

Guest Editorial

Toward a Jewish Community Center

By Rabbi Marc Wilson

What makes a Jewish Community Center "Jewish"? Everyone agrees in the abstract that it must be more than just a place where Jews gather, more than just a country club. What kind of "more" and how much "more" are the stuff of heady, often heated, philosophical and practical debate. If it is any consolidation, Charlotte is far from alone in struggling with how Jewish a JCC should be.

I offer my two cents. A Jewish Community Center becomes a Jewish Community Center in two ways:

1. A JCC must offer a significant number of programs of specific Judaic content, particularly in the areas of Jewish culture, education, issue forums, art, music, literature, theater. The most vital way that a JCC becomes Jewish is by offering a panorama of Jewish things to do.

2. Things must be done to create a Jewish atmosphere and ambience to the JCC. Kashrut and Shabbat are important elements of this ambience. But they are not the end-all. Sadly, our community to this point has seen Kashrut and Shabbat cast only in a negative light, as a maze of abracadabra tabus, prohibitions and restrictions. It need not be that way. Kashrut can become an enjoyable, invigorating challenge to culinary creativity. (Just ask me.) The focus must shift from what we can't do to what we can, not an accommodation to a lunatic fringe.

Admittedly, Shabbat is a stickier issue. I do not advocate closing the JCC on Saturday afternoon. I do advocate establishing a positive Shabbat atmosphere through creative programming and activities that support the Sabbath spirit.

I realize that the current state of Shabbat activities at the JCC is far from this ideal. But gradually, lovingly, patiently, a nicer Sabbath atmosphere can be created. We need to look at other JCCs where this has been successfully accomplished and not feel obligated to re-invent the wheel. Among other things, we will learn from them that a more "Jewish" atmosphere does not alienate the non-Jewish clientel, a concern we've often heard expressed.

But there are other things beside Shabbat and Kashrut that create a positive Jewish ambience at a JCC. Little inobtrusive subtle things can and are being done: Jewish artwork, Jewish music piped in (sometimes!), a Hebrew or Yiddish phrase here and there, Kippot available at functions for those who choose to wear them, mezuzot for each door (an obvious crafts project), tzedakah "pushkes" in prominent places, a food collection basket for the needy, an occasional wine and cheese Kiddush or Havdalah reception on the weekend, and so on.

How do we get from here to there? How do we create a Jewish Community Center?

The first step is a matter of attitude. It is an attitude that the Jewish element of JCC will be a creative, enlightening, stimulating experience, not a distasteful encumbrance or a punitive imposition. It is an attitude that we will feel good and healthy about being a Jewish Community Center, not self-conscious. It is an attitude that must be enthusiastically embraced by JCC leadership and no less enthusiastically by the constituency they represent. Without the right attitude, none of this is possible.

The second step is that there must ultimately be a Judaic Specialist/Consultant/Resource on staff to the JCC, just as we (rightfully) have an Aquatic Specialist, a Crafts Specialist and a masseur. It needn't be a full-time position. Perhaps it is a role that could be fulfilled by the Director of a Charlotte Bureau of Jewish Education, an idea that is starting to percolate among some respected elements of the community. The Specialist could consult with other staff members on Judaic dimensions to programming, bring the Temples and JCC together for citywide projects, work on cultural programs, supervise Kashrut, and so on.

The notion that "the rabbis" can serve this function is tenuous at best. Our time and attention is already chopped up in a hundred directions. And, despite our protests, I fear that we have been typecast and invoked as Jewish watchdogs and policemen over the JCC, not creative influences, a stigma that my colleagues and I desperately want to dispel, were we given the opportunity.

The potential for positive Jewish content to our JCC is so great and the need is so pressing that a Specialist on staff, even part time, is well justified, if we are really serious about being a Jewish Community Center.

I passionately disagree with those who contend that a JCC must be either a vaguely Jewish country club or a 19th Century shtetl. There is a middle ground that lets Judaism become a source of pride and delight, a stimulant, not a deterrent, to a community's positive self-image and wellbeing. I am committed to help find that middle ground. I believe that you join with me in that quest.

