

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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Across The Editors' Desks



"Where Were You?"

In the last issue of the *Charlotte Jewish News*, "Shalom Y'all" notes that the Jewish community of Charlotte numbers approximately 900 Jewish families.*

On Monday, April 23 at 8 p.m., a Service of Remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust was held at Temple Beth El. It was sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Charlotte Area Clergy Association, Church Women United and the Federation. We received a notice by mail, so I believe the other 899 other names did also.

The entire service lasted less than an hour. It was beautifully done by those people who so generously gave their time and energy to pay homage to the helpless victims of the Holocaust.

Temple Beth El's sanctuary seats 300. My eyes tried to avoid seeing the empty seats. I was absolutely appalled. How humiliating it had to be for all the many people of different faiths who had worked so hard, so long, so diligently to bring this memorial to fruition. It was obvious that many of those attending had come with their church leaders.

I am certain it would have been much more relaxing for all the speakers to have spent that evening at home with family or friends, most certainly a busy executive such as Rolfe Neill with 5 children.

I tried not to think what was in the thoughts of the 12 survivors of the Holocaust who live in our midst, as they kindled the memorial lamps. Perhaps their thoughts were too far away, their eyes too dimmed by tears to see the empty seats that my husband and I saw.

The June-July issue of the *Charlotte Jewish News* also announced on the front page - top center - prominently boxed - large headline - stating that "Holocaust Square" would be dedicated by a monument honoring the many millions who had been tragically slaughtered by the Nazis.

In very large and clear type, the dedication was to be on Sunday, June 10 at 12:15 p.m. at a clearly designated Morehead and Dilworth, cosponsored by Temple Israel and its neighbor, Covenant Presbyterian Church. WE WERE ALL URGED TO ATTEND!

With restrained eloquence, Dr. Julian Hirschfield, the guest speaker, relived for us the horror of his imprisonment and his dramatic rescue. Once more I felt the sting of sorrow and humiliation at the sparseness of the audience. The square or triangle actually is a rather small space and 150 people would have packed it. I saw a few familiar faces, but most of the audience seemed to be members of the co-sponsoring church, members of the speakers groups, some curious neighborhood residents and the news media.

In reporting the dedication of the monument, the *Observer* was more than kind in estimating the attendance at 400. Perhaps the reporter shared the embarrassment my husband and I felt at the shameful showing. Discussing the figures later that day with two others who had attended, that was the consensus of our opinions.

Again, when I realize the planning, the effort and the work that is needed to bring these things to realization, I cringe inside. How then must the people who do all the work feel when they see how few really give a damn — how few care enough to take an hour or two out of their rather comfortable lives to even attend?

Can you who were not there remember what terribly important events in your life on Monday, April 23 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, June 10 at 12 noon kept you from paying respect to the tortured souls of so many millions who died so horribly?

If so many of us can't be bothered to shed a tear and bow our heads in tribute to their terrible suffering, then why should not history repeat itself??

Just out of pure gratitude that you were not one of the victims who suffered degradation, starvation, mental and physical torture, painful medical experiments, and were worked to death, you should have cared enough to give them an hour of your time in respect.

Frankly, I consider your lack of compassion and interest in this foulest crime in history on our people absolutely outrageous and horrendous. FOR SHAME...FOR SHAME.

-Lynn Tuvin

Random Thoughts...

BY MURIEL LEVITT

The Jewish family beautiful has existed throughout the ages. Parents shower affection upon their children and they, in turn, share the common bond of love. Still and all, there comes a time when one child will rebel against another. This is usually a temporary condition, but it's a real whopper for as long as it lasts.

I have great compassion and sincere empathy for anyone who grows up being the youngest child in a family. It really is the pits. I have been there and I know for sure that older sisters can be a royal pain in the ear. Generally it works out that the older child is top banana while the youngest invariably feels like an "also."

Using my case as a fair example, let me begin the story by saying that I grew up in a typical Jewish home, in a typical New York Jewish neighborhood, with typical Jewish parents. The only thing atypical was my older sister. Instead of being your everyday typical ordinary kid, she had to go and be a multitalented, extremely gifted girl upon whom everyone doted.

Without a question both of us were loved, but being the youngest always brought an uncomfortable sensation that the first born was the favorite. It was a bitter pill to swallow. My sister's musical and dramatic abilities were enough to intimidate anyone. She was a magnificent soprano, an accomplished pianist, and a stunning elocutionist who could move you to tears with one of her emotional recitations. It was a tough act to follow.

