

Meet the Members

by Todd Wilkof

*The Friedman Family
Herb & Marianne*



BJC: What brought you to Oakland, and Beth Jacob?

ATTENDING CAL BROUGHT US TO THIS AREA. WE HAVE LIVED IN BERKELEY/OAKLAND/PIEDMONT FOR OUR ENTIRE MARRIED LIFE! FOR SOME YEARS WE WERE DONATING TO BETH JACOB AND RABBI ZACK TO SAY THANK YOU FOR BEING SO WELCOMING TO OUR SON, AND BELONGED TO BOTH TEMPLE ISAIAH AND BETH JACOB. WHEN OUR DAUGHTER JENNIFER LANG AND FAMILY MOVED HERE WE JOINED FULL TIME.

BJC: Tell us about yourselves.

WE LOVE TO TRAVEL AND WE ARE BOTH INTERESTED IN PHOTOGRAPHY. AS SOME IN THE SHUL KNOW, WE HAVE BEEN TO MANY EXCITING PLACES: ANTARTICA, THE ARCTIC, COSTA RICA, THE GALAPAGOS, PERU, ECUADOR, ALASKA, BOTSWANA, ZAMBIA, KENYA, TANZANIA, RWANDA AND, MOST RECENTLY, INDIA. WHILE MOST OF OUR FRIENDS PREFER TRAVELING BY SHIP, WE WILL ONLY DO THAT IF IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO SEE A PLACE. THE SHIPS WE HAVE BEEN ON HAVE BEEN SO FAR FROM LUXURIOUS THAT THEY LAUGH AT US! NEXT SPRING WE ARE TRAVELING TO VIETNAM, LAOS, CAMBODIA AND MYANMAR. A LESS EXOTIC TRIP TO SPAIN IS COMING UP IN SEPTEMBER AFTER 3 WEEKS IN ISRAEL. WE WILL BE MEETING THE OAKLAND MUSEUM ART GUILD FOR AN ART AND ARCHITECTURE TOUR INCLUDING THE NEW WINERIES DESIGNED BY THE SO CALLED "STARCHITECTS".

WE HAVE A HOME IN ISRAEL THAT WE VISIT TWICE YEARLY FOR 3-4 WEEKS. IT IS AN OLD ARAB STYLE HOUSE DATING BACK TO 1867, MODERNIZED BY OUR SON IN LAW PHILIPPE'S BROTHER. IT IS A HISTORICAL LANDMARK IN ONE OF THE FIRST NEIGHBORHOODS OUTSIDE THE OLD CITY IN DOWNTOWN JERUSALEM. WE WALK EVERYWHERE AND IT IS A 50-MINUTE BRISK WALK TO OUR SON'S ON SHABBAT (BACK AND FORTH TWICE!).

FOR MANY YEARS WE WERE BOTH ACTIVE IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY. MY HUSBAND WAS PRESIDENT OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION IN THE MID 1980S AND WAS THE RECIPIENT OF THE LESSER YOUNG LEADERSHIP AWARD. HE AND THE FORMER FEDERATION DIRECTOR HIRED THE FIRST SHALIACH AND STARTED THE TEEN TRIPS TO ISRAEL. I AM THE LONGEST SERVING BOARD MEMBER OF THE MAGNES MUSEUM AND AM LOOKING FORWARD TO RELOCATING THE MUSEUM TO DOWNTOWN BERKELEY IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE. WE WERE BOTH HONORED BY OAKLAND HEBREW DAY SCHOOL FOR OUR ONGOING SUPPORT SINCE ITS INCEPTION.

BJC: How did you two meet?

SHORTLY AFTER I ARRIVED AT UC BERKELEY FROM LA AS A FRESHMAN, I SAW HERBIE PLAYING BASKETBALL AT A TEAM PRACTICE I ATTENDED WITH SOME NEW FRIENDS. I TOLD THEM I WANTED TO GO OUT WITH HIM AND HE TURNED OUT TO BE A PLEDGE IN MY FRIEND'S FRATERNITY. HE FIXED US UP AND THE REST YOU MIGHT SAY IS ANCIENT HISTORY AS WE RECENTLY CELEBRATED OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY!

BJC: Tell us about your children.

MARC, 46, GRADUATED FROM COLUMBIA IN 1984 AND ANNOUNCED HE WAS MAKING ALIYAH. HE HAS LIVED IN ISRAEL FOR 24 YEARS, MARRIED A GIRL FROM SANTA BARBARA HE MET THERE AND THEY HAVE 6 BEAUTIFUL CHILDREN. BEST OF ALL, THE CHILDREN WHO RANGE IN AGE FROM 9 MONTHS TO ALMOST 17 ARE NICE. MARC IS A RABBI TEACHER AT AISH HATORAH, SELLS REAL ESTATE IN RELIGIOUS NEIGHBORHOODS AND MANAGES PROPERTY FOR ABSENTEE OWNERS (LIKE US).

JENNIFER, 43, GRADUATED NORTHWESTERN, WORKED IN PARIS AND MET AND MARRIED PHILIPPE IN ISRAEL. THEIR FIRST SON, BENJAMIN, NEARLY 15, WAS BORN IN HAIFA. THEY MOVED TO PARIS FOR PHILIPPE TO GET AN MBA AND THEN TO OAKLAND. THEY NOW LIVE IN WHITE PLAINS, NY, WITH BENJAMIN, DANIELLA 11 AND SIMONE 9. JENNIFER IS A FREELANCE WRITER WHOSE WORK HAS APPEARED BOTH ON LINE AND IN NUMEROUS PUBLICATIONS AND A LICENSED YOGA INSTRUCTOR. PHILIPPE IS VICE PRESIDENT OF LIVEPERSON.COM, AN ONLINE COMPANY THAT PROVIDES SUPPORT TO PEOPLE MAKING ONLINE PURCHASES. THEY HAVE JUST SPENT THE YEAR IN ISRAEL WHERE PHILIPPE HELPED REORGANIZE HIS COMPANY'S ISRAEL OFFICE IN RA'ANANA.

BJC: What are your interests and hobbies?

WE HAVE ATTENDED CAL BASKETBALL GAMES PRACTICALLY EVERY SEASON SINCE 1956. HERB LOVES COLLEGE BASKETBALL AND WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO GO ONE ON ONE WITH OBAMA! GO BEARS!

BJC: Tell us something about yourselves that most people may not know.

I AM THE CHRONICLER IN THIS FAMILY SO IT IS ALL ME TELLING ABOUT US! MARIANNE

"Meet the Members" is a feature of the BJ Beat,
intended to help the wonderful members of our community get to know each other
(and place a name with a face!)