In my youth (three years ago) I would have written these words in anger for all we have not done. I now write these words with hope and optimism because of all that I know deep down this community can yet achieve.

Marketing Committee Designs New Image For Federation

By Marvin Bienstock
Director of Charlotte
Jewish Federation

The publicity and public relations of the Charlotte Jewish Federation are undergoing a complete change due to the creation of a Marketing Committee.

Under the direction of its Chair, Phil Joffe, Director of Marketing and Sales for Radiator Specialty, this committee is helping the Federation keep up with the latest developments in communication and advertising techniques. The goal is to keep the members of the Jewish community better informed about Federation, what it does, and the institutions and organizations which benefit from its planning and fund-raising efforts. Members of this committee of profes-

sionals include: Mike Lewis, Marketing Director for Beta Shoes; Howard Levine, Director of Sales and Marketing for Family Dollar; Harvey Cohen, PR Director of United Way; Vivian Leibowitz, owner of Leibowitz Market Research; Marc Silverman, President of Schloss Outdoor Advertising; Ed Moline, PR Consultant; Mrs. Geri Zhiss, graphic artist and ad agency owner.

The first results of the committee's efforts can be seen in this issue of *The CJNews*. The four-page supplement tells the story of the Campaign in photos and short sentences instead of the previous pages of descriptions. A second four-page insert will appear next month in *The CJNews*.

Community members can look forward to receiving weekly post card mailers every

week during the six weeks of Campaign from Nov. 2 to Dec. 14. The cards will highlight the stories and attitudes of both donors and recipients. The cards will be made into posters and located around Shalom Park as reminders of the positive results of the Federation's work.

Signs located strategically around Shalom Park and ads in *The CJNews* will say "Your Federation Dollars at Work" and reinforce the importance of Federation allocations to institutions such as the JCC, Academy, Social Services, etc.

The initial efforts of the committee are directed to the '87 Campaign. But, as soon as the goal is reached, the real work of the committee will begin. It will start to focus on year-round education and awareness of the Federation as well as ways to understand what people feel about Federation and how they want it to change and develop and grow. Most of all, the committee will be looking for ways to allow individuals to participate in the work of the Federation.

We, at Federation, have come to realize that we must keep pace with the sophisticated world of communications and marketing if we are going to be able to compete for your interest and support. When we began to assemble the committee we knew of some expert resources and new ones came to our attention. Everyone we called agreed to participate and share their skills and talents.

Perhaps you are a professional in marketing, commercial art, public relations or a related field and want to join in this project. Just give me a call at 366-5007. We'd love to have the benefit of your knowledge.



On The Issues ... By Ira Gissen, Va/NC Director ADL

"Ku Klux Klown"

This may remind you of the time that Mayor LaGuardia used Jewish police officers to protect Fritz Kuhn at a German-American Bund Rally in Madison Square Garden.

Charlotte police Major L. R. Jones, a black officer, was in charge of protecting the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan during their parade in Charlotte on September 6.

White and black spectators heckled and harassed the Klan marchers. Some pelted the KKK with bottles and rocks. One spectator doused a robed Klansman with the contents of a cup of soft drink and ice. Scuffles broke out. A group of approximately 50 spectators repeatedly tried to charge the line of marchers and would have done so but for the intervention of a police car which obstructed their line of attack. One spectator ripped an American flag from one of the Klan marchers. Another spectator wore a jester's costume and carried a sign "Ku Klux Klown."

F. Glenn Miller, Jr., former leader of the White Patriot Party, and Stephen S. Miller (no relative), former Party Chaplain and second in command, have been sentenced on their conviction of contempt of court for operating a paramilitary organization and violating North Carolina laws.

Glenn Miller has been sentenced to six months in prison. Both Millers were ordered not to have any contact, for three years, with the White Patriot

Party nor with similar groups anywhere in the United States. The Party was fined \$2,000. In addition to his prison sentence, Glenn Miller received a six-months suspended sentence and three years probation.

Chaplain Miller received a six-months suspended sentence and was ordered by U. S. District Judge W. Earl Britt to enter a residential treatment center for 90 days to get job counseling.

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