

HADASSAH

A Long-Ago Visit to Israel Brings Hope for Israel Today

By Phyllis Berlin, President, Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah

It was twenty-five years ago this month that I returned from my first and only trip to Israel. In the summer of 1977, I boarded an El Al Boeing 747 with a girlfriend, a sleeping bag attached to an aluminum framed-backpack, dozens of cotton shirts and shorts and most importantly a stack of tissue paper thin, powder-blue, pre-paid Aerograms. With about \$400 in traveler's checks strapped to my waist and a passport glued to my skin, the two of us set off to explore the land we had only read about. Our goal was to have fun and create a lifetime of memories.

I remember most of what happened that summer, but pictures and a journal help remind me of what I have forgotten. I even have all the letters that I wrote to my family and that they mailed to me that summer. Thoughtfully, my mother had saved them and just recently I opened them up to read what we had written. Each began with me assuring everyone that I was fine. Each of theirs also assured me that they, too, were well (and have I scheduled my return flight, yet.). I told them of our daily activities, what we saw and what we did. Interestingly, there is even one that details our visit to Hadassah Hospital. As I read the words I had written so long ago, I couldn't help but wonder just how much of what was once there, no longer exists.

The Israel in my mind is a contrast to the images I see on television and in the newspaper. I know as the years passed, so did the

landscape and architecture of the country, but what I am referring to is the overall ambience. I lived on kibbutz Kfar Maseryk and remember peaceful days interrupted only by the occasional sound of fighter jets flying overhead. In my mind I hear the hum of the tractor that I sat on while I sprayed rows of cotton plants with insecticide. Are the cotton fields still there? Is the kibbutz still operating? After we left the kibbutz we traveled the country. When we reached the Kennedy Memorial, I planted a sapling in memory of my brother's best friend who died earlier that year in a baseball accident. Does it stand tall in the forest? What about the little hut we slept in one night in a campground near Tiberias. It was made of straw, is it still being used? Or the little jewelry store in Jerusalem where I purchased a necklace for my sister with her name spelled out in Hebrew letters. Is that building still standing?

As I said, it has been over twenty-five years since I visited Israel. I don't know what Israel looks like today. I only know what I see on television and in the newspapers. I see she is suffering from the effects of modern warfare. The cities and gardens that sprang from her desert soil are under the threat of extinction every day, and so Israel must evolve every day in order to survive. She cannot do it alone. It takes a team effort and Hadassah has been a proud partner. Our contribution of time and money to Hadassah are just two of the many ways you can participate in Israel's fight for survival. Keep

in mind that by helping Hadassah Hospital you also help medical progress in the United States, too. New procedures and breakthroughs that occur in Hadassah hospital's research labs and operating rooms are eventually introduced to American hospitals. To put it in business terms, it's a win-win situation.

Just as Charlotte has grown, so too has our membership. If you are not already a member, I invite you to join us. We would love to introduce you to our many projects, here and in Israel. Please give me a call to become part of an extraordinary group of women who tirelessly and selflessly respond to Israel's needs. There is truly no better time than now to show support for a land that has created incredibly long-lasting memories for its visitors, and has been a catalyst for progress the world over. ☆

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Join Hadassah Now and Take Part in the Exciting Programs for September

This fall Hadassah has lots of wonderful programs planned.

The Women's Study Group, Lunch and Learn, will resume on Thursday, September 19, with a program about Sukkot. You've heard of the Ushpizim, the guests for your sukkah. But what Ushpizot, women guests, would you invite?

Bring your own lunch to Temple Beth El at 12:30 PM on September 19 and we'll discuss our favorite Jewish heroines and why we'd share our Sukkot meal with them.

Paid-Up Membership Supper

You can join Hadassah for just \$25 a year. You will be supporting a group that stands with Israel, endows the Hadassah Hospital in Israel, works in Washington, DC for women's rights, and plans fascinating entertainment and educational programs here at home.

All wild and wonderful women of Hadassah are invited to a light

supper on Thursday night September 19 at "La-Tea-Da" at 1942 E. 7th St.

In celebration of "women of a certain age," those proud to be over 50 are asked to wear red and purple. (Those of you poor girls who haven't made it yet can wear pink and lavender.) The cost of the light supper is \$15.

To join Hadassah, call Debby Rosenberger at 704-543-3148. To make a reservation for the evening at "La-Tea-Da," call Lorrie Klemons, 704-846-6790.

Annual Donor Event

This year's Donor Event will feature comedian Joel Chasnoff. It will be a brunch held at the Park Hotel on October 27. A minimum donation of \$50 plus the cost of the event is all anyone needs to join the fun.

To make your 2002-2003 donation, call Heidi Rotberg at 704-365-3859. ☆



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