

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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and
Jewish Community Center
Marvin Bienstock, Director

Charlotte Hebrew Academy
Rabbi Sanford Tucker, Director

EditorsAnn Langman
Rita Mond

Club Editors.....Rose Massachi
& Mary Gordan

Feature WritersEstelle Hoffman
Muriel Levitt & Michael Shapiro

International News.....Marta Garelik
Copy Reader.....Fran Burg

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P.O. Box #220188
Charlotte, N.C. 28222

Editorials

Yom Hashoa

On April 13th the community will once again commemorate Yom Hashoa (Day of Remembrance) at Holocaust Square. This annual event's purpose is to keep our eyes open to the ever-present danger that can come about through indifference, self-centeredness and bigotry. We will gather together on that day to remember the five million non-Jews and the six million Jews killed by Nazis during what became known as the Holocaust in World War II.

We know that the world is not free of the treachery of people who wish power and do not care how they get it. There is a hatred and suspicion in us all that makes a Holocaust possible. We must make the commitment to work harder for harmony, peace and love among all people.

In the evening there will be a special service held at Covenant Presbyterian Church on Dilworth Rd. sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. This service will be one of dedication and commitment in regard to the Holocaust. It is open to the public and members of the Christian and Jewish communities will take part in both the service and the candlelighting ceremony.

"Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold on to what is good; return to man evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the suffering; honor all men and women; love and serve G'd, rejoining in His power."

We urge you all to attend the ceremonies at Holocaust Square and at the church on the 13th!

Growing Old

To most of you who enjoy biographies, and particularly like to read about celebrities, we heartily recommend an excellent book on the life of the late Groucho Marx entitled, "Hello, I Must Be Going." This is more than a biography; it is a painful lesson in aging. It takes in the whole history of the Marx brothers, but specifically deals with the last five years of Groucho's life, and what it meant for him to be in his 80's.

On the very opening page there is a quotation from this man who is a 20th century philosopher. When an interviewer asks Mr. Marx, "How old are you?" his response is, "This is not the question — the question is how am I old?"

Growing old in America has become less of an achievement and more of a nightmare for too many individuals. The breaking up of families, the distances put between them, attitudes of young people toward older people, inflation, high rentals, crime in the street, have all made the prospect of being old very difficult.

The aging process begins at the time of birth. If one were to take a very negative view of life, it could be said that we start dying the day we are born. But that's not really true — we start to live, and to grow, and to develop, and to try to fulfill. Some people say we do all this so that our later years might be fruitful. This may not be a proper way of looking at things. If we are successful in our lives and keep our minds and bodies healthy, then if we are privileged enough to live into our later years, they can be more rewarding, more useful and helpful. However, no matter who we are, no matter how well we take care of ourselves, we will at some point slow down.

Your Jewish Community Center is dedicated to making the golden years, the senior years, whatever one chooses to call them, happy ones. Through our Chai program the center looks for ways and means to help those who have gone through life to share new experiences, to utilize talents and skills learned, and to be looked upon as human beings of dignity.

Every week the Chai Club meets for a program, lunch, to socialize, to share; not to cry together, not to complain (although this takes place), but to do and to be, so that each member can answer the question of "How am I old," in a positive fashion.

"Youth is not a time of life — it is a state of mind. It is not a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips and supple knees. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions. It is a freshness of the deep spring of life."

— S. Aullman, From the Summit of Four Score Years

The Editors welcome comments and reserve the right to edit.

Living Alone In Charlotte

By Estelle Hoffman

The State of Loneliness has no borders, and anyone may become one of its inhabitants. Most people who live alone did not choose to live that way. There is our neighbor, who said that she was a member of a family of four until a year ago. Now she lives alone, her former husband in a distant state with one son, the other son grown and also gone. The change has been traumatic.

The question has been raised about the condition of the person living alone in Charlotte. Answers are determined by the differences in personality and needs of the individual, but the society in which one lives does have some effect on his life.

In the case of a person who requires constant companionship, no location can be satisfactory. If there were a former mate, the loss may be an added sorrow. However, there is no doubt that anyone may feel alone, even in the company of one or more people who fail to afford desirable companionship, like children, who, while inspiring devotion and furnishing a sense of being needed by the parent, cannot contribute to an atmosphere of stimulating conversation, or make possible the interchange of ideas and expression of mature and serious concerns and thought. This suggests there may be situations equal to or worse than living alone.

Someone who has been burdened by years of hard work or care of an invalid may feel thrilled by a sense of freedom when released from responsibility. Should such a person have a backlog of interests he or she was never able to explore, like travel or attending school at any level, that individual might enjoy such pursuits alone. However, our social structure creates problems for many people who live alone.

Do married women consider an unattached female to be a threat to their marriages, even if a friendship existed when the single woman was married? Women, young and old, often express this belief when they are

not invited to social functions of the kind they formerly attended with their husbands.

It might be necessary to exert an effort to overcome the awkward feeling one may experience in the presence of someone who has suffered a loss of any kind. One friend who is concerned with people who live alone told me that she believes it behooves the single person to make others feel at ease, but admits such skill is difficult for one who pulls away for the very reason that he or she feels ill-at-ease.

