

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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Guest Editorial

Some years ago I happened into a supermarket in New York and there confronting me was a magnificent pyramid of Passover Matzos, gay in yellow and soft blues, pastel and red lettering. And I could not help thinking: Who ever would have thought it? The "bread of affliction" packaged with such careful, hygienic splendor.

Bread of affliction? Egg Matzo, whole wheat matzo, safflower matzo (for the perpetual dieters), all "delicious to the taste, nourishing with added vitamin riches (vitamins kosher l'pesach, of course). What a far cry from the old dry-as-dust matzo, burned about the edges, hard, tooth-filling, a real ordeal for the digestive tract. And what a mount of chicken fat or chopped liver it took to make the matzo palatable! Still, it was the "bread of affliction", and Jews have to afflict themselves with matzo on Pesach. Do not misunderstand, the less attractive and tasty the matzo, the more delicious everything else by comparison. How unthinking to distract one's enjoyment of gefilte fish or chicken soup through the use of delectable matzo.

And we are grateful to God that we may celebrate our Seders richly and in security. Far be it from us to stand in the way of matzo progress in this jet-propelled age. I understand that the first Jewish astronaut will be equipped with a matzo paste packed in a squeeze tube so that his orbital Seder will be complete. (I don't know how they will solve the matzo-ball problem or keep the "afikoman" from floating away into space.)

Be it as it may, the forms of matzo may vary with technological progress, but Passover is here to stay. When before in human history has man more desperately needed to be reminded that his ultimate problem is human freedom - freedom from hunger, from indignity, from injustice, freedom from the tyranny of inertia, freedom from bias and prejudice, freedom from confusion between means and end, freedom from the shattering generations our people have recited the Haggadah and jolted their memories with thoughts of persecution past and present. What a source of strength and inspiration for the Marranos to conduct the Seder clandestinely amidst the monstrous afflictions of the church. How many murderous blood libels were heaped upon our ancestors on Passover - infamous charges that the blood of gentile children was used in baking matzo. Down the Middle Ages enterprising artisans manufactured pictures and wax statues of Jews performing ritual murders to collect blood for matzo. As late as 1952 a bishop in Austria refused to have these horrible objects removed from his churches on the grounds that "the Jews had not yet proved that they never did such things."

It was only natural that the Nazi regime utilized the blood libel fantasy, and it is well that we and the civilized world remind ourselves that we are not so distant from barbarity - that "it" can happen here or anywhere as soon as men forget the message of Passover.

To you and yours go warm wishes for a joyous Pesach.

-Rabbi Harold Krantzler

MAIL BOX

To the Editor:

It is hard to express how touched I have been by the many expressions of concern shown by the members of this community during my mother's (Bertha Wand) recent illness and since her passing. The calls, notes, cards from friends; Rabbi Rocklin's call to me in New Jersey midst the complications of his trip to Israel; Marvin Bienstock and Ilse Bergen's beautiful handling of the Chai group's meaningful memorial to my mother were just some of the things that helped comfort us at this time.

In these few years that we have been in Charlotte we have truly found a warm and caring Jewish community.

Thank you,
Sincerely,
BETTY W. JAFFE

To the Editor:

Thank you for sending me the Charlotte Jewish News at the Jewish Week in New York. I'd be grateful if you could also send it to me at the Jewish Digest editorial office, 3459 Frederick Street, Oceanside, N.Y. 11572.

The paper looks very promising.

I'd be grateful if you would please insert the address of McNally and Lofton, publisher of the book of *The Jews of Charlotte*, and mail it. With many thanks.

Sincerely,
BERNARD POSTAL,
editor Jewish Digest

Random Thoughts On This and That...

by Muriel Levitt

And now I'd like to tell you about my Grandmother. She was a very special lady, was my Grandma. Short, rotund, with laughing azure eyes set in a beautifully complexioned face, plus a frothy topping of curly white hair - that was my Grandma. Her cheerful smile reflected an outgoing personality that beamed love in every direction.

Unbelievable as it seems, Grandma was betrothed to Grandpa at the age of fourteen (he was nineteen), and she saw him for the first time when the "shadchen" made the match. The second time they met was under the chupah when she was fifteen. Although this sounds shocking today, it was not at all unusual in nineteenth century Europe. However, I must confess that a more unlikely couple were never mated. He was a penurious introvert, a perennial scholar, while she was a generous party girl who loved the good life in particular and all people in general. Yet despite such vivid differences, together they begat ten children, two of whom survive today.

Although some of the grandchildren wanted to converse with Grandma in Yiddish, she never would. A "Yenkee" she had become and "American" she would speak. She tried mightily, but ended up butchering the English language in her own special style.

