

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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Guest Editorial

Our *Jewish News* has fast become an inspirational tableau to provoke serious thought and reflection and to contemplate contemporary problems of the Jewish family.

Our temples and Sabbath tables were once the cornerstones of Jewish life and tradition. Now they are mere slots to be plugged into complex schedules when time permits.

It was then a generation of "Us's" and "We's" in a caring home steeped in tradition and discipline — children encircling mothers and fathers who devoted themselves to the task of bringing their loved ones to adulthood in a "haimish" environment — children who often matured with their peers in a Jewish community setting instilled with a sense of right and respect for traditional values.

It is now a generation of "I's" and "Me's" in a world torn with terrorism, saddled with subversive conduct, and tainted by chemicals with video game rooms and loitering in shopping center malls.

Hasn't the day come when mothers and fathers must overcome the wails of frustration harbored by Jewish educators who daily contend with the pressure of their students' secular activities?

Hasn't the day come when mothers and fathers realize that their treasures are not the jewels stored in safes and locked boxes but the joys and love stored in the hearts of their children and the wisdom to be gleaned from the aged?

Hasn't the day come when mothers and fathers must perpetuate and foster the growth of Hebrew day schools and Jewish Community Centers as oases in a desert often barren of Jewish thought and learning?

Hasn't the day come for mothers and fathers to become concerned more with ethics, values and a sense of the human soul and spirit, than the rules of the ball field and the thrill of victory?

Can we as parents consciously now make an effort to cause our children and our children's children to become beneficiaries of a world where there is peace among nations; beneficiaries of a community where there is sharing among neighbors; and the beneficiaries of homes where there is love among those dear to them?

— Donald M. Tepper

Jewish Divorce: Our Changing World

Reprinted from The Jewish Post and Opinion

By Arlene G. Peck

A very astute and married friend of mine recently commented that he was afraid that he was getting old. He was worried that quite often he was ready, willing and able but not always at the same time. He then continued saying that he "had been married for 17 years and had almost forgotten what it was like not to be married."



Peck

I CAN REMEMBER when I wasn't married but I seem to be recalling the people that we once were. It made me reflect on how many of us are the same as we were even a few short years ago. Or,

more importantly, how many of us like the individuals that we have become? Come to think of it, life would be awfully boring if everything stayed the same, especially people. However, as true as death and taxes, nothing stays the same.

Unfortunately, most of the conflicts that arise in marriage do so when one of the parties change and the other resists the changes. There is a lot of truth in the expression, "If you don't grow together, you grow apart."

ANOTHER FRIEND recently told me after his divorce, "We could have made it work, but we didn't want it badly enough. I knew that there were other women out there that I could date and she could find other men. We didn't need the grief. Life's too short."

With attitudes such as that, it is no wonder that the divorce rate is running 50 percent.

The situations that people aren't willing to put up with in today's world were lived with as a matter of course when I was growing up in the South. True, there was probably a lot of miserable people coexisting under the same roof, but Jewish homes just did not break up.

100 YEARS AGO a Jewish woman never had to make a decision. Everything was decided for her by her husband, synagogue or family. Not too many years ago if a home did break up, the scandal was borne like a scarlet letter on both parties and the alternative was to stay married or leave town. I wonder how many of my parents' friends stayed together for

the children? Unfortunately, even today in the South, divorce is generally more difficult on the women because they feel that there is a stigma against them.

I recently spoke on this topic with Atlanta therapist, Mark Weiss, who shed yet another light on the problems resulting from the fact of we, as Jews, becoming too smug in our apartness from the general population. Dr. Weiss feels, "Judaism today is so watered down with modern values and assimilation that one is no longer today in a Jewish environment." No longer do our lives center around the guidepost that they once did. We have changed and established a different identity. Judaism used to be the unchanging rock. Now we question how to redefine

ourselves in a changing world.

UNFORTUNATELY, I feel that the synagogues and the Jewish organizations have been slow in responsiveness and sorely lacking in flexibility. Today, when the question of divorce arises in a Jewish home usually they get their feedback from their friends. Everyone gives different advice and besides confusion, the variety of feedback forces you to make your own decisions. The base of much of the anxiety that is happening today stems from coping in a world that is lacking in consistency.

