

New Jersey Dentist Is One-Man Welcome Committee

By Ben Gallob

A 72-year-old Hackensack, N.J., dentist spends most of his Friday afternoons implementing an ancient but often-forgotten Jewish tradition -- helping new Jewish arrivals with their Sabbath needs.

Dr. Morris Friedman and his wife Naomi moved into an apartment above his office in Hackensack 45 years ago. The semi-retired dentist said there have been many changes in the community since then, according to the Bergen Jewish News.

After playing tennis for three hours on Friday afternoons, Friedman delivers to newcomers a fresh loaf of challah and a bottle of kosher wine.

He was asked how he found newly settled Jews among all the apartment dwellers in an area dominated by high-rise apartments. He replied that, in some of those buildings, friends acted as scouts.

It is also a matter of periodic visits to the high-rise apartments. He indicated that some of the Jews he has thus met have been "overwhelmed" by the Jewish stranger bearing Jewish gifts.

Friedman not only delivers his Sabbath gifts to Jewish newcomers, he also invites them to the community's Temple Beth El. He said membership had reached 250, almost 30 of whom had joined during 1986.

Friedman has been a member of the synagogue's board for more than 40 years.

Currently he is synagogue vice president and chairman of the membership committee.

Despite his advanced years, Friedman includes in his schedule a lot of tennis, a great deal of work for the Hackensack Jewish community and some dentistry.

He fondly remembered the Friday night on which he saw a young Jew sitting alone in a corner of Temple Beth El. "Naturally, I went over to speak to him. He told me he had had a pretty hard time" as a newcomer to Hackensack, Friedman explained.

Friedman said he learned that the young Jew "was living alone in a camper in a nearby town, isolated from other Jews, except for the Friday nights when he came to our shul."

The dentist invited the young Jew to become a member of the congregation "but he said he could not afford the fee, so we adjusted it. When he gave the (synagogue) secretary his check, he kissed her hand and said 'Today, I am a Jew. Today I am a person.'"

That event was particularly gratifying for Friedman because he said he was convinced the future of the Hackensack Jewish community depends "on a united front to show our strength."

"I want every Jew in Hackensack -- all 6,000 of them -- to become part of the Yiddishkeit that's available for them," he said. He was saddened that a large number of Hackensack Jews avoid becoming active in Jewish life.

He said there was a bright side. The synagogue is once again attracting young Jews, and he expressed the hope that, within a few years, the synagogue would reopen its Hebrew school.

He spends the winter at Longboat Key, Fla., where he plays tournament tennis. At his home in Bergen County, he plays more informally. But, said the 72-year-old activist, "I'll play the young fellows, the 20 and 30-year-olds. I'll play anyone who shows up at Hackensack High School" with a tennis racquet.

Orthodox Jew Stabbed In The Old City Despite A Heavy Police Presence

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The stabbing attack on 66-year-old David Lipschitz in Jerusalem's Old City recently was carried out despite a heavy police presence and other civilians nearby.

Police Minister Haim Barlev disclosed in an Israel Radio interview.

He insisted, however, that Jerusalem "is the safest city in the world -- far safer than New York, Paris, London and many other big cities -- despite the problems we have."

Lipschitz, an Orthodox Jew, was assaulted near the Damascus Gate on his way from prayers at the Western Wall to his home in the Mea Shearim quarter outside the Old City walls. He was treated at Hadassah Hospital and is reported to be recovering.

More than a dozen prominent Palestinians, including Palestine Liberation Organization sympathizers, issued a statement deploring the attack. They rejected "attempts by the Israeli media to link (it) to the Palestinian nationalist struggle." The signatories included faculty members of Bir Zeit University in the West Bank and Hanna Senlora, editor of the pro-PLO East Jerusalem daily Al Fajr.

This act directly contravenes the civilized context of our legitimate Palestinian struggle" and is "in complete contradiction to humanist principles and religious laws in which we believe," the statement said.

Barlev said he hoped "the police presence will act as a deterrent, that the criminals will be caught and that no extremists -- neither

theirs nor ours -- will disturb the peace."

He said that Lipschitz's attackers may have been hiding behind a parked truck, stabbed him and fled, all in a matter of seconds. "Two other Jews were following him (Lipschitz) about 10 meters behind, and another Jew was walking ahead of him," Barlev said. "None of them noticed anything. Not far away there was a police vehicle with the 'Kojaks' on duty." He was apparently referring, not without sarcasm, to the popular American television detective.

Barlev said the police are investigating the incident and security patrols have been beefed up.

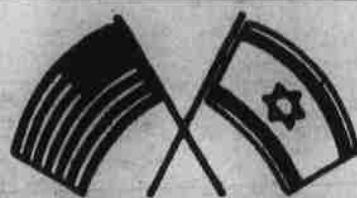
Arsonists Who Burned Down Synagogue In Rumania Get Long Prison Terms

NEW YORK (JTA) — A Rumanian court has sentenced four persons to long prison terms for burning down a synagogue in the Moldavian town of Bohush on October 30, the Chief Rabbi of Rumania, Moses Rosen, told leaders of the World Jewish Congress. The synagogue was burned to the ground after its janitor was stabbed.

Rosen said here that the court in the town of Bacau found the four guilty and sentenced them as follows: Gheorghe Podoleanu, seven years imprisonment; Florin Sandru and Vasile Popa Moganu, each five

years in prison; and Mihai Vatau, four years in a reform school.

The four, ranging in age from 17 to 28, were arrested on November 9 and charged with arson and stabbing. They claimed they had come to rob the synagogue and asserted that the fire broke out accidentally from two candles they had left burning.




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