

The Charlotte JEWISH NEWS

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Charlotteans Reflect on Visit to Auschwitz Exhibit

By Rosalind P. Taranto

I often ask myself why we Jews seem to gravitate to our past more than any other group of people. The clearest answer came to me when a group of us from Charlotte went to Atlanta to see the exhibition "Auschwitz: A Crime Against Mankind," on January 24. Dorothy Ashendorf and I, through the sponsorship of the Women's Division of the Charlotte Jewish Federation, worked together to coordinate the day trip from Charlotte to Atlanta. Reflecting back on the day, I came to realize the answer to my question — the young adults, ages 13-17 who made the trip to Atlanta. These teenagers showed sad emotion — love, strength, tears and even humor, as they, along with the others, viewed the exhibition. It is not easy to view the photographs of our people being gassed, huddled into cattle cars, being stripped of their personal clothing and dignity; the children taken away from their parents; husbands, wives, grandparents, sisters and brothers all being moved in different directions. It was also difficult to look at the tangibles: suitcases and personal belongings, ashes from the crematorium, cases of human hair and samples of cloth woven from hair. It is a very difficult exhibit to walk through for over an hour and a half. Questions and answers, from survivors of all the camps, which were spaced throughout, were moving and real. Our own Susan Spatz, a survivor of Auschwitz, answered many questions in Atlanta and on our return trip. The exhibit, composed of 135 photographs, panels and artifacts relating to the activity and operation of the infamous death camp from 1941-1945, was conceived by the government of Poland, and



At the Schatten Gallery, Woodruff Library, Emory U. (L to R) Dorothy Ashendorf, Debby Rosenberger, Maddie Joffe, Hardy Spatz, Susan Spatz, Doris Fligel, Rosalind Taranto, Sandra Hirsch, Meg Goldstein, Simon Estroff.



Our young adults, the future leaders of our community.

United States under the auspices of the UJA. Objectively, the exhibit is well put together and the docents prepared for any group that tours the exhibit.

The young adults, who are the future leaders of Charlotte and the Jewish community, are two generations removed

from this tragic period of Jewish history, living a secure and comfortable life in America. As I listened and watched them that Sunday afternoon in Atlanta, I know why we go back — because the future needs to know so that we can learn forever, "never again."

of such a wonderful Jewish experience. The day's effort was a gratifying experience for all who participated."

Marty Stein, National Chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, made a special trip to North Carolina to meet with Jewish leadership from Gastonia and to speak at a small parlor meeting held at the home of Barry Brodsky. Stein spoke to the group about the current situation in Israel, Jewish responsibility, and the special importance of Jewish participation by small communities.

After the parlor meeting, volunteers from the Charlotte Jewish Federation campaign work force met at the offices of State Senator Marshall Rauch in order to "call Gastonia" on a special "Metrolina Super Sunday." Senator Rauch made his office phones available to the callers and played a key part and a significant role in helping us reach the \$40,000 mark. Participating in the phone-a-thon were Barry Brodsky, Robert Damsky, Simon Estroff, Phil Joffe, Richard Klein, Richard Melenson, Jim Rosenberger and Steward Scher.

By Shira N. Melenson

On January 9, 1988, I went to the Auschwitz exhibit in Atlanta. I went there with the motivation to keep the memory of these tragic happenings alive, and to sanctify the names of the six million souls who died — solely because they were Jewish. I thought I knew a lot about the Holocaust, but what I learned was nothing compared to the wealth of documents, pictures, lists, maps and letters I saw at the Schatten Gallery in the Woodruff Library of Emory University.

This Holocaust exhibit began with a tour; the guide gave a simplified version of the historical events. Not satisfied, I returned for a second and third review of the exhibit. I read the documents and the endless sad letters requesting that loved ones at home be taken care of. These letters described endless tortures and were not believed by the families and friends left at home. I looked at the portraits that the inmates of the concentration camp had drawn of each other to keep their sanity. The first time around I felt nervous, tense and sick to my stomach. By the third time around, I was numb and was no longer as shocked by what I saw. So perhaps the Nazis and the other people who daily saw the cruelties imposed upon the Jews and other minorities became insensitive to what they saw and were no longer as shocked. Such tragedy can happen again unless we, the people of the world, work to preserve the bitter memory.

By Juanita Condruff

I went with the Temple Beth El V'Shalom confirmation class to see the display, "Auschwitz—A Crime Against Mankind," at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

I am not Jewish and I feel I must tell you about my feelings and what happened to me that day.

I attended this presentation with Julie Goodman, just looking for a fun, happy, relaxing time with people my age. But when I got there, I was really surprised. I had never really thought about the Jewish Holocaust, because my church doesn't really talk about it, since it never affected my religion. To see all those pictures and read all those names really puts me in a thoughtful mood. Now when I think about it, I wonder which side I would have been on: in the concentration camp or one of the "civilians" who just didn't care.

Going to this presentation now means a lot to me. I'm glad I didn't miss it. I just wish more Christians who never experienced the devastation would realize just how bad this "black spot" in our history really is. They may know a little bit about it, but it was probably only through world history texts which can never convey the feelings of depression, pain and humiliation that these people had to face.

I really enjoyed this trip and am grateful to my Jewish friends for inviting me. More people should know more about this terrible thing so they can understand it and come to terms with their inner feelings as I did.

Metrolina Federation Holds Campaign: Gastonia Has Very Successful "Super Sunday"

By Mike Minkin

Exec. Director CJF

Bobbi Bernstein, 1988 president of the Charlotte Jewish Federation, and Richard Klein, 1988 Campaign cochair, announced the results of the Metrolina Division campaign effort, held in Gastonia on Sunday, January 17. Klein said "The Gastonia leadership and general community answered the call of Israel by pledging nearly \$40,000 to help meet Jewish needs. This represents nearly a 90% increase over last year's actual



Dedication Ceremonies

Sunday, March 27

2 p.m.

at the

Blumenthal Jewish Home

Clemmons, NC

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—Special Feature—

Visit Israel for
its 40th Anniversary
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