

## MY FRIEND



/ by Max Heeres

**Shauli** was one of my first friends on the kibbutz. I was impressed right away with how smart and how funny he was. For a few years we were roommates, and boy we threw some great parties. After the army we met up in London to begin our conquest of the world. He had bought a Ford Cortina station wagon, which we later nicknamed Pegasus, and fixed it up into top shape. Shauli was a gifted mechanic and could fix anything.

We started our European tour in England and Scotland, then on to Belgium, Holland and Germany. From there we drove up through Denmark and took an overnight ferry to Norway. Then on down through Sweden to Germany. Shauli was always good at nicknaming places. So Baden Baden was Baden Baden Baden. While in Germany the car started acting up. After a quick crawl under it Shauli announced that we need a new prop shaft. So we went to a junk yard and tried to overcome the language barrier with a helpful German who spoke no English. Hand signs did not seem to work. When our conversation between us in Hebrew included the word 'cardan' he said "Ah, cardan!" We didn't know that was a stolen word from German. Within the hour Shauli had the car fixed and we were on our way.

From there we went on to Switzerland, Italy and France. In Paris we spent a few days driving around in heavy French traffic, with British license plates. We learned very quickly from the locals to wave your arm out the window and shout things in French. Shauli was good at that. He found humor in everything.

From there we drove back to London, where after putting 15,000 km on the car, Shauli was able to sell it for the same money he bought it for. Only he could pull that off. Driving across Europe with him was interesting, exciting, and very, very funny. Crossing over from England to Europe and back to England, in an English car, took the efforts of both of us at all times. We constantly had to remind each other which side to drive on. When an impatient driver would get behind us and start flashing his lights, Shauli, in the passenger seat, which they thought was the driver seat, would stick half his body out the window and stare backwards at them, until they'd freak out and back off in a hurry.

From there we went to America, to start our American trucking adventure. When it was time for him to back up an 18-wheeler into a dock for the first time, I stood on the ground and began to bark orders. Left! Right! The other right! Shauli calmly stuck his head out the window and said "how about I try it on my own first." One minute later the trailer was backed perfectly into the dock. I had forgotten he was a Ben Meshek.

Team driving basically boils down to one guy in the sleeper trying to fall asleep and one guy behind the wheel trying to stay awake. Every 12 hours we would change shifts, in hope that the guy in the sleeper got enough sleep. The truck never stopped moving, in essence, running coast to coast in 2.5 days and then doing it all over. Shauli, the expert in finding humor in everything, found plenty of material on the road. Everyone was taken with his BBC accent and we nicknamed him "Duke." He had plenty of fun with everybody's southern drawl, which he would imitate perfectly whenever talking on the intercom. One day I woke up while parked idling in a truckstop and went inside to use the facilities. I came out just in time to see Shauli jump back in the cab, kick it into gear and drive off into the sunset. 20 minutes later he came back, laughing hysterically.

Years later, at an Easton get-together, we were sitting at the table and Shauli was standing behind Adina and rubbing her shoulders as he was looking over her and talking, until he realized it was my shoulders he was rubbing. After picking himself up off the floor, Richard was quick to say "I always wondered about you guys in that tiny sleeper."

After 6 months of team driving, with plenty of money in the bank, we headed for the Far East. This trip was Shauli's idea, and a good one. We started our trip in Hong Kong, the city that has everything that you want and nothing that you need; a Chinese version of New York City. In a sea of people, all short and black haired, we were able to maintain eye contact from a few blocks away at all times.

From there we flew to Kathmandu. We spent 3 weeks on a 300 km loop trek that took us through the most scenic Himalayan vistas, where the only mode of transport is on foot, the only two directions are up and down, and distance is measured in days of walking. We started in the tropics, went up through Alpine forests and ended up in a dry arctic landscape, looking down at the world from 5,400 meters. Shauli never complained, and actually couldn't get enough of it. He started out trailing a bit behind me, but by the end of the trek he was always running ahead of me.

From there we spent a month in China, where the Lonely Planet's chapter on table manners simply said "there are none." From China, on down to Thailand, the Land of Smiles. From here Shauli went on to begin his Australian adventure, from which he returned a year later to the kibbutz with an Australian accent.

Shauli was always able to see the bright side and the humor in every situation. Traveling with him always offered good conversation and occasionally a great laugh.

I am glad to have spent a great part of my life with him, and am proud to have had Shauli as my friend. May he rest in peace.

Max

