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# The Charlotte JEWISH NEWS

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## More Soviet Jewish Families Arrive in Charlotte Four Families are Reunited *Meet the Kurgans*

By Sally Schrader  
Soviet Resettlement Coordinator

Four Charlotte families were reunited with relatives from the Soviet Union the last two weeks in April.

Gregory Levenfeld's son, George Levenfeld, arrived from Leningrad on April 6 with his wife, Helen, and son, Vladek, 3½.

Grigory Bunich's brother, Lazar Bunich, arrived from Kiev with his family on April 17. Lazar was accompanied by his wife, Yevgeniya, their sons, Alexander, 19, and Dmitry, 16, and his wife's mother Fanya Garber.

Alexander Ehrenburg's uncle, Lev Glezerman, arrived from Riga, Latvia on April 28 with his daughter Irena Ravina and granddaughter Vita Ravina, 22.

Issac Grossman's parents, Roman Grossman and Genya Lichterman, and Issac's brother, Ilya, with his wife, Irena, daughter, Elena, 5, and Irena's father, Yuri Otreshko, arrived from Minsk on April 27.

Alexander Ehrenburg and his former wife, Ingrid Noreiko, were among the first families who emigrated to Charlotte in the summer of 1974. Grigory Bunich moved to Charlotte in 1979 from Norfolk, Virginia with his wife, Raisa, and sons, Boris and Alex. Issac Grossman moved to Charlotte in 1982 from Boston, Mass. with his wife, Berta, and son, David. Gregory

Levenfeld moved to Charlotte in 1988 from New York with his wife, Valentina.

More will be written about the new families and their Charlotte relatives and the others who are arriving by May 10 in the June issue of *The Charlotte Jewish News*.

The Charlotte Jewish community with the very generous financial contributions from the non-Jewish community as well as from the Jewish community, will assist in the resettlement of as many as 50 or more refugees during 1991.

We need everyone's continued financial support as well as goods and services. We especially need volunteers for driving to appointments, interviews, religious services, community activities and general socialization and for tutoring English.

We need funds for camp scholarships this summer and for preschool and day school next fall (1991-92). We have new families arriving with young children and most of the families who arrived last summer have limited incomes and will need scholarships. If you have a special interest in encouraging and assisting our Jewish refugee families to obtain a Jewish education or to enable their children to experience Jewish camp, you can send a contribution to Jewish Family Services and designate your contribution for that purpose.

By Sally Schrader

The first of our new Soviet families arrived in Charlotte on April 6. They are Arkady Kurgan, his wife, Helena, their daughter Irina, 19, and their son, Boris, 17.

Arkady worked as a design engineer with the gas department of Moscow and Helena worked as a secretary. Irina graduated from the Medical Secondary School and worked as a nurse in a hospital in Moscow. Boris finished his ninth year of school with the third highest grades in his class but was not permitted to continue his studies there because he is Jewish. He was the only Jew in his class. However, he passed an exam that enabled him to study at an institute of economics.

Irina and Boris would like to continue their education. Irina hopes to study medicine and become a doctor or nurse. Boris has begun classes at West Charlotte and will attend college as soon as his English language skills are proficient. Both intend to work part-time while they attend classes.

Arkady enjoys playing chess and watching boxing and wrestling. Irina enjoys reading. Boris has some expertise in Judo. The whole family enjoys popular and jazz music, and Boris and Irina also like rock music.

Arkady's concern for the future of his children was his main motivation for leaving



The Kurgan family: (L to R) Helena, Irina, Boris, Arkady.

photo/Darren Mond

Moscow. They were already experiencing discrimination for being Jewish. Arkady expressed that his worst experience as a parent was the day when his daughter (she was 16 at the time) asked if he could have the government officials stamp in her passport "Russian" as her nationality instead of "Jew." Internal passports are issued to all people in the USSR at age 16 and are used as identification for education, employment, housing, travel, etc. Having "Jew" written on your passport

will guarantee discrimination and persecution in every aspect of your life. The only positive effect it can have is that for now (this could change any day) Jews are allowed to emigrate in greater numbers than other groups.