A person arriving in the community alone is in a different situation from that of the person finding himself alone after an extended residence in Charlotte. One such man who came to Charlotte with the company who employs him, a gentle person, finds abundant warmth and opportunity for recreation among his co-workers and acquaintances he has made in the synagogue. He has only praise, rather than criticism, of the attitude of people towards him.

A young adult alone in the community requires different avenues for making acquaintances. Like the older person, he or she needs to find people who share his or her interests, but with different goals and a limited range of age. In Charlotte many young Jewish people feel that the Jewish population here is not large enough to allow adequate choice. Such a young man or woman, if sufficiently interested in a career or hobby, may not require a broad social arena, but that is not the usual case.

For a woman who is nearly middle aged or older, who desires a partner in matrimony, or even for dating, the number of single women compared to unmarried men is so great as to make slim the possibility of success. Such people of both sexes may want a different circle of friends who engage in activities more attractive to single people than married couples. The newly formed Young Couples Club of Temple Israel is splendid and there are currently 2 single

groups, one for the 35 and older and one for the 18 and up group. These groups are one way of meeting new people.

With efforts well supported to help the underprivileged, the handicapped, the old, and the sick members of our community, is the person living alone the only one who lacks our concern?

It is not fair for a person who has not been in another's situation to judge it. Regardless of sympathetic attempts to understand, it takes experience to realize another's feelings. It is easy, however, to recognize the symptoms of loneliness, like the need to talk to someone, anyone, even a stranger, about something, anything, without thought of whether the listener may care or want to hear. Who has not had the experience in a supermarket or beside a swimming pool, for example, of having a stranger, usually not young, begin a conversation in which he or she unburdens a load of thoughts or a problem or rapid personal history, clearly in need of a listener.

While there may be no responsibility, perhaps, to cheer the plight of a stranger, single persons among our own circles may cause us concern. Does it create inconvenience or expense to consider and respond to the needs of the people we know who are, in one way or another, alone, people who may indeed, add to an occasion in a beneficial manner? What is our fascination for even numbers? It seems that in our society we wish to have pairs, totals divisible by two. Does a dining table tip if three people are seated on one side across from four on the other? The automobile called a "coupe" without a back seat is almost obsolete; yet, that back seat is generally unoccupied. Someone who is reluctant to venture forth alone at night may gladly accompany others who attend theatrical performances or similar functions. We are not troubled at all by the odd number of days in the week, the year, and some months. A preference for even numbers of people is not easily understood.

Rallying to the aid of victims of a calamity is popular. Quietly cheering those in a continued situation of unhappiness remains a virtue easily ignored. The Jewish community of Charlotte is exceptional in its response to a variety of human needs. Many single people living alone in Charlotte feel that theirs is the area that has been and continues to be neglected.

For the Record

By Norman Olshansky
Regional Director
Anti-Defamation League

At a recent social function I attended, just as I was entering the room, I couldn't help but overhear one of my friends whisper to another, "...we better cut out the ethnic jokes; Norm just came in."

What's so wrong with ethnic humor? Some of it is downright hilarious. Many famous comedians have been catapulted to stardom based entirely on their ability to tell ethnic jokes. Personally, I do not feel that ethnic humor is necessarily evil. There are, however, certain types of ethnic jokes which are and should be of grave concern.

There needs to be a distinction made between those jokes which portray a negative, inaccurate and heavily prejudiced image from those which express humor in a positive and accurate manner. Unfortunately, through largely negative ethnic humor and other forms of stereotyping, we have come to know Poles, Italians, Mexican-Americans, Jews and blacks in a negative way. While the intent may be innocent, over a period of time these stereotypes and jokes tend to reinforce negative attitudes and for many people, especially children, the joke becomes fact and the inaccurate portrayal is seen as truth. Many people do not have direct contact with members of various

ethnic or minority groups and therefore are exposed only to these and other native stereotypes.

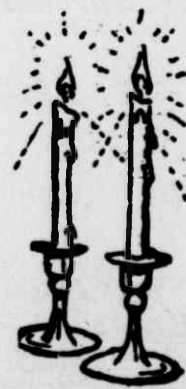
When you hear a Polish, black or Jewish joke, you usually hear humor which plays on the ridiculous, absurd or prejudiced attitudes held towards those groups. Whether or not the intent is innocent, in most cases, the joke is, in fact, a put-down of the group. Such jokes, when told over and over, take their toll. They reinforce and develop negative attitudes about the targeted group.

I was recently with a leader from the Polish-American community who was lamenting the impact of Polish ethnic jokes on youngsters of Polish descent. He indicated that they are affecting the self-concept of Polish youth. This has also occurred in the Jewish community regarding personal identification, lack of pride and/or willingness to express oneself within the context of their Judaic experience or background.

What may be hilarious for the moment could be very damaging in the long run. Hopefully, at the next party, it won't be necessary for the ADL Director to walk into the room before someone reminds their friend that negative ethnic humor is not necessary, in order to find material for funny stories.

By the way, did you hear the one about...

The Jewish Calendar



CANDLELIGHTING
April 1 - 6:37 p.m.
April 4 - 6:40 p.m.
April 6 - 6:41 p.m.
April 7 - 6:42 p.m.
April 11 - 6:45 p.m.
April 18 - 6:51 p.m.
April 25 - 6:56 p.m.
May 2 - 7:01 p.m.

HAPPY PASSOVER