

Political Refuge

Senior Natan Shklyar enjoys the United States

Although he is only a senior, Natan Shklyar has had quite a life. Natan, who came to the United States from the Soviet Union, has recently applied for political asylum. His intriguing life story demonstrates how dreams can come true.

When he began high school in the Soviet Union, Natan joined the Moldavian Democratic Movement. The pro-democracy club drew its support from concerned youths like Natan. Much to the demise of Natan's family, his involvement in the club drew the attention of the KGB as well.

The KGB interrogated Natan for two reasons. As a member of the Movement, Natan wrote a letter to former General Secretary Gorbachev, asking for reforms to be implemented. Secondly, Natan was questioned because he was Jewish.

Natan was born in Leningrad during the height of Communist rule in the Soviet Union. When he was young, his family moved from Kazakastan to Moldavia, a region sandwiched in between Romania and the Ukraine. Since the break up of the Soviet Union, Moldavia has declared its independence.

Natan's family is similar to one in the United States. His father is a physician, his mother, a language teacher. Natan also has a sister who is 13.

While Natan faced the KGB in the So-

viet Union, it is ironic that Jeff and Gayna Bassin began to research their family's history in the United States. As a result, they discovered that they had relatives in the Soviet Union. This discovery could not have come at a better time for Natan.

The Bassins contacted their cousins in Moldavia, and suggested that Natan come to the United States for a visit. It was at this point where Natan's family had to make a hard decision.

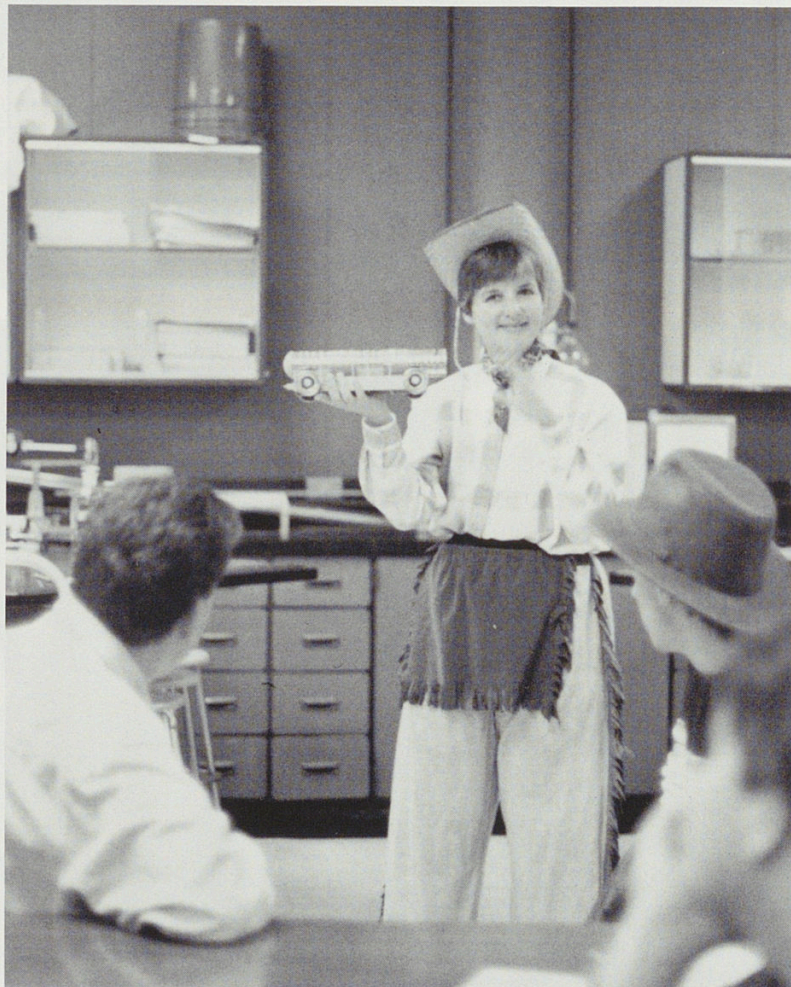
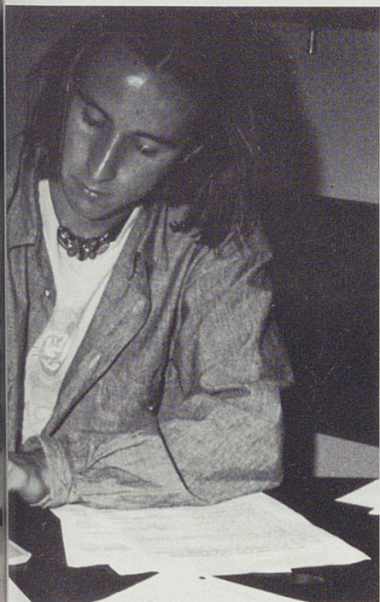
Because Natan's father was an established military physician, it would be impossible for him to leave. The decision was made. Natan would go alone to visit his cousins.

However, Natan was not just going to visit, he was going to the United States to stay. "My family and I had a plan," Natan recalls, "I would go first, get a good education, and a good job. Then, my family would follow."

At first, the Communist government refused to grant Natan a visa. "It took a while, because of my religion and my political views. Finally, my mom had connections, and I got a visa," Natan explains.

Finally, in November of 1991, Natan arrived in Cincinnati. The Bassins, who paid for his passage to America, became his legal guardians. or political asylum.

by Jeremy Mason



During Homecoming Spirit Week Mrs. Linda Ford dressed up and did a demonstration for her Physics class.