The family is looking forward to becoming part of the Jewish community. The first week they arrived, they asked if we had books in Russian on Jewish customs and history. Irina and Boris asked how they could meet other Jewish young people.

### Israeli Teens Visit "Queen City"

By Jillian Goldberg

Our family and the Cooper family recently had the pleasure of hosting two Israeli high school students. Dana Roche and Elad Toister were part of an Israeli teen mission sent abroad by the Department of Foreign Affairs as "youth ambassadors." Sixteen boys and girls toured different regions of the U.S. in teams, talking to student groups in public and private schools and Jewish organizations. Their job was to describe life in Israel today and, in particular, during the recent Gulf War.

Both Dana and Elad are confident and personable young people, passionately patriotic and confident of their country's strength and stability. They had questions and answers at their fingertips and were skillful in getting discussion rolling even in shy, unresponsive audiences. Their command of English put most of us to shame, a reminder of our lack of multilingualism in this country.

The Jewish Federation, their sponsors here, organized a busy schedule of speaking engagements for the three days of their visit, which left little time free for "hanging out" and getting to

know their contemporaries in Charlotte. They did find time to share the international language of popular music with their hosts, Rafi Goldberg and Elana Cooper, and visited a couple of record stores. The highlight of their trip was seeing the Hornets play the Knicks at the Charlotte Coliseum. They had expressed strong interest in the Hornets when they arrived, and Roz Cooper and I scurried to find them tickets for the game the next night. Peggy and Al Rovman came up with great seats for our guests and thanks are due to them for their kindness.

A heart-warming "small world" story emerged during the visit, which reinforced the sense of community and brotherhood we feel with our fellow Jews in the state of Israel. It turned out that Dana's home is the small town of Kochav Yair, where her father, the mayor, works closely with my younger brother, who serves on the town council there. In addition, Elad's father, an English teacher who went on aliyah from Australia, knows many mutual friends in Israel, including the person who was my elder brother's best man at his wedding in Cape Town, South Africa, over 25 years ago. So, from two apparent strangers, we were able to get up-to-date news on many family members and old friends.

Although the visit was brief and busy, it was nevertheless a little window into a world far away in miles, outlook, styles, and daily realities, but close to us in deeply held Jewish values and identity.

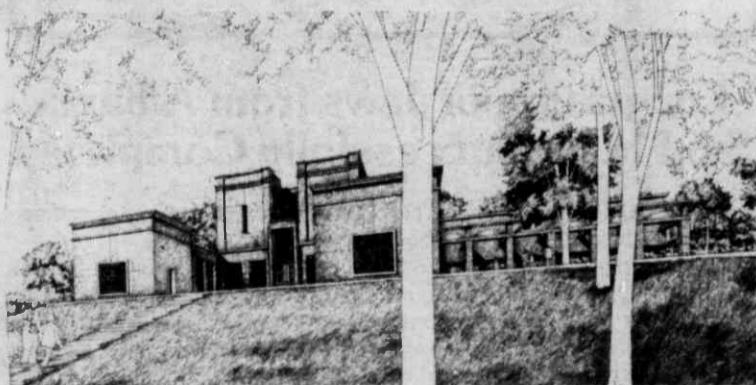
### Temple Beth El V'Shalom Schedules Symbolic Groundbreaking Ceremony

It has been many years since bulldozers were active at Shalom Park, but soon they will be seen again on top of the hill across from the main building at Shalom Park.

Temple Beth El V'Shalom will have a symbolic groundbreaking ceremony Sunday, June 2, 1991 at 5 p.m. Speeches, entertainment and a cook-out supper will round out the event.

A time capsule will be filled with artwork and photographs from the Sunday School. Temple memorabilia and current events that will be of future interest will also be included.

The actual construction is due to commence mid to late summer but for the convenience of the membership the earlier



Artist's rendering of the new Temple.

date for the ceremony was selected.

The committee members planning this event are Ethel Gordon, chairperson; Sara Benfield, Shirley Fytelson, Paula Gentile, Vera Mendel, Jill Newman, Eva

Nove, Paul and Debbie Paskoff, Diggie Pesakoff, Elise Ray, Anna Resnik, Faye Seigel and Joy Weinstein.

The Temple's Annual Meeting will follow at 7 p.m.

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