



Cave Junction resident Don Hook (above) visited his wife, Nancy, who is studying and working in Israel. Besides posing near a dromedary, Hook viewed (bottom) a 2,500-year-old olive tree, and (in top right photo) toured Masada, with the Dead Sea in the background. (Photos provided)



## Nancy Hook finding her roots in Israel sojourn

By CHRISTINA HILL  
Correspondent

When valley resident Nancy Hook boarded an airplane bound for Israel last summer, she was on a search to find her roots.

After spending several months working and living in Jerusalem, Hook said that she found what she's been looking for.

"I wanted to go to Israel to learn more about my Jewish heritage and find out where my roots began," Hook said during a telephone interview.

Regarding her current residency there, she said, "I just love it here. I absolutely love it. It's the best decision I've ever made except I miss my kids and my family. If it weren't for them, I'd be here (always) and not look back."

Since arriving in Israel, Hook said that she bought a car and found a wonderful congregation, which led her to a good-paying job.

"The average wage here is about \$4 an hour, but I'm making about \$7 an hour plus medical, which is considered really good," she said.

"I work six hours a day, three days a week in a soup kitchen that feeds 55 people a week. This is something that I would have volunteered to do, so I just feel like the Lord has really blessed me," Hook said.

Shortly thereafter, Hook found a house to rent in Har Gillo, a community on the hills on the outskirts of Southern Jerusalem.

"I love the architecture in Israel," said Hook. "Everything's made of Jerusalem stone and has arched doorways and flat roofs. Jerusalem stone, is a white stone, similar to gray cinder blocks in the U.S. Except, when the sun is starting to set, the stones reflect a gold tone, which makes it look like the city of gold. It's really beautiful," she noted.

After renting her two-bedroom home for a few months, Hook was given the option to purchase the home, and she did.

Her husband, Don, recently returned home to Cave Junction after visiting Nancy and their new house for three months.

"We started remodeling

our house while I was there," he said. "And our daughter, Charity, came and visited for three weeks. We took a boat ride across the Sea of Galilee and even went floating in the Dead Sea. We'd take black mud and rub it all over our bodies; then get in the water and rinse it off, and it was very firming for our skin," Don said.

"There's so much history over there," he added, "that it's really amazing. And I know Nancy is really happy to be there. I'm proud of her because she wanted something and went for it. She now has full dual citizenship in both countries, America and Israel, and is learning the Hebrew language pretty well.

"She knows most of the words, but they talk pretty fast, so conversational Hebrew is pretty difficult. It'll probably take her a few years to get it down completely," he added.

Besides learning a new language, Nancy has had to learn a new culture and its customs.

"Religion is a way of life here," she said. "Beginning on Friday evening at sundown is the Shabbat or Sabbath. It lasts 24 hours, and during that time the whole country shuts down. Airlines, buses, stores -- everything just shuts down.

"You'll see men heading home with flowers, and it's just quiet for 24 hours. Nobody drives. They'll walk or ride their bikes to where they need to go.

"The whole country does it, not just a few people. Then, at sundown on Saturday evening, everything starts back up again," Nancy explained.

Her taste buds had to do some adjusting as well.

"They eat a lot of fruit and vegetables and pita bread," she said. "But they absolutely don't eat pork. In fact, I believe it's illegal to even have pigs on Israeli soil, but, one place in Southern Israel exports pork, and they have the pigs on raised platforms so they're not touching the soil. It's very interesting.

"Also, they don't eat any shelled-fish or crab, or

any fish with fins and scales," Nancy noted.

During her free time, Nancy will drive along the countryside, where "you'll see camels, goats and Bedouin camps scattered among the hills.

"Bedouin," she said, "is an ancient culture left over from the time of Abraham. It's funny, because at night you'll drive by the deserts and see all these tents set up with generators and TVs, but their homes are just tents, and they have their herd of goats next to them," Nancy said.

As far as feeling safe in Israel, Nancy said she doesn't even think about it.

"The media really hypes stuff up," she said. "There's not nearly the crime here that they say there is. The trouble is in Gaza, which is far away. In fact, I felt more scared visiting my mother, who was ill in Los Angeles a few weeks ago, than I have the whole time I've been here," Nancy said.

"The world needs to know what's really going on," she said. "There's a lot of one-sided reporting on the nightly news in the U.S. They'll show soldiers responding with gunfire to Palestinian children who are throwing rocks, but what they don't show is that those children's parents are standing behind them with guns shooting at the soldiers.

"The Palestinians are training their 3-year-olds how to use machine guns and to hate the Israelis, the

Americans and basically anyone who's a Christian," Nancy said.

"And," she added, "I believe it's the U.S. and France and a few other countries that are going to train or are already training the Palestinian soldiers and giving them weapons. But the Palestinians are just going to take that and retaliate on Israel.

"Until they start to love their children more than they hate the Jews, then the fighting won't stop. They'll keep sacrificing their children and themselves to Allah until Israel is wiped out," Nancy said.

Nancy insists that "what you see on the news is not what's really going on here. Everyone is really family oriented.

"Even most of the Arabs in Israel are very friendly, nice people. There's just a small percentage of radicals that ruin it for everyone," said Nancy.

She plans on returning to the states beginning in July. She'll stop at a week-long conference in Pennsylvania before visiting her mother in Los Angeles for a week. Finally, she'll make her way to Cave Junction around mid-July. She plans to stay until the first part of October, when she'll take the 17-hour flight back to Israel.

"Our goal is to eventually be able to spend six months in Cave Junction and six months in Israel," Nancy concluded.



## House increases funding for K-12, 2-year colleges

The Oregon House followed through on its commitment to fund schools first, passing legislation that provides \$5.275 billion for K-12 schools and \$439.3 million for community colleges next biennium.

Both figures represent sustainable increases from the governor's recommended budget, ensuring a full school year and a quality education for Oregon students, according to House Majority Leader Wayne Scott (R-Canby).

"When combined with local and federal funds, this represents an increase of more than \$700 million, 9 percent higher than the budget from the last biennium," said Rep. Gordon Anderson (R-Grants Pass).

"When session started, we never thought this level of funding would be attainable," said Scott. "Our budget exceeds the governor's recommended budget by \$275 million and is still \$25 million higher than his most recent proposal for

education.

"This is an incredible investment in Oregon's schools that still allows us to meet our obligations to senior citizens and the disabled and keep our neighborhoods safe," he said.

Eighty-seven percent of districts in Oregon are budgeting based on a budget of less than \$5.275 billion, and no district is budgeting to a figure higher than \$5.3 billion. Additionally, this education budget was built on the assumption that insurance rates would increase by 12 percent this biennium.

Recent information shows that rates will only increase by 8 percent next year, saving schools \$35 million to \$40 million. This will be additional, unanticipated revenue that can go directly for programs and services.

"The House truly put education first by passing a budget that puts Oregon students and schools first," said House Speaker Karen Minnis.

## Help sought for JoCo hungry

(Continued from page 1)

are staggering, it's a solvable problem. Many already are working to make a difference, and put an end to the intolerable situation of families who are hungry."

She added that more help will be welcome. And I.V. residents can give directly to the two sites in the valley; or donate to the county food bank, which distributes on an equal basis countywide, she added.

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