Most of my early years were spent wavering between envy and resentment. The five year bridge between us made a close relationship almost impossible. Communication was minimal because we had practically nothing in common. In retrospect, I am sure that our parents never suspected how I felt. They gave us unlimited affection and much attention, probably assuming that similar emotions were shared by their children.

Sibling rivalry can be a hurtful thing. Trying to emulate my sister, I began to study music and dramatics but never could even approach her point of perfection. In sheer adolescent frustration I gave it all up not wanting to be second best. It is never easy walking in another's shadow.

There can be no doubt that I must have been a precocious child and a sore trial to my sister. She played baby sitter patiently and had to drag me along many times when I am sure she would have preferred privacy. I baited her, abused her possessions, and generally made her miserable whenever I could. I adored and hated her simultaneously.

Several years later, I am happy to report, I finally found my own niche. Under the guidance of a shrewd and observant English teacher, she brought me to the realization that while I had some small musical aptitude, my real strength was in the written word. I had discovered my own "thing" and it was a glorious experience.

My sister had been married for five years when I became a bride. The post-war housing shortage and pure chance found us living in the same apartment building. At long last we met as individuals on common ground and on equal terms. It was almost a magical confrontation. We happily rediscovered each other when it became apparent that all the old negative feelings had faded with maturity. Only familiar affection remained, stronger and greater than ever. It was pure joy and a stunning revelation.

I must say unequivocally that my sister is an exceptional woman. She is fair of face and more important, beautiful inside. Her extraordinary musical talents are second only to being the complete human being. She relates to people in all walks of life and has a particular affinity for the young. One of her greatest attributes is the ability to communicate openly, honestly, and objectively. Active in religious and community affairs, she has been honored repeatedly on both local and national levels. She is indeed a lady for all seasons. That she married an incredible man with talent, grace, wit, and plenty of smarts is just more icing on the cake.

Developing mutual respect does not come easily. It took us years of growing and learning but we have reached such rapport that we are able to say anything, but anything, to each other without guilt or fear of recrimination. There is complete understanding and a feeling of oneness. When she is happy I laugh, and when she hurts I cry. I know she feels the same way.

So take heart, little sister, whoever you are. Some day you will surely feel as I do. You may have many friends and countless acquaintances, but there is only one sister on whom you can rely. She can be your confidant, your advisor, your rock, and your alter ego. There is a love between sisters that transcends all else. I know, because I share it with my sister Helen.

"Response to Where Were You?"

*Editor's note: You noted in your original letter than 900 families is an inaccurate count. This is true, there are actually closer to 1200. Dr. Hirschfield is not included in our directory as he is a Gastonia resident.

The Editors attended the dedication of "Holocaust Square" (see story page 3), and also counted heads. There were approximately 400 people in attendance; however, they were almost all from the non-Jewish community, the participants in the program, and the press. The lack of participation in such events by the members of the Jewish community is unfortunately an old story.

For the past two years programs similar to these have been done in the Charlotte community that were very well attended, and many comments have been made that the issue is being overdone - the public is tired of it. Just as in the editorial we wrote a few months ago concerning volunteerism, the same applies in this situation. The apathy of the Charlotte Jewish community in general is apparent. Perhaps Mrs. Tuvin, with more people like you around we can someday overcome this malady.

-A.L.&R.M.



Dear Ms. Langman,

Thank you for bringing the news release as requested; we included a story in the next issue of *The Southern Advocate*. I hope we can carry more articles like this in the future and look forward to receiving your newspaper.

I went over to the square last weekend after receiving your release. It is a moving reminder of the horrors of the Nazis and makes me more determined to counter their efforts today.

Thank you again,
 Eileen Hanson
 Charlotte Equal Rights Council

Dear Ann:

Congratulations on your fine editorial praising Charlotte's beauty Barbara and I have lived in Charlotte fifteen years, and we, too, share your enthusiasm for our community.

As the incoming president of the Charlotte Opera Association/N.C. Opera, I would also like to thank you for including opera in your list of cultural assets. If you or any of your readers would like information regarding our coming season of "Aida", "The Magic Flute", or "The Elixir of Love", please let me know. I would be delighted to personally acquaint them with the advantages of attending our performances.

Keep up the fine work!!
 Sincerely,
 Jeffrey A. Huberman