

— Update —

By Lynne Cojac

Though there have been no new arrivals in the past few months, Russian Resettlement continues in Charlotte. The Charlotte Coalition for Soviet (Russian) Resettlement is in the process of approving the Resettlement Plan for the next three years.

Recent emigres who have joined our community are involved Jews. They send their children to Religious Schools, Hebrew High School and Post-Confirmation classes. Many worshipped with us for the High Holy Days. In this fresh start for the year 5753, please think of some way in which you, personally, can help involve a Russian family in the Jewish community. We have so much to offer them and they have the potential of so much to give.

Job Needed

David Shklovsky came to Charlotte in May 1990 with his wife, Alla, and son Vovo, now in the second grade at Idlewild Elementary. David's education was at the Leningrad Academic Institute where he studied water supply and sewage systems. He has studied Auto CAD 2 & 3D and DCA at CPCC. David has done work in Charlotte as a CAD draftsman and designer, producing shop drawings. He had worked for seven years with the City of Leningrad Develop-



David Shklovsky

ment Department. His skills include working on public works/utilities team projects. He has excellent organizational skills, ability to make field decisions independently and thorough knowledge of math and basic computer operations.

David is in need of work. He seeks employment as a Civil or Environmental Engineer. He has experience in waste water supply systems for industry and local communities, including water supply and waste water collection facilities, storm drains, sanitary sewage systems and environmental problems. **David would appreciate the opportunity to interview for any employment at this time.** If you know any employer who could benefit from David's talents, your help in arranging this interview would be greatly appreciated. Please call JFS, 364-6594.

Medical Professionals Donate Services To New Americans

By Lynne Cojac

Jewish Family Services has been the support system for all the Russians who have come to live in Charlotte, providing help with adjusting to a new community and culture, finding jobs, providing a furnished apartment, transportation until drivers' licenses are acquired, teaching English, and a myriad of other necessary parts to the whole of their well-being. In addition to this, the JCC, Temple Israel, Temple Beth El and Lubavitch all offer them immediate membership and Jewish educational opportunities.

One final "piece of the pie" is their physical health. Upon arrival here, the dental and physical medical needs of these Russians have been provided for by the following doctors in our community. They have donated many hours of medical services at no cost to the patients or the Jewish community over the period of the last 2½ years. Sincere appreciation on behalf of the entire Jewish community is due to these and other professionals for the support and services they have so generously given:

Dentists

Joe Steiner & C.J. Treat
Randall Stewart & Michael Danze

Scott Menaker
Scott Goodman
Mark Perlin
Larry Seitlin & Barry Marshall
Robert Widis
Harold Weisman

Physicians

Sandy Benjamin
Carl Eisenberg
Donald Russ
Mark Kirsch
Selwyn Spangenthal
Marvin Shapiro
Helen Melaragno
Paul Putterman
Barry Golembe
Arnold Snitz
Jim Linderman
Herbert Stein
Mark Wolozin
James Shearer
Gary Waldman
Stuart Wernicoff
Walter Schoen
R.L. Pixley
Pierre Martinbeau
Peter Katz
Trevor Goldberg
Joseph Estwanik
William Gruhn
Richard Kleinmann
Larry Berman
Donald Schumacher
James Touissant
Nalle Clinic
Laurel Eye Associates
Eye Care Clinic
Carolina Medical Associates
Mercy Hospital
Presbyterian Hospital

The Jews Of Georgia

Calm has returned to Georgia, but it is generally agreed that the tension, now barely suppressed, could erupt at any moment. In the past 18 months the country has experienced civil strife related to the leadership of the country, secessionist conflict in the autonomous regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and an earthquake in Oni. Since January of this year alone, 850 people have died as a result of political conflicts.

The country, now led by former USSR foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, went to the polls in its first democratic election on October 11.

The Jewish Agency in Georgia

One of the first Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) offices in the former USSR was opened in Tbilisi in February 1990. JAFI enjoys special status at the municipal level and is the only non-municipal agency renting space in City Hall; this status is matched at the national level. In fact, when the local OVIR (interior ministry) office was destroyed during the events leading to the overthrow of Gamsakhurdia, authorities allowed the continuation of OVIR activities out of JAFI offices there.

The Jewish Agency operations in Georgia are centered in the Tbilisi office, where a permanent emissary is responsible for coordinating all activities in the former Soviet republic. With the inauguration of direct flights from Tbilisi in June 1992, the emissary also assumed responsibility for all flight and ground arrangements for olim from Georgia.

Coordinating rescue operations for the Jews of Georgia is also a primary responsibility of the JAFI emissary in that country. When Jews began to flee Ossetia in early 1991, Emissary

Itzik Moshe organized a rescue team to evacuate the Jews to Tbilisi, find them shelter and begin to process their aliyah to Israel.

Soon after the events in Ossetia, an earthquake destroyed the homes of hundreds of Georgian Jews. The JAFI emissary again organized a relief operation to bring these individuals to safety and assist those who wished to leave immediately for Israel.

The same type of operation rescued Jews from the battle zone in Abkhazia when, at the height of hostilities, a Jewish Agency flight brought 175 refugees to Israel. This infrastructure now exists to use whenever it may be needed.

A JAFI Hebrew teacher from Israel assists some 20 local teachers to teach the Hebrew language to thousands of Georgian Jews.

The Jews of Georgia — History

There are approximately 22,000 Jews in Georgia today, and more than 40,000 in Israel; most of those living in Israel came during the 1970s, when Soviet authorities first allowed large numbers of Jews to leave. However, Georgian Jews began to settle in Israel as far back as 1863, and by 1920-21 the Israeli Georgian community numbered 1,700. In the past two years, 3,500 Georgian Jews have left for Israel and about 65 percent of the Jews remaining in Georgia hold family reunification papers.

There is considerable evidence that Jewish settlement in Georgia has ancient origins. They are

mentioned in the writings of Benjamin of Tudela (after 1160). The Jews suffered prolonged oppression under the Turks and Persians from the 15th century through the beginning of the 19th century, when Georgia came under Russian rule.

Communities of European, Ashkenazic Jews had already been established in Georgia by the end of the 19th century, settling among the native Sephardic Jews. During World War II, Georgia succeeded in resisting the German invasion and Ashkenazic Jews from Nazi-occupied areas settled temporarily in Georgia. By 1959 the census of the Jewish population of Georgia listed the total as 51,582, with 36,745 speaking Georgian (Sephardim) and the remainder speaking Russian and Yiddish (Ashkenazim).

Georgia — General

Georgia, with a population of more than four million, forms a wedge at the eastern end of the Black Sea, south of the main range of the Caucasus Mountains. The land is primarily mountainous and hilly, with only 13 percent plains and valleys. It has a wide range of climates and flora and fauna, and is rich in hydro-electric power, metals and minerals. Native Georgians comprise 64 percent of the population.

When the Soviet Republic of Georgia was formed in 1936, three autonomous regions were created: Abkhazia, with its capital in Sukhumi bordering

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OOPS!

In last month's issue, Gregory Barkan was identified as Gregory Bunich. We are sorry for this error. Barkan is the translator for the group that was featured. However, Bunich has been the translator for driver applications for the Russians.

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