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LOCAL

Couple has led missions to Israel for 27 years

By Phyllis Steinberg
Staff Writer

Zvi and Karen Krugliak have been leading B'nai B'rith missions to Israel for the past 27 years. They make two trips a year to the Jewish country and always come back with wonderful memories and a desire to return.

"I think everyone should go to Israel at least one time," said Zvi Krugliak, an insurance broker and financial planner in Kendall.

Krugliak, a native of Israel, came to South Florida nearly three decades ago as a representative of Jewish National Fund. He met his wife, Karen, got married and had triplets.

"We thought we might go back to Israel to live, but when the triplets were born, we thought it would be better to stay here as we had a lot of family here," Krugliak said.

The Krugliaks are volunteer tour group coordinators for B'nai B'rith, a task they consider a labor of love. All profits from the trip go to the B'nai B'rith Foundation.

"Zvi enjoys planning every detail of every trip and tries to show participants everything he can during their visit to the Jewish country," said Karen Krugliak.

The Krugliaks have just returned from a B'nai B'rith two-week 60th anniversary mission to Israel.

"We took two busloads of people, 80 people, and we covered the entire country from the north to the south," said Karen Krugliak.

The Krugliaks are al-

ready planning to do a similar trip in September. The dates for the trip are Sept. 7-21. All of the food on the trip is kosher. The group stays at five-star Sheraton Hotels and on the Kibbutz Far Blum and all breakfasts, dinners and five lunches are included as well as non-stop air service on El Al Airlines from Miami. The cost of the trip is \$4,569 per person.

"We will be back before the Jewish holidays," said Zvi Krugliak.

The trip covers Natayna, on the coast, Caesarea, Haifa, the Golan Heights, Safed, Acre, the Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea, Masada, Jerusalem, Eilat, Tel Aviv, an optional visit to Petra and more.

"We visited a winery in the Golan Heights, had lunch in a Bedouin tent and rode on camels," said Karen Krugliak. "We felt very safe there and we saw many tourists. Everywhere we went there were many tourist buses and the stores, markets and coffee houses were packed with people. We enjoyed visiting Petra. It is one of the Seven Wonders of the World."

The love of Israel has been passed on to the Krugliak children.

"Our children have been there many times and are son, Daniel, 23, is there now staying on the Kibbutz Ma' Agan Michael near Caesarea," said Zvi Krugliak.

The recent tour of Israel also included a visit to the Ayalon Institute.

"The Ayalon Institute was an underground secret bullet factory built by the Palmach during the

War of Independence," said Karen Krugliak. "We also visited Ben-Gurion's home in the desert."

Marilyn Ballabon, a resident of Wynmoor in Coconut Creek, one of the participants on the recent B'nai B'rith tour said the trip evoked many emotions for her.

"This was my second time visiting Israel," Ballabon said. "The first time I went was 19 years ago with my husband. Six years ago he passed away and this time I went alone, but I was never really alone. The participants were always together in a group."

Ballabon said that the tour leaders arranged for large tables at dinners so that people that came by themselves weren't alone.

"It was nice because you always had people to sit with and all of us on the tour shared a common bond," Ballabon said. "We all had a love for Israel."

Tour participant, Tina Newmark, of Atlantis, said she had a great time on the trip. This was her second visit to Israel and she and her husband, Manny went on the tour.

"I felt that I was really a part of the country," Newmark said. "I didn't feel like I was just a tourist. I felt that I was experiencing the growth of the nation. I don't have a favorite part of the tour. I loved the whole trip, from the places we visited to the speakers we heard and the wonderful dinners we enjoyed."

Larry Meselsohn and his wife, Sheila of Delray Beach, also enjoyed the mission.



Petra, Jordan, one of the Seven Wonders of the World which participants see on an optional B'nai B'rith Mission tour. From left, back row, Manny Newmark, Tina Newmark, Zvi Krugliak and Karen Krugliak. Front row from left, Barry Krugliak and Daniel Krugliak. Submitted photo

"I have a problem walking a lot and I told Zvi about it and he was very helpful, said Larry Meselsohn. "The group never got to far ahead of me and I managed to see everything. I never knew Zvi before the mission, but he planned a great trip. It was a wonderful experience."

This was Carol Milet's fourth trip to Israel. Milet, a resident of Aventura, said the B'nai B'rith mission was "exhilarating, exhausting and exuberant."

"We were busy from

morning until evening and saw many wonderful things," Milet said. "We also had interesting, knowledgeable speakers at many evening events. It was a very well organized trip. I told many people in my building how great it was and three of them have already signed up for the September trip."

For more information about the upcoming B'nai B'rith mission to Israel in September, call the Krugliaks at 305-898-1827 or 305-385-3575.

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