When you were firm and unwavering on any subject, Grandma would caution, "Don't be stubby!" She was very fond of

Arthur Godfrey and Joe Di Maggio (don't ask me why since she knew little about television and even less about baseball) and referred to them as Arty Gottlieb and Joe Di Magical. To impress you with the verity of any story she told, she would be admonished that "Da true is da true." Often she would chase us out of her tiny kitchen by saying, "Aveck, aveck, too many cooks spoil da bro!"

Grandma was awed by higher education and particularly by my husband's profession which she did not understand at all. However she told her friends proudly that her ainekle was marrying "a chemiseh - nisht a pharmiseh but a chemiseh." My news articles and columns made me a writer to everyone else but to Grandma I was the "paper schreiber."

Any happy event gave her an excuse for celebration. If you were leaving on an extended trip, it was very probable that Grandma would say goodbye with a "welfare party" in your honor.

When meeting a stranger she would flash that disarming smile and say, "Mine name is Rachel Richman, but you may call me Rae." She was really something.

Beauty salons were unknown to her and I was fully grown before I realized that her silvery hair was helped along by a weekly application of laundry bluing in the rinse water. Grandma was vain about her person and we loved her for it.

Money was scarce but she always made kitchen magic on

a minimal allowance. To put it succinctly, her life with Grandpa was no bed of roses. Such dissimilar personalities created many problems but they remained together, disagreeing all along the way. When society became more liberal and after some sixty years of marriage, she astounded us by admitting that she was contemplating divorce. Her reason was, "He's not mine type!" Needless to say, nothing ever came of it.

Eventually it was obvious that she was aging, and to us she seemed ageless and indestructible. At the age of 88 Grandma passed away after having been married an incredible 73 years. Early in the morning on the day she died she had baked challah and made gefilte fish. Her delicacies were consumed during the shiva period, and we wept collectively knowing that these would be her last culinary masterpieces.

And Grandpa? Well, he was 93 when Grandma left us and he survived her by four more years. Up until his very last day he attended shul regularly and also pursued his trade as a custom tailor. We visited her very often since he was extremely independent and insisted on living alone. Although their lone life together was turbulent, I am certain that her presence was missed.

My Grandmother left us a legacy of love, laughter and kindness. We think and speak of her constantly which surely means that her life was well spent, and I know with a certainty that the things she said and did will long be remembered.

Lubavitch Cover Carolinas

by Rabbi

Yossef Groner

Two weeks before Purim, my cousin Shalom Ber Baumgarten and I loaded a car full of Purim kits to distribute in the Carolinas. I am a Lubavitcher Chassid from the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, N.Y. and have visited the Carolinas since the summer of 1977. On this trip, I visited Charlotte for the seventh time. Most of the times I have come with my cousin.

Our purpose in coming is to further the mitzvah campaign that was initiated in 1974 by Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita. We strive that every Jew should be aware of and practice ten essential mitzvot of Judaism: (1) Ahavat Yisrael - the love of every Jew for his fellow Jew; (2) a good Jewish education; (3) the study of Torah every day; (4) tefillin; (5) mezuzah; (6) tzedka - charity; (7) the ownership of basic Jewish books; (8) lighting Shabbat candles by all girls three and over; (9) eating kosher food; and (10) family purity.

The Purim kits we brought to the Carolinas on our recent trip contained a hamantasch and candies, the minimum required to perform the mitzvah of *mishloach manot* - sending a gift of foods to a friend, and two coins to give to the poor and a card that informed the recipient how to observe the mitzvot of Purim. We distributed the kits in Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, Greensboro, High Point, Clemmons, Columbia, Spartanburg, and Charlotte.

In Charlotte, we held music and dramatic programs at the Hebrew Academy and Temple Israel afternoon school. We also spoke and presented a song at Temple Israel on Shabbat. On our walk to the synagogue on Shabbat, we were passed by

motorists and joggers who had probably never seen a Chassid in dark suit, hat and beard, strolling the sidewalks of their city. Joggers said "hello" to us as they ran by. Cars slowed down to look.

Also in Charlotte, we visited the homes of a number of Jews and met with Marvin Bienstock at the Jewish Community Center for over two hours. We were received cordially both by old friends and by new people.

I am impressed with the possibilities of the growth of Jewish involvement in Charlotte. The Hebrew Academy is growing and the children show great interest in

Judaism. A Shabbat afternoon study group under Rabbi Tucker has been formed. Attendance in Temple Israel on Shabbat morning is higher than when I first came to Charlotte. And young Jewish families whom I have met ask more positive questions about Judaism. I find it exciting each time I visit Charlotte and look forward to coming again.

Although there are no permanent representatives of Lubavitch in North Carolina, Lubavitch representatives are active in Richmond, Atlanta, Charleston, Nashville, New Orleans, Birmingham, and in many cities in Florida.



"But, Sir, my daughter already donated... in Sunday School."