

This That

The Carolina Panthers have named Mann Travels as their exclusive travel agency. Mark Richardson, director of business operations for the Panthers, said, "Mann's designation as our exclusive travel agency was the result of an extensive search for the right travel management company. Our varied travel needs are complex... Mann Travels is the right choice to provide a high level of service and to help us keep our travel expenses as low as possible." Gary Silverstein, President of Mann Travels is also the travel agency for the Charlotte Hornets and the Carolina Checkers.

Lyerly Agency, Inc. recently took five prestigious ProAd Awards from the Business Marketing Association's marketing competition. Recognizing the best creative work in North and

South Carolina, Lyerly Agency received a ProAd for two advertisements.

Elaine Lyerly was appointed to the Board of Directors for SouthTrust Bank and was recognized as the Charlotte Woman Business Owner of the Year for 1994 by the Charlotte Women Business Owners Association. Elaine, and her husband, Marc Rauch, have recently adopted an eight month old son, Elias, from Paraguay, South America.

Sidney Cojac, representing Mecklenburg County at the North Carolina Senior Games held in Raleigh on September 22, won a gold medal for Tennis Singles. He is now eligible to play at the level of competition held in San Antonio, Texas.

Josh Hantman, son of Barry Hantman, former director of the Jewish Community Center, has been invited to become a Golden Key member of the National Honor Society. Membership is extended to the top 15% of students only. Josh, an upper Junior, is pre-med and is majoring in Biology and Chemistry with a 4.0 average. The Golden Key National Honor Society was founded in 1977 to recognize outstanding students at leading colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

Judy Goldman's book, *Wanting to Know the End*, won two prestigious awards recently: the Oscar Arnold Young Book Award from the North Carolina Poetry Council and the North Carolina Poetry Society's Zoe Kincaid Brockman Award for the Best Book of Poetry by a North Carolinian in 1993.

Ruthie Warshenbrot, daughter of Amalia and Abraham Warshenbrot, won first place in the annual Essay and Public Speaking contest sponsored by Charlotte Mecklenburg Urban League, Inc. Ruthie is a sixth grader in First Ward elementary school and is in the Vav class of Temple Israel religious school.



Chanukah: Holy Day of Light, Laughter and Latkes

by Ted Roberts

My good friend Herb loves Chanukah. "It's the Fourth of July with latkes subbing for hot dogs and dreidel-spinning for fireworks. "Dreidels," says Herb, the Chanukah Hochem, "are safer than fireworks. And much more profitable if you understand the odds and your fellow players think it's a child's game. How 'bout a nice game of dreidel," Herb says to synagogue newcomers - all year 'round!

We augment our shul treasury with a latke cookoff every year. Anyone can enter. Even an anonymous member - we'll call her Yetta - who tried to buy a house without a kitchen, until her real estate agent fired her as a client. Once a year she attempts latkes. A gray, soggy mound of mush that would work well in the transmission of your car. When Yetta sets a skillet on the stove, oil futures skyrocket and the latke hotline is tied up all afternoon.

Herb the dreidler, since he can't be a Jewish mother, is the ultimate Jewish eater. He once begged Hilda to bake him a Chanukah turkey - stuffed with latkes. The other night at my kitchen table - inspired by a glass of Manishevitz - he told me his version of the Chanukah story:

"It was all a big culture clash," he says. "Greeks and their worship of beauty and the human anatomy vs. Judaism's accent on adornment of the soul. Those Selucids loved to work out," says Herb. "Why, they opened up fitness centers all over Jerusalem."

So here's a Jewish kid walking to Hebrew School and he passes a gym full of Selucids and their oiled-up sinewy bodies. "Hey kid, you're as pale as a bowl of goat's milk," yells a guy pumping a full-grown heifer over his head. "Lay out on the hillside with us and catch a few rays - then you can join our 1000K run to Beersheva."

Pale (but bright) Jewish kid: "I dunno. My folks said I should go to Heder this afternoon and then attend Maariv services at the synagogue."

Well, Herb oversimplifies. And he forgets to mention that Chanukah is our only holiday that comes from the Apocrypha - the books that didn't make the first team. But basically it WAS a clash of incompatible cultures.

Antiochus IV, the Homan of his day, wasn't content to collect taxes and sit on a golden throne and coexist with his conquered contentious subjects. He wanted to crush Judaism like you mash a thick latke with your spatula. And like we learn in Maccabees I and II, he filled the Temple with chazzerai - statues of gods and goddesses. Things were so bad, says Maccabee I, that rulers and elders groaned, girls and young men fainted away, and the beauty of the women was altered. "You know things are bad when the beauty of the women is altered and your best girl starts looking like Antiochus."

"That did it!" said the Hasmonean clan. Our long-suffering ancestors could take no more. They rose up like the narrow brooks of the Galilee turn into raging white water torrents during the rainy season. They stormed over their banks, carrying all before them.

After many battles, most of Jerusalem was liberated and the desecrated Temple was cleansed. The portrait of Antiochus was used as a chopping board to prepare the onions and potatoes for latkes.

The Temple's holy flame - the eternal light - was relit and miraculously it burned for eight days with only a single day's oil. That's why we celebrate for eight days.

Pesach, Purim, Chanukah - Holidays that commemorate first bondage, then deliverance. Our past, we should remember, is not only oppression, but liberation. This Chanukah, after latkes and dreidel, maybe a silent prayer of thanks would be well-received by He who makes history.



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