. He said this is his home. In America, he was in the orchestra of Jewish history; here he sits on the stage. These people, just normal people, not soldiers, not heroes, seem as vulnerable as the soldiers on Mt. Hermon.

Tuesday, July 3 was our final day in Jerusalem, our day at Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. A quiet fell upon the group. Perhaps we were tired, but maybe it was because we realized the holiness of this place of remembrance. We walked to the children's pavilion and entered into the darkest days of human history. One and a half million children would never play, be spoiled, misbehave, laugh, be loved. Matti told of a woman who said she did not see one and a half million children, she saw three million eyes...so true, those eyes beseech you, why me? Why me? Then we went to the museum and the valley of the destroyed Jewish communities. We participated in a most meaningful service. Never again! Never again!

Our final stop was to pay

tribute to the fallen Israeli soldiers at the military cemetery on Mt. Herzl. Julius and I walked through the rows of graves; the average age buried here is 22½. I was looking for a 38-year-old, like our son. I could not find one so I placed the flower in my hand on the grave of a 21-year-old buried on a hill in Jerusalem.

We have come to the end of our trip. At no time did we feel threatened or exposed to danger, even on Mt. Hermon. We walked on the streets alone and without fear. I have not written of many things, the fun we had, the laughter, the sore feet, the weight we all gained, the good friends we made, the tears we all shed. Each of us has a story to tell. This is only a portion of my story. I rejoice that Julius and I made this trip. It renews my spirit. We are getting older and when we left Charlotte, we thought this would be our last trip to Israel. We have changed our minds. We will not wait another 18 years. I urge all of you to join a mission—a mission of learning who we are as Jews. Who knows? Perhaps together we can say—this year in Jerusalem.

Library Lines

By Amalia Warshenbrot

We are pleased to announce that the Speizman Jewish Library has been awarded a Library Citation for the intermediate level by the Jewish Book Council of the JWB.

The Jewish Book Council was established in 1943 to promote Jewish literary creativity, to encourage the establishment of Jewish libraries and broaden the appreciation of Jewish literature. The certification criteria for Judaica libraries in schools, synagogues and Jewish Community Centers are:

1. The library must be established for at least three years.

2. The collection must contain at least 3,000 volumes of Jewish interest, 50% of which should be non-fiction. Speizman Jewish Library contains over 4,000 volumes, about 1,000 of which were donated by individuals. About 350 were selected carefully and purchased during the past year. We are required that 65% of our donated acquisitions have been published within the past five years.

For receiving the certification the library needed an acquisition budget of at least \$1,000. The library is funded by the Foundation of the Charlotte Jewish Community; Speizman Library Fund, Tulman Fund and the Becky Shulimson Memorial Children's Library Fund.

3. The library must be open for a minimum of 15 hours per week, with a librarian in attendance, for 10 months of the year. Our library is accessible to patrons and supervised by a librarian 20 hours per week throughout the year.

4. The librarian should have a degree in library science or in Jewish studies.

5. A Book Month Celebration must be a part of the library program. Every year we have a Book and Author evening, a gigantic Book Fair and a program for the religious schools and preschool students.

6. Membership in a professional association and attending conventions is advised. We are members of the Association of Jewish Libraries and of the Charlotte, N.C. Non-Public School Librarians.

7. A written "Statement of Purpose and Book Selection Policy" was required and is available in the library. We were also required to have regular publicity. I have submitted articles to *The Charlotte Jewish News* and will continue to publicize through articles to the community and special fliers to teachers, the JCC staff, parents and students.

As required, we are in the process of cataloging our library holdings. We are trying to raise funds for a card catalog in Judaica classification scheme and hope in the future to have a computer.

9. Over 200 people visit the library each month. It is much more than the required number.

In June 1988, the library received a citation for Basic Level. In June 1990, we received the intermediate level. We are recognized for maintaining the Speizman Jewish Library at a high level of Judaica content.

The chairman of the library and publication committee presented the award in New York on June 11, 1990 at the 41st annual National Jewish Awards ceremony, June 11.

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