

# Soviet emigrants battled, won passage to Israel

By Shirlee Rose Iden  
staff writer

Several years ago, a tall, slender law student from Southfield fled the Soviet Union. During a stay in Leningrad, he met Irina and Evgeny Lein.

Since that visit almost a decade ago, Keith Braun, now a Detroit attorney, and the Leins counted themselves friends despite being separated by a "rusty iron curtain."

The Leins, recent emigrants to Israel, endured an 11-year struggle to save our lives and go out (of the USSR)," in Evgeny's words.

During the years, the friendship was maintained and communication continued. Braun always urged interested Americans to visit the Leins when traveling in the USSR.

SVETLANA BRAUN joined her husband and came to live in Southfield in November 1987.

The Leins' long ordeal ended on Jan. 22, 1989, when they arrived in Israel.

On a tour of U.S. cities, they visited with friends in Farmington Hills, Lenny and Olga Makar-Limanov, and spoke of the odyssey that has led them to freedom.

"Until the last minute when we got permission to leave, we thought it was a ploy of the KGB, that they might punish us by drafting our son, Alex, and separating us," he said.

The Leins first applied for permission to leave the USSR in 1978 and were refused.

IN THE time before refusal, they courted, married and had Nehama and Alex. Evgeny Lein was a mathematician with a doctoral degree, Irina, also with a Ph.D., worked as a chemist.

Evgeny and Irina lost their jobs on the same day. He became a watchman, and later a building worker. Attending a seminar to keep his mind active, Evgeny was arrested and imprisoned.

Although his lawyer advised him to plead guilty, he defended himself and was sentenced to three years labor for "resisting authorities."

In ensuing years, his daughter was expelled from the Geology Institute for "activities." He was slandered in the newspaper "Izvestia" and was dragged from his apartment and severely beaten by the KGB.

The Lein phone was disconnected, and Alex was made to stand in class while his father was vilified.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Irina (left) and Evgeny Lein believe Glasnost hasn't had that much effect on the ability of Russian Jews to emigrate. The couple are on a tour of the United States but are adjusting to life in Israel.

Evgeny participated in a hunger strike in 1986 and was detained by the police when he joined a group attempting to visit the U.S. Consulate.

In 1987, the Leins' daughter, her husband, and their two children, were given permission to leave.

TIME AND again, the family was used as an example by the KGB, which caused them to be dismissed from the jobs, have their mail stopped and their phones cut off. "They were always trying to show our colleagues and neighbors what could happen," he said.

During the 1988 summit in Moscow, the Leins and 14 other families met with Ronald Reagan. Before the

meeting, they were told they could reapply for a visa, but afterward they were refused again.

"Every one of the families who met with Reagan were punished in some way after he left," Evgeny said.

AN OLD adage states that life begins at 40. For Irina and Evgeny Lein, a new life started when they arrived in Israel in time to be feted for their 50th birthdays.

Greeted by their daughter and her family, they met their young grandson, Perez, and Alex has passed his exams for entrance to the electrical engineering program at the Technion.

# City residents face tax hike

Farmington residents will face a property tax increase averaging 3.6 percent beginning in July to cover the city's \$6.8 million annual budget, adopted June 5.

But the city is rolling back its property tax rate from 10.65 to 10.4 mills. It's just that a mill is now worth more because of increased state equalized values, or SEVs.

In addition to the increased tax revenues, the city will use \$68,000 from its cash reserve balance to handle the 2.8-percent increase in expenditures and declining revenues from the state and other sources.

The bulk of the budget, \$4.3 million, will be used to operate the city. The remainder includes the water and sewer, highway and capital funds. The debt service rate of 6.98 mill will remain unchanged.

Not addressed in the budget are increased costs for changes in garbage collection and disposal, expected to come to light in the next year or two.

The public safety department will receive the largest portion of the general fund budget at \$1.33 million, followed by general government expenses, public services, insurance and other fixed expenses.

SOME OF the changes in the coming year include:

- Reorganization of the city assessor, clerk and treasury staffs, as renovations continue at city hall.
- Additional training for public safety officers.

- Street projects, including the city's share of the widening and storm water changes on Orchard Lake Road.

Sewer and water rates are expected to remain stable in the coming year, as the city received no wholesale increase from its supplier — the city of Detroit.

# Officials will look into keeping weight room open

Farmington Public Schools administrators say they will look into why the weight room at Farmington High isn't open and being used.

The issue was raised by graduate and former Farmington High track

star Chris Inch, who said his class helps raise money to open the room, but now it's closed because of lack of supervision.

"Coaches are boycotting bringing their teams in there," said Inch, who

attends the University of Illinois and comes home to occasionally use the room.

"It's the responsibility factor. This is hurting the athletes and . . . alumni. These are the same people who've

brought glory to the school."

Inch is the son of trustee Jack Inch, who was teaching class and not at the school board meeting June 6 when the comments were made.

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