

## THE FRIENDSHIP CLUB OF PITTSBURGH

A brief Chronicle.

It was the year of 1936, the early days of the immigration of Jews from Central Europe, when six new Pittsburgh residents had a vision that there should be a place for newcomers to meet, to exchange their ideas, to gather mental support for the trying times of a new beginning in their adopted new homeland. Also to have special cultural and educational programs and entertainment.

The six men were Frank Bader, Stanley Baer, Sig and Ted Levite, Kurt Levy and Frank Schwarz. The Friendship Club was born by six founders and six members; making the start with this total of twelve. But it did not remain at this number very long, the membership grew through the years and at its peak there were close to fourhundred members.

Over the fortythree years of the Club's existence, the members elected fifteen presidents:

1. Fred Bader
2. Ted Levite
3. Kurt Levy
4. Richard Almasy
5. Ernest J. Nachman
6. Erwin Pollitzer
7. Harry Apt
8. Alfred S. Markus
- 7 9. Frank Buchwald
10. Karl Albert
11. Paul Green
12. Martin Stern
13. Anne Albert
14. Alfred S. Markus (second term)
15. Erna Green

The activities of the Friendship Club grew in scope. The special anniversary dinners, twenty, twenty-five, thirty and forty years were celebrated with prominent guest speakers, among them Rabbi Dr. Solomon B. Freehof, Rabbi ; Dr. Walter Jacob, Rabbi, Dr. Joachim Prinz, Rabbi and the late Hon. Judge Wolk.

One of the highlights of the club's innovation was the arrangement of the first High Holiday services in 1943. A group of devoted religious members who wished to pray in their accustomed tradition

started these services which continued annually until 1976. In the beginning the services were contacted by our own members, only in later years we were privileged to have the ~~Rantoral~~ service of Mr. Ackerman from New York.-- Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Kolb donated the silver for one Sefer Thora, while the Friendship Club bought the silver for the second Sefer Thora in memory of Mr. Isidor Bloch who was instrumental in arranging and preparation of the services. The Sifrey Thora were ~~presented to the B'nai Emunoh Synagogue after the discontinuation of our service.~~ donated to the B'nai Emunoh Synagogue after the discontinuation of our service.

The year 1943 will also be remembered for founding of the Ladies Auxiliary which was organized to provide some help for the Newcomers in adjusting to their new environment. During the war years packages were sent to our soldiers. The Council of Jewish Women and most of all the Jewish Family and Children Service played an active role in helping and paving the way for many new immigrants. <sup>The late</sup> Mrs. Zena Saul is being well remembered by many for her advice and comfort she gave.-- The Ladies Auxiliary was initiatory in arranging special parties for New Year, Purim, Sedarim, Chanukah and few times the Chanukah celebration <sup>was</sup> especially prepared for the children and grandchildren of our members. For many years we had picnics which were enjoyed by young and old. To this very day the head of the Ladies Auxiliary and her co-workers <sup>are</sup> visiting the sick and confined members of the club.

Few years later, in 1953 the "Selfhelp" was founded - its purpose to assist families in their time of bereavement.

Members met on Saturday evenings at social gathering with musical entertainment, speeches, playing cards and enjoying the company of friends. Throughout the years, The Friendship Club actively participated in Pittsburgh's Jewish Community life and was a constant contributor to the United Jewish Fund and many other local organizations. The money for all the donations came from the "Erwin Pollitzer Memorial Fund" which was founded in memory of our departed president Erwin Pollitzer. In 1973 a check in the amount of \$ 1,000.00 was given to the Israel Emergency Fund. The club raised enough money to adopt two Israeli children in a Pioneer Women child care center. About 4000 trees were planted

in Israel in the name of the Friendship Club. This was accomplished by our members who bought those trees for various occasions.

The Club's monthly publication "Gossip" later changing its name to the "Friendship Club Recorder" kept the members informed. Thanks to the ~~effort~~ untiring effort of our editors this paper is still informative and keeps our members up to date, even if they moved to other areas.

Last but not least The Friendship Club thanks all their officers and board members for their dedicated work during the 43 years of its existence. ~~The~~<sup>Their</sup> guidance, inspiration and helping hands were always appreciated. It is impossible to name all the members who contributed in many ways to the work as well as to the enjoyment of our activities.

The spirit of the Friendship Club will live on.