

A Russian Family - Reunited in Vegas



A RUSSIAN FAMILY - REUNITED IN LAS VEGAS AT MC CARRAN AIRPORT ON JUNE 24, 1980. BORIS IVASHKOV KISSES HIS MOTHER AFTER A 10 - YEAR SEPARATION. HIS WIFE LYNN IVASHKOV STANDS ON THE FAR LEFT. BORIS' DAD, OVERCOME WITH EMOTION, WAS NOT IN THIS PERSONAL PHOTO. BORIS' MOM AND DAD WERE HAPPY TO BE WITH THEIR CHILDREN IN LAS VEGAS. THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN MINUTES AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL.

BY VALERIE WIENER

Ten years. Thousands of miles. Death and separation. Tests most people could not endure...

Yet, the strong sense of tradition within Russian-born Jew, Boris Ivashkov, can survive even these devastating circumstances with hope that one day he again would share life with his family. Recently, that hope became a reality. Ivashkov, with the persistent help of Jewish Family Services, was able to locate his family after a 10 - year separation. After many months of work, Jerry Katz, of Jewish Family Services, helped make the family immigration to Las Vegas, like those ventures of 20 other Russian emigres, a reality.

Ivashkov's story of new life began when he was 18. Then a student of physical therapy, Ivashkov considered his life complete and happy. One day, however, when his efforts to visit Poland were forbidden because he was a Jew, Ivashkov's life and attitude changed. It was then, in 1971, he decided to seek freedom.

The young Jew's first home outside Russia was in Israel. His best friend, Boris Gandelman, who had immigrated to Israel two years earlier, helped Ivashkov maintain an emotional link to his family still living in Russia. One weekend Gandelman, a soldier, did not return home on leave. The search for his friend in the war - torn Golan Heights led Ivashkov to Gandelman's casket. Left then with only the memory of a "brother" killed when Egyptian tanks rolled over troops in their sleep, Ivashkov decided to leave Israel for New York.

Before his departure, however, Ivashkov spent one last impressionable moment with his family in Brest. Feeling lost and despondent, Ivashkov sought advice from his father, a Nazi concentration camp survivor. His father, bearing the physical reminder of that concentration camp life, a tattooed upper torso designed for skinning to make purses and lamp shades, told his only son, "However happy you might be, you still will have times when you want to die." His father continued, "When this happens, visit the nearest hospital, where those people without arms and legs and those dying would be happy to do what you are able to do . . . walk out of there."

Those words continue to remind Ivashkov of what he has. Settled in his new life, as a masseur at the Hilton Hotel, Ivashkov has learned to appreciate his new life with his wife, Lynn, in a country where he can openly welcome his family and know that freedom can be theirs too.

Thoughts and words were not important, though, when Ivashkov anxiously greeted his mother and father at the McCarran Airport recently. Tears of joy and love, emotion bridging 10 years of unknowing separation, reminded Ivashkov and his parents that there are no barriers too great to separate family.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Meyer Lansky, the reputed one-time Czar of organized crime in the U.S., will be permitted to visit Israel on a one-month's tourist visa. Interior Minister Yosef Burg, who ordered Lansky expelled from Israel in 1972 after denying him citizenship, lifted the ban after Lansky, who lives in Miami Beach, expressed a desire to visit Israel for Rosh Hashanah.

WASHINGTON (WNS) -- The establishment of the annual Simon Tovkower Memorial Writing Competition for member publications of the American Jewish Press Association (AJPA) and their staffs was announced here at the AJPA's 38th annual meeting.



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REFORM RABBI AGAINST HOSTING ARAB MAYORS

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Rabbi Moshe Haim Weiler, chairman of the Council of Rabbis for Progressive Judaism (Reform) in Israel, has sharply criticized Temple Sinai the Reform temple in Washington, D.C., for hosting the deported Mayors Fahd Kawasme of Hebron and Mohammed Milhim of Halhoul at a public meeting. "I utterly object to offering hospitality in a Jewish house of worship for these two enemies of Israel," Rabbi Weiler said.

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