Where years ago so much of our lifestyle was done solely, "for the kids," that's not the case now. In most homes today, the way a

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Spotlighting Federation

By Richard A. Klein

A decision was made several months ago that your Federation should start planning now for the community's future. The Federation immediately extended an invitation to Charlotte's major Jewish institutions to be represented in this long range planning effort.

The process has begun under the direction of Harry Lerner, chairperson, and Marvin Bienstock, the Federation's executive director. Initial meetings have shown that, if anything, this kind of thinking is overdue.

Providing input to the long range committee will be more than our own community can handle. We will also be relying on the expertise and regular assistance of the Council of Jewish Federations, based in New York, of which our local Federation is a dues-paying member.

Robert Hyman is a CJF field representative assigned to Charlotte and he has been in regular contact with our local Federation office. Hyman and Les Levin were in Charlotte to meet with members of the Charlotte Jewish organizations to suggest ways to plan for the future.

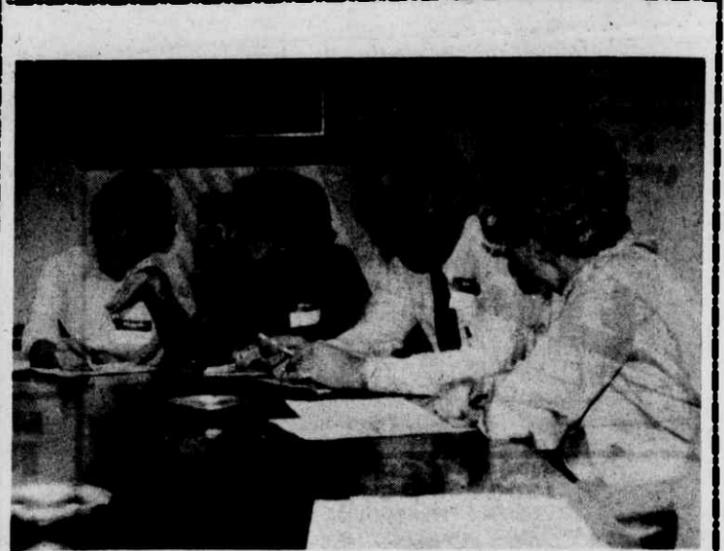
The CJF professionals reminded those assembled at the JCC for the meeting that "staying where you are today is dying. You have to face the issues. It is time to look at what you might elect to do."

One item that the long range planning committee quickly targeted for attention is day care, especially after school care. CJF is aware that 80-percent of Jewish children in day care centers nationwide are in church-related schools. Naturally these kinds of schools have no Jewish exposure, and it is a source of concern.

There is a national push now on for Jewish day care centers, and Charlotte appears to be no exception to the rest of the country with a need.

There are other subjects to be addressed. More attention needs to be given to non-family categories. All of us must wake up to realities

road. CJF is calling to our attention that we live in an aging society. We'll be needing less and less in the way of taking care of our young as the concerns of older Jews will face us. The guess is that there are about 250 Jewish children in Charlotte 0-4; 500 that are 5-14 years old. But we have 1600 people in the 30-59



Lt. to rt.: Evelyn Berger, Mae Kropp, Mike Scharf and Ilse Bergen at first long range planning meeting — more pictures on page 16.

that there are now many one-parent families, singles, college students and the elderly who want to express their Judaism. But they often feel trapped in a Judaism that is so traditionally family oriented—many times to the exclusion of those who don't fit the standard mold.

The Council of Jewish Federations also wants to put to rest the myth that there are no poor Jews. The U.S. Department of Energy alone recently provided a \$1 million grant to assist poor Jews! We have to open our eyes that there are Jews on fixed incomes who are having a difficult, if not impossible time surviving.

As we proceed to build our project, plan our programs and hire staff in our Charlotte Jewish institutions, we must look down the

category, and 600 who are 60 and over.

In the months and years ahead, long range planning will be looking at Jewish education in Charlotte, health care, counseling, single adults, college student population, vocational guidance—and much more.

Where do you see the needs? What kinds of services do we need to be providing? Where are the gaps in service?

We'd like to hear from you. Send your thoughts in writing to: Long Range Planning, Charlotte Jewish Federation, P.O. Box 220188, Charlotte, NC 28222.

All Jews are responsible for one another כל ישראל ערבותם ביניהם