

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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Editorial

**We've Come A Long Way . . .
 But A Jewish First Lady?**

Recently, when my daughter Jodi was home on winter break from college, we discussed a speech that she had written for a "Modern Miss Pageant" a few years ago. (It was reproduced later as a guest editorial for *The CJN*.) It was written about the Modern Day Woman and how she has been involved in virtually every activity and profession . . . fireman, policeman, clergyman, doctor, lawyer, astronaut, actress, artist, architect, mayor, senator, supreme court judge and even a vice-presidential candidate.

We spoke about how the Jewish woman has also been recognized in many new capacities. We now have many women who are rabbis and cantors. Temple Israel last year gave women the right to be given aliyahs and be counted as members of a minyan. This year both Temple Israel and Temple Beth El V'Shalom have women presidents. More and more of our women are going into careers that formerly were open only to men . . . we have outstanding doctors, accountants, attorneys, etc., in our community.

The possibility that we may some day have a vice president or even a first lady of the U.S. is not remote. According to *The National Jewish Post & Opinion*, they are thinking that as early as 1989, Mrs. Kitty Dukakis, wife of Massachusetts Governor Dukakis, who is expected to be a candidate for the presidency, might be the one. She is the daughter of Harry Ellison Dickson, violinist and associate director of the Boston Pops. Since 1979, Mrs. Dukakis has been preparing herself for the role of first lady of one of the world's great superpowers by involving herself with Holocaust victims and memorials and Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate. She has toured Poland, Russia, Denmark and visited Israel six times. As president of the National Center for Genocide Studies, she has visited Cambodia and Thailand several times to aid orphans. She is interested in civic beautification, the arts, and like Mrs. Gerald Ford and Mrs. Ronald Reagan, is active in the fight against drug use by children.

Personally, I don't think we are quite ready in this country to have a Jew in the White House. But it would be a great idea serving heads of state some good old-fashioned chicken soup with kreplach or matzo balls. It might be just what we need to cure the ills in this world. Think about it!

—Rita Mond

Your paper may be late due to the recent snow storm. Hopefully we will have better weather this month.

The Jewish Calendar

Candlelighting



Feb. 6 - 5:38 p.m.	Feb. 14 - Tu B'Shvat
Feb. 13 - 5:45 p.m.	Mar. 12 - Fast of Esther
Feb. 20 - 5:52 p.m.	Mar. 15 - Purim
Feb. 27 - 5:59 p.m.	Mar. 16 - Shushan Purim
Mar. 6 - 6:05 p.m.	
Mar. 13 - 6:11 p.m.	

Over 5 Million Offended

McDonald's Claims Fievel Furor Unjustified

By Andrew Muchin
 (JTA)

What's a nice Jewish cartoon character like Fievel Mousekewitz doing in places like these?

The rodent star of Steven Spielberg's new animated film "An American Tale" formed the centerpiece of two major Christmas sale promotions, both apparently with Spielberg's blessing.

At more than 7,000 McDonald's restaurants across the United States, Fievel appeared on four facsimile stocking Christmas tree ornaments, each given free to purchasers of a \$5 book of gift certificates.

The books also contained a coupon for \$5 off a \$25 Fievel doll at 801 Sears department stores nationwide. Sears has exclusive rights to sell merchandise based on the movie's characters, according to

James Podany, director of marketing communications for Sears Roebuck & Co., Chicago.

Sears placed the characters on a variety of children's products as a draw for sales during the Christmas season. However, Podany insisted that Fievel was not pictured on any Christmas related items such as a wreath or tree ornament.

'Ill Advised' and 'Tacky'

The use of an identifiably Jewish character to boost Christmas sales is incongruous to say the least, isn't it? "I think of it as ill advised and tacky," said Dr. Eliot Spack, executive director of the Coalition For Alternatives in Jewish Education. He noted that he was expressing his own opinions, not his organization's policy.

However, he told JTA that

the Fievel campaigns did not post major assimilation problems for Jews. "I'm not personally worried that we're going to lose thousands of Jews over it," he said, explaining that children won't easily identify the mouse as Jewish, since Fievel is an uncommon Jewish name.

He chalked up the Fievel promotions to capitalism. "Chanukah and Jewish linkages have clearly been exploited for many years in the promotion of Christmas and non-religious events," he added.

Spokespeople for the companies involved, in interviews with JTA, denied any tackiness or incongruity in the use of Fievel.

Podany of Sears said the Fievel centered campaign appears at Christmas time only to concur with the release of the movie.

Marvin Levy, a consultant to Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment and Universal City Studios, Inc., both of Universal City, Calif., acknowledged that Fievel is Jewish and even receives Chanukah gifts in the film, but he said the film is less a Jewish story than one of immigration that fosters universal American values such as the "melting pot."

"No one thought of it with a religious significance," he said of the many Jews, including himself and Spielberg, among the leadership of Amblin and Universal. "We would probably be as sensitive as anybody," he added.

But might not children who see the film and then see the character pushing Christmas sales get the wrong impression of Judaism? "I really don't think so," he said. "I don't think anybody here thought of it as being as much of a Christmas promotion as a (generally ecumenical) holiday promotion." According to Terry Capotosto, media relations manager for McDonald's Corp., Oak Brook, Ill., the movie represents American values of intercultural understanding, hope and family heritage.

Moreover, both Capotosto and McDonald's customer relations representative Chris Garrity noted that families can participate in the Fievel promotion without getting involved in Christmas. Scenes from the movie decorate the packages of McDonald's meals for children from November 24-December 24, which each week is accompanied by a different Fievel storybook.

No Offense Intended

She said she didn't see anything wrong with placing Fievel on the Christmas tree ornaments, and added that McDonald's employees, including Jews, had discussed the issue at length, concluding that Fievel transcended any one ethnic group.

But she said, "We certainly apologize if someone has misinterpreted (the Fievel ornaments) ... We obviously wouldn't do anything that would offend anybody."



Letters to the Editor

Reader Needs Information

In the CJN, May, 1986, p. 18, World Beat/Tid-Bits, appeared an item, datelined New York, which spoke briefly of an anti-Semitic article appearing in an Australian Croatian weekly newspaper, Hrvatski Tjednik.

As a Jewish person, I am, of course, very bothered by any and every anti-Semitic action, in whatever form. What upsets me even more, in this instance, is that my heritage also contains Croatian roots — my maternal grandparents came from Croatia, and I have 3 generations of cousins who live in Zagreb.

My point: Would it be possible somehow to obtain a copy/transcript of the anti-Semitic article in question — preferably in English, but I

have a couple of sources where I might be able to have it translated.

Any assistance you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

— Gary Weiss

Editor's note: Hope that you have received the information you needed from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. The JTA is the source of most of the items found in "World Beat." Marta Garelik has been editing this column for the past 8 years; she has been doing a truly excellent job.

We encourage our readers' viewpoints. Letters should be submitted typewritten and double-spaced and signed. Please include your address and phone number. We reserve the right to edit.

Deadline for March is February 9