

## THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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## Kiryat Shmona — Fear at the Foot of a Mountain

by Marvin Bienstock

Named after eight young Jewish pioneers assassinated in the 1900's, the settlement Kiryat Shmona, from its beginning, was a disaster, a sore spot on Israel's record of achievement.

In the '50's and '60's poor and unlearned Jews swarmed out of the caves of Morocco and fled to Israel. Those Moroccan Jews with means chose France and left Israel no choice but to accept this rag tag remainder, a motley assortment driven by fear of death or enslavement if they stayed in the hovels which had been their homes for centuries. Unlike the Yemenites who had come as a group bringing with them their indigenous leaders and community structure and a sense of pride, these latest Jewish exiles brought only misery and ignorance. Only the doors of Israel were open to them and in they came without knocking.

Kiryat Shmona was one attempt to absorb and assimilate this most difficult influx. Built in the northernmost Hula Valley adjacent to the Lebanese border, it was a hasty assortment of mismatched construction. Much of it was little more than cement, canvas and sheet metal caves. These newest of Israeli citizens felt right at home and settled in to the task of turning their new living quarters into modern parodies of their ancestral cliff dwellings.

Don't make the mistake of thinking of the Hula Valley as inhospitable territory. It was and is one of the richest and most productive of Israel's agricultural areas. Peppered by prospering Kibbutzim the land was hospitable. It was the Kibbutznicks who weren't. They regarded their new neighbors as a blight in paradise and built walls of emotional isolation

around the embryonic city.

But the Hula nurtures and feeds its inhabitants as generously as its crops. Little by little over the years Kiryat Shmona began to change. Nothing dramatic at first. Perhaps it was a flower planted here, a cleaner street there, the sounds of young laughter coming from day care centers and classrooms, or perhaps it was an emerging sense of promise and pride. In the early '70's a member of Parliament chose to move to Kiryat Shmona and his arrival lent "yichus" (honor). Buildings arose, as did apartments and private homes. Businesses developed on the outskirts. The residents went to work in the industries of the Kibbutzim, and this tiny bridge between cultures soon became well trafficked both ways.

Then, on a bright Israeli-blue morning, it all became tainted.

There is a hill behind Kiryat Shmona; to climb over it is to be in Lebanon. Down the hill on that morning came a band of Palestinian terrorists; their target was an elementary school. When they found the school not yet open they took possession of the nearest building — an apartment house — and they brought disaster and death. Eighteen women and children died horribly before these assassins were destroyed. Amid the tears and pain and mourning the Israeli government ordered security rooms built onto each apartment. These are 8-inch thick walled cubicles with iron doors and single tiny windows that defy rather than admit light. Into these ten foot square enclosures the children of each family are still placed each and every night. Their parents tuck them in and the last sound the child hears is the door clanging shut. The children of Kiryat Shmona have returned to living in caves.

But wait, the horror isn't over. Terrorists don't cross the well-mined hill but "katyusha" rockets do. They come when they please, courtesy of Russian factories and Palestinian mortars. When they come, buildings crumble, people die.

Yes, Kiryat Shmona is tainted but it is also determined. Now Russians live here and so do American immigrants. Israelis are drawn to the scenes of terrorism as a conscious act of positive reprisal. Today Kiryat Shmona's homes and factories are leaping out of the ground like a rich harvest. The town bustles with activity and proudly displays its new hotels, movie theaters and fashionable shops.

But beneath the surface lurks the taint.

Our group rode in its bus up the narrow road which climbs the lower level of that fear-bringing mountain. We stepped out cautiously and stood looking over the city as two of the local social workers explained the ultimate corrosive outgrowth of the terror. They spoke of mothers living on the edge of panic when children are even a minute late in coming home. They described intergenerational families wedged apart by social changes yet crushed together night after night in tiny apartments filled with fear, fear for the screaming, whistling sound of a "katyusha." They talked of the emotional strain, mental disintegration, the emigration of the children out of the lack of alternative options.

They ended their comments on a hopeful note. There had been no rockets for the previous two months and people were visibly easing up.

Before boarding the bus I bent and broke off a cluster of dried weed-flowers. As I type I am

(Continued on Page 8)

## Editorials

### Happy 1st Birthday To Us

This issue marks our first birthday. It has been a very busy and rewarding year for the staff — the highlight being the winning of the PR Award in Montreal, a most pleasant and welcome surprise. (See picture, p. 12.)

The past year was a milestone not only for our community but for our editors as well. The Charlotte Jewish News presented a challenge to all of us. Our trials and tribulations could fill a complete volume consisting of anecdotes, some of pathos, some of humor.

When we volunteered to serve as editors we did not fully realize the endless hours we would have to devote in putting each issue together. The work sessions that go on into the wee hours of the morning, the tracking down of news stories, ads, photographs, etc., go on month after month. We just about get through putting out one issue when we are ready to begin the next. We have lost count of the insurmountable cups of coffee and tea we have consumed to keep us awake. Gone are our days of bridge and tennis; home-cooked meals and home-baked cakes are a thing of the past (thank heaven for convenience foods, Hardees and children who have learned to cook).

