

Twenty-Nine Years of Yiddish Joy

By *Moishe Bienstock*

For 28 years, after each annual Charlotte Yiddish Institute Weekend at Wildacres, an article has been printed in the Jewish press extolling the event. You may well be inclined to ask what could possibly be said that hasn't already been said? The answer lies in the reality that each Institute is unique. Each is its own special combination of participants and performers. From first time attenders to those who have never missed an Institute, the shared love of the Yiddish language creates the desire to find actual ties or create family-like connections in order to build bridges to the past and bridges leading to the future.

Countless hours are spent in conversations exploring where people have lived and where they now live; exchanging stories drawn from life; enjoying the resulting laughter; sitting and rocking under the heavens, gazing at far off mountain peaks and singing in Yiddish, Hebrew, English and, more than any previous year, in Spanish. This year's participants included a sizeable number of knowledgeable Yiddish loving Jews from South America, Uruguay in particular, and former residents of Cuba. The singing that lasted late into the night found its instrumental accompaniment in complex drum rhythms and harmonies that blended deep base tones with soprano and tenor virtuosity. Many songs led to dancing from horas to tangos to square dancing in which the leader called out the instructions in Yiddish.

To a great extent, the spontaneity was stimulated by the magnificence of this year's two professional groups of musical performers, both of whom had overcome unexpected difficulties. Gene and Ali Kavadlo, clarinetist and violinist for Charlotte's Viva Klezmer, and also principle clarinetist and violist with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, learned just about a week before coming that their piano accompanist had injured her arm and would not be able to be with them. They turned to their friend pianist, Paul Nitsch, who immersed himself in learning and appreciating the emotions inherent in Klezmer music. And learn them he did, to the point where his performance seemed based on a lifetime of familiarity.



Ali Kavadlo, Cantor Robert Abelson, Martha Novick, Paul Nitsch, and Gene Kavadlo, the musical guests at the Yiddish Institute.

Cantor Robert Abelson also discovered at the last moment that his accompanist would not be able to be with him. He invited Cantor/pianist Martha Novick, who had performed at past Institutes, to attend. Martha's presence, personality and professionalism helped Cantor Abelson to perform at a level which brought repeated standing ovations from the Institutenecks.

The program of the Institute was rounded out with a class in beginning Yiddish, readings from Yiddish poetry and literature, humor, sharing of Yiddish childhood memories and performances by Institute participants in impromptu entertainment in the mid/late evening hours. To all this were added daily and Shabbat services conducted by Rabbi Michael Hecht and Cantor Saul Rubenstein. As part of the Shabbat morning services Yiddish was a strong presence in both the prayers and the Torah and Haftarah readings.

Most striking about the services was the emotional intensity of the congregation's participation in the melodies. They seemed to echo from the top of the mountain, with a sense that their sound and emotion stretched to the horizon and the heavens.

What also cannot and will not be forgotten are the sumptuous meals served by Wildacres, balanced by tables laden with platters of Jewish delicacies served after services, and in the evenings.

As the Institute drew to a close what was repeatedly heard was the sense of the extended family the participants had become. What was also heard is the desire to reach out and bring additional members into the family next year

and the years to follow, to continue the warmth, care and enjoyment that had been so wonderfully present at this 29th annual Charlotte Yiddish Institute. For information on the 2008 30th Yiddish Institute send an email to JohnBaila@aol.com or a letter to The Charlotte Yiddish Institute / LJCC, 5007 Providence Road, #111, Charlotte, NC 28226. Or call The Levine Jewish Community Center 704-366-5007. You will learn when and how you can be part of this joy enhancing, life-changing experience. ☆



Molly Lipschutz and Sarah Ackerman, roommates for the Yiddish Institute weekend.



Lisa Faulds, Paul Nitsch, and Marisa Rosenfeld.

Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community Establishes The Book of Life Society

By *Jill Newman and Margi Goldstein*

The end of summer brings with it Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah. These holidays challenge us to reflect on the past and celebrate the future. The temples are full with a mix of long time friends and relative newcomers mingling together in our ever-expanding community. We also remember friends and relatives who are no longer with us but live forever in our memories and for the legacies they leave behind.

Together, we have been part of this Charlotte community for more than 80 years. We enjoy watching our children and grandchildren embrace their Jewish heritage. It is the future that brings us together determined to strengthen our Jewish community for generations to come.

For this reason we have agreed to co-chair a committee to recognize those that have made provisions in their wills or estate plans to provide for one or more of the agencies serving our Jewish community. We both believe in it so much that we have each made provisions in our estate plans to provide for a number of Jewish organizations so they continue to receive our gifts in perpetuity. The Foundation of the Charlotte Jewish Community has established a society to recognize individuals that have made this commitment. It is called The Book of Life Society.

We have both served as board

members of the Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community. We believe in its mission to advance philanthropy through education and to raise permanent charitable resources to improve and strengthen the quality of Jewish religion, life and culture in the Charlotte area. We believe in the Foundation's leadership and the direction it is taking to more actively market itself throughout our Jewish community. It is our hope that the marketing efforts of the Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community and our other Jewish organizations will result in more people making deferred gifts to complement their annual giving.

The Book of Life Society will recognize anyone who has made any deferred gift of any amount. Our committee will determine how to honor Book of Life Society members, how to publicize the society, and help this society attain a significant role in our community. We want to acknowledge this kind of generosity because a deferred gift is a promise made to the next generation that the values of our Jewish heritage will be preserved, shared, and cherished by our children, and our children's children. It is our hope that we can help others understand the value of this society and have them join us as members.

Over the years, so many of our community members and friends have passed away without leaving any type of gift to benefit our Jewish community because they

were never asked. We want to learn from our past and help individuals structure meaningful gifts that will fill them with pride and purpose.

A meaningful gift is one that excites both the donor and the recipient. The best type of gift is one that matches the needs of an institution with the charitable interests of the individual donor. We are working as a community to improve our ability to make these matches. Phil Warshauer, the Director for Planned Giving at the Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community, has assisted us in structuring our gifts. We hope you'll take the time to ask him to assist you.

We're excited and honored to have been asked to help in the establishment of the Book of Life Society. We need your help to make it happen.

Jill Newman and Margi Goldstein are co-chairs of The Book of Life Society Committee. For more information or questions, please contact Phil Warshauer, Director for Planned Giving, at 704-973-4544 or pwarshauer@fftc.org. ☆



The group enjoys a traditional dance together.