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MONTREAL'S

ONLY INDEPENDENT SENIORS' NEWSPAPER

Jewish genealogy comes to Montreal

Montrealers are joining the Jewish genealogy wave. While there are more than 50 Jewish genealogical societies worldwide, local genealogists have had to look elsewhere to hook up with fellow researchers till now.

Thirty-two active and budding genealogists gathered at Bialik High School on November 13 for a workshop on *Jewish Genealogy in the 90's* led by Dr. Rolf Lederer, International Vice President of the Jewish Genealogical Societies. Lederer, a Toronto psychiatrist, has been tracing his family tree for almost 20 years and has 2,000 living and deceased relatives in his database. He has gathered vital records dating back to 1730 and 19th century photos.

The workshop stressed the use of

modern technology in genealogical research, including sophisticated software, CD-ROM indexes and databases, and Internet. Lederer talked about breakthroughs in making vital records available, the result of the opening up of archival resources in the former Soviet Union. Genealogists can now obtain records about their ancestral towns that many believed were destroyed by the Nazis.

Lederer discussed the resources of the Mormon Family History Library in Salt Lake City — the world's largest repository of vital records. Genealogists with Polish roots can now consult the Mormon's collections of Jewish records microfilmed in the early 70's. These microfilms can be viewed in Montreal at the Mormon

Family History Center on Terrebonne Avenue in NDG.

Lederer mentioned that Mormon cameras have been microfilming in all former Soviet Union countries. Vital statistics from Minck And Pinsk will be available shortly with other Belarus towns to follow.

Computer technology has also resulted in the *Jewish Genealogical Family Finder*, a database of more than 30,000 names and towns being researched by Jewish genealogists worldwide. Every day, contacts are made of between branches of long-separated families. *The Family Finder* database is updated annually and the last edition was on hand at the workshop; several of the participants quickly identified potential family "matches".

The latest addition to the genealogist's tool box is the *Jewish Geneal-*

ogy Message Base (JewishGen) on the Fidonet computer network, shortly to become a "newsgroup" on Internet. JewishGen can be accessed without cost through Quebec Genealogy Online, a Montreal-based BBS (Bulletin Board System). Lederer said that genealogists worldwide are now sharing their research and successes — just by sitting at their computer.

Representatives of the Montreal Jewish Public Library and the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives were on hand to provide information on genealogical resources in their collections.

By discussing their ancestral towns and family names, participants started the networking that so often sparks research success. Monthly meetings are planned. For more information, call 484-0100 or fax 484-7306.