

Point of View

Each issue of the CJN will feature an article written by one of the three rabbis active in the Charlotte community.

**Rabbi
James M. Bennett
Temple Beth El**

With the secular new year comes a renewed sense of commitment to self-improvement. Who among us has not been tempted to add our own "New Year's Resolutions" to those offered by so many of our friends and neighbors? While we as Jews are particularly encouraged to do our New Year's introspection, "teshuvah," during the High Holy Days, there is something very Jewish about striving for teshuvah throughout the year. Such teshuvah includes repentance, but includes personal growth, reflection, and change as well.

We of the Jewish community of Charlotte are proud of the tremendous sense of unity engendered by Shalom Park. We share so much as a community, and our strength and success are in large part due to the cooperative venture embarked upon by those visionaries who created and built our buildings and institutions. The flourishing Jewish community we enjoy today is the direct result of their efforts.

But we must recognize the need for continued growth and vision as well, and therein lies the need for some individual and communal "teshuvah."

Recently, Rabbi Ezring and I taught and led the Post-confirmation class in an "Ask the Rabbis" session. Among the questions asked was "Why is there so much division within our Jewish community?" Our answer reflected both of our convictions that Charlotte is a uniquely united Jewish community. Shalom Park and other joint community programs and activities reflect this spirit of cooperation.

Still, in the time I have served in this community, I have

heard numerous examples of prejudice within our Jewish community. Cruel and mean-spirited comments from one part of the community aimed at another are common. Sarcasm, jokes and inferences of superiority or authenticity are examples of such attitudes. Comparisons or criticisms of one part of the community's observance or non-observance of Jewish ritual, attitude towards intermarriage or conversion, or commitment to Jewish continuity are frequent. Worst of all, perhaps, is that many of us in the community simply do not understand the beliefs and practices of the other members of our own Jewish community. Few members of this community can truly explain what each of the Jewish movements represented in Charlotte truly stand for, and fewer still recognize the need for a mutual commitment to K'lal Israel.

It is time for teshuvah on this and many other fronts. We need opportunities not simply to play together and celebrate together. We also need to be willing to admit that we can learn more about each other as Jews. We need to learn to accept that while we may not agree with each other, we can still co-exist and affirm each other as legitimate expressions of the Jewish spirit. We need to air the differences between us, and to celebrate our common vision. Our ancestors knew and understood this when they taught that "All of the people of Israel are responsible one for the other." May we, too, recognize our joint responsibility for each other and for our common dreams for our world.

Open House Set For Camp

Camp Barney Medintz, summer resident camp of The Atlanta Jewish Community Center, will present an exciting musical slide production in Charlotte on Thursday, January 25, 1996, at 7:00 P.M. at the Charlotte Jewish Community Center.

Jim Mittenthal, M. S. W., Camp Director, will meet with new and returning families, answer questions pertaining to the 1996 summer season, and provide

applications for registration. Camp Barney Medintz is located in the North Georgia Appalachian Mountains on over 500 acres of forests, lakes and streams just 75 miles from Atlanta.

According to Mr. Mittenthal, the setting facilitates dozens of exciting and unusual activities, including water-skiing, sailing, canoeing, leaping off "The Blob," horseback riding, campouts, whitewater rafting, tubing, theater, tennis, all land/

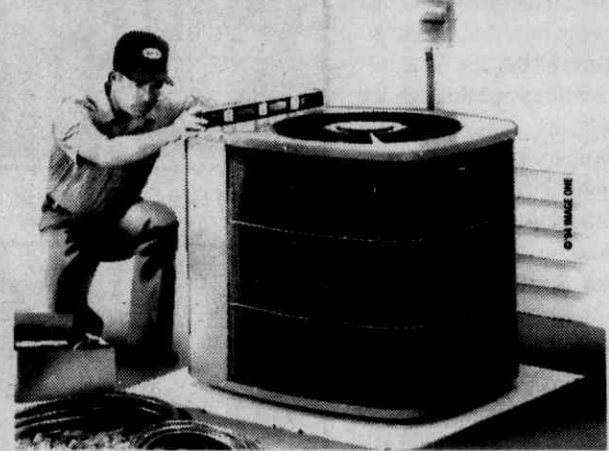
court sports, videography, crafts, music, Israeli culture, mountain biking, swimming, and a series of high-adventure rock climbing, rappelling and rope courses.

For more information, those interested may call the Camp office at (770) 396-3250, or the CBM Charlotte parent representative, Susan Jacobs at (704) 364-1922.



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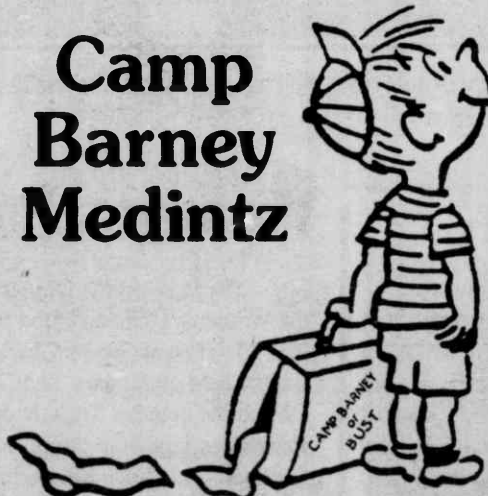


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For a 1996 application or more information on the most exciting camping adventure of your life, call the Camp Barney Medintz office, (770) 396-3250; or CBM Parent Representative Susan Jacobs, (704) 364-1922.

• PRESENTATION •

DATE: Thursday, January 25, 1996
TIME: 7:00 pm
PLACE: Charlotte Jewish Community Center
5007 Providence Road
(704) 366-5007

Operated by the Atlanta Jewish Community Center. Accredited by the American Camping Association

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