We feel that we have reached many of our original goals but we will continue to strive to do better. The Jewish News was a pioneering effort which we believe has effectively provided news and information to all members of the community. We are hopeful and excited for its future potential which can only reach fruition if all of you will participate fully in making it an even more important media of communication. We began with an eight page paper and now find we are bursting at the seams with twelve pages!

One of our dreams is that this paper will become a self-sustaining publication. This can only be achieved with the full support of the community. We need more people to help in obtaining additional advertising and also to volunteer as staff members. Another one of our dreams is that when the complex becomes a complete reality we will have our own news room. This will give us a permanent facility where all our production staff can meet and work together, and also enable us to work more efficiently. Currently we have been working on a rotating basis at each others' homes using whatever make-shift equipment we have available.

We greatly appreciate the assistance of the present members of the staff, our sponsoring organizations, Marvin Bienstock for his helping hand, the JCC staff and our present advertisers.

We have just blown out our first candle with a special wish that the '80's will see better times for all of us.

Ann & Rita

### What is The Best I Can Do?

Ten years ago a well meaning but insensitive solicitor teed me off. Five years later I was still finding ways to avoid being solicited. I threatened to slam the door in the face of any woman who dared to "solicit" me. But it seems, to me at least, ironic that I find myself cochairing this year's Women's Division Campaign.

Perhaps my journey back began with my need to prove that others, too, will give if educated and not badgered. Certainly my unbridled rage at the mention of campaign was squelched by the pointed telling of a Sholom Aleichem story. It's the classic about the schnorrer (beggar) who comes for his weekly handout and finds half the expected amount in his hand. Expressing his upset, he is told that the giver had a bad week. The punchline translates as, "So, if you had a bad week, why should I suffer?" Certainly the Jews who count on our contributions as their lifeline are neither beggar nor "smart-mouth." Yet the punchline holds. Because we had a bad experience with a rude solicitor, because we weren't reached by the solicitor who had our card, because a well meaning volunteer didn't know exactly which story to tell or didn't bring tears to our eyes (or perhaps brought too many and made us want to run from her message) WHY SHOULD NEEDY JEWS STARVE, SUFFER TORTURE OR LIVE IN ABSORPTION CENTERS FOR LACK OF OUR SUPPORT?!

This year's campaign is pledged to educate, as are each of our workers. We believe that our sister Jewesses in Charlotte, knowing the issues that face us, will rise up and respond with a commitment that asks not "why should I help" but rather, "what is the best I can do."

Gail Bienstock  
Campaign co-chairwoman



Marvin Bienstock at Immigration Absorption Center.

## For the Record

by: Norman Olshansky  
Regional Director  
Anti-Defamation League

Messianic Hebrews and Jews for Jesus have become popular among the born-again, evangelical Christian groups. They say they are Jewish, but also say that they accept Jesus as the Messiah. They have traveling entertainment groups and appear regularly on Christian radio and TV programs.

It is interesting that they have been unsuccessful in drawing into their fold large numbers of Jewish young people. For the most part they are used by Christian groups to demonstrate that if "Jews" can find Jesus, then Christians should see by example the strength of being "born-again" and recommend one's life to Jesus.

Nevertheless, these Messianic groups are an irritant to the Jewish community, and those Christians who support them need to know why we react so negatively.

1) Messianic Hebrews present an unauthentic view of Judaism.

2) They often use Jewish symbols and music to lure young people to their programs but do not always make it clear who is the sponsoring group and the evangelical purpose of the program. While proselytizing is an accepted aspect of religious commitment, most religions do not condone targeted and/or

deceptive methods directed towards Jews and/or other non-Christian or Christian groups.

Tidewater and Northern Virginia have Messianic Hebrew congregations. All areas of our region have been exposed to these groups through mailings, church sponsored programs, and media exposure especially over the Christian Broadcasting Network. PTL has agreed to refrain from having these groups on as a result of dialogue with representatives of the local Jewish community and ADL.

Often the sponsoring church leadership is unaware how offensive these groups are to the Jewish community. Minimally they should clearly state in the advertising that the Messianic Hebrews are "Christian" in orientation. However, Jews also have the responsibility to share their concerns and help educate others as to the negative aspects of these "Hebrew Christians." In reality they are neither fish nor fowl and would do well to find their roots and stop trying to be all things to all people. They are obviously being used and do not have the respect of mainline Christians or Jews. For more background on Messianic Hebrews or other emerging religious movements, contact your rabbi, Jewish community leadership, and/or ADL; 3311 W. Broad Street, Richmond, Va. 23230, (804) 355-2884.



### Across The Editors' Desks

Just a note to tell you how deserved I think the award is for The Charlotte Jewish News. I read it and find it most interesting. It is an amazingly quick take-off for a new publication and I congratulate all of

those connected with it.

Regards,  
Rolfe Neill  
President and Publisher

The Charlotte Observer  
The Charlotte News