

# Healing Is a Journey for Zhou Lin

**T**HREE years ago, 12-year-old **Zhou Lin** was sitting next to her parents outside a Beijing television station, begging for help. She needed medical care for burn injuries that left her unable to use her hands or to walk.

Zhou Lin's frown caught the eye of **Brecken Chinn Swartz**, an American graduate student passing by on her way to meet with Chinese television executives. Compelled by a strong desire to help the desperate parents and their child, Swartz, who speaks fluent Chinese, stopped and listened as the girl described what had happened to her.

A faulty fuel mix caused a kerosene explosion in Zhou Lin's home one night while the family celebrated the Chinese New Year. The flames engulfed Zhou Lin and her younger sister. As her father rushed to save his youngest daughter, Zhou Lin stumbled outside - with pants ablaze - and lost consciousness. She was found on the concrete with third-degree burns to her hands and the entire lower half of her body. Her sister was burned from head to toe, but much less severely than Zhou Lin.



ZHOU LIN playing her dulcimer.

The extent of Zhou Lin's care, which turned out to be substandard and incomplete, forced her parents to borrow money they did not have. Healing is a Journey for Zhou Lin

Swartz promised to help Zhou Lin and gave the family her business card, hoping they would stay in touch. She also gave them \$200 from HandReach, a humanitarian organization she co-founded, to support two years of education for Zhou Lin and her sister. After returning to the U.S., Swartz sent books, supplies and money to Zhou Lin and her family.

A year later, a chance meeting with a Shriner in Albuquerque provided Swartz with a possible way to help Zhou Lin even more. The man told her about Shriners Hospitals for Children and the expert burn care the organization provides to patients at no charge.

With the aid of HandReach, Swartz arranged for Zhou Lin and her mother to fly to the U.S., so Zhou Lin could receive treatment at Shriners Hospitals for Children — Boston. Since arriving in June 2006, Zhou Lin has had 11 surgeries, including the surgical removal of her feet. After a lengthy healing process and extensive rehabilitation, she learned to walk on prosthetic feet at the Springfield Shriners Hospital.

Despite her obstacles, Zhou Lin, now 15, has an optimistic attitude. While in the hospital, her favorite activity was standing in the kitchen and cooking her favorite Chinese dishes to share with hospital staff. She also learned to play the dulcimer, a stringed musical instrument, and wrote a song about her hometown in China. She enjoyed the instrument



ZHOU LIN walking along the New England coast.

so much that her music therapists would play it to help her relax before surgery.

Swartz, who was Zhou Lin's temporary guardian after the girl's mother returned to China, has made the guardianship permanent, so Zhou Lin can remain in the U.S. for her education and continued medical care. Since beginning the ninth-grade in January, Zhou Lin has shown remarkable progress academically and socially. She recently made the honor roll and is beginning to think about colleges. She is making friends, enjoying walking and will soon begin dulcimer lessons.

While lying in the hospital bed last year, Zhou Lin began dreaming of helping other children with medical difficulties. She and Swartz hope to find a way to help children in China get access to world-class care in the U.S., like Zhou Lin has received at Shriners Hospitals.

## Meet Max Rabinowitz

### Maximum Motivator of Masons

By HERMES BOYATIS

**W**HILE interviewing **Max** and his wife **Irene**, he recalled his more than twenty-six years at the Shriners Hospital in Springfield. My usual inquiries followed: Your happiest memory? "Marrying Irene fifty-nine and a half years ago!" Throughout my call, Max was always precise, while Irene gently chastised him for his too-specific details.

The two had just come back from his 60th Chelsea High School reunion at Spinelli's Restaurant. Returning to his beginnings, his parents came from eastern Russia to Canada and, at last, to Peabody. Before he was eight, he tobogganned with a cousin, but is no longer a sports enthusiast.

Time to watch television? "I enjoy news, game shows, and classical music. There's little time to read, except for newspapers. My hobbies are volunteering, I love kids."

Back to his start in life: I was born in Montreal, Quebec, on July 29, 1926, son of **Ben Zion** and **Gusia**. I married Irene Lipsky on August 18, 1948, and we have one son **Barry Allen**."

We know that Max has maximum energy, targeting precisely what's important. How did his life of challenging employment begin? "I was recorded in February, 1973, by the editor of Metropolitan's Territory Sales (and I'm happy to be with Metropolitan still): "I am a lousy manager."

Max was addressing candidates for employment, stressing the must-haves of building an organization, getting the right attitudes, finding people who have owned their own businesses. He went on to say, "I was a dairy distributor with five trucks and I worked with the Rabb Distributing Company in Stoughton before I joined Metropolitan."

Your reporter stopped Max for a while to find out what others have thought about him. He was called, "someone from the Old School, thinking of others before himself, a stereotype of mother and apple pie."

Now we returned to Max. We know that his parents came from Russia. But what was their route to

America? "I was brought up in a Catholic school in Montreal, had my bar mitzvah there, and sang Christmas carols with the nuns and the kids!"

The Aleppo Shriners News in October 1997 called him a "Transportation Angel" and a thank you letter from the children and staff of the Burns Institute, Boston, described his adorable Snoopy Dogs and his being a marvelous Santa for their Christmas Eve.

When he received the Man of the Year Award, he was called "a humanist." He should, they said, have been a caterer. He loves to cook. If he was required to feed 100 diners, he prepared meals for 200, so that the rest could go to his special project, Haven for Hunger. Max's own favorite food, Canadian smoked meat.

Whenever anyone asks Max about why he volunteers, he responds, "It's because I believe in miracles, the power and determination of the human spirit, surmounting the insurmountable." In October 1991 at Santa's Castle in Peabody, Noble Max and **Shirley Labrie** were described by our departed editor/photographer **Joe McKertich** on Christmas Eve as the "founder and embodiment of the Jewish Santa, arranging Christmas parties for the kids, with toys, nuts, dried fruit, and sometimes a matzoh. He is always sensitive to the needs of the poor and hungry and sees that to 'fill a barrel of food' is ongoing at his Temple."

In July 2000, Max and his Noble comrades had two booths at Hynes Market Place where they sold T-shirts and pins to almost 2,000 people. They also helped seniors and youngsters find their way around Boston.

His grants and awards? Your reporter found them so numerous, that it was impossible to put them in order by date, so he asks for his reader's understanding.

"In 1994 I received a Quality of Life grant made on my behalf to Haven from Hunger; B'nai Brith, Peabody, named me Man of the Year in 1990; the Temple Ner Tamid Award came to me in 1984; and my most special honor was the Congressional



MAX RABINOWICH

Award from the U.S. Congress in 1989!"

He was presented the Pride of Peabody Award in 1996 from Mayor Peter Torgian at City hall. The award is for "individuals whose quiet charitable works often go unnoticed but contribute significantly to the lives of Peabody residents."

In the midst of all Max's busy days and nights, he is also a Notary, State of Massachusetts and a Justice of the Peace!

His memberships, again **MAXIMUM**: National Association of Life Underwriters; American Society of CLU; Million Dollar Round Table; Jordan Lodge of A.F. & A.M.; Aleppo Temple; North Shore Shrine Club; B'nai Brith Peabody Lodge; vice-president of Temple Ner Tamed; General Agents Club; #1 Sales Manager; Life Member, Jewish Memorial Hospital; Million Dollar Round Table Association; Shriners Volunteer Services Department;

Max's business card catches all the glitter of a giver. We are honored to know such a maximum motivator!