

From the Editor

This June will mark ten full years that I have served as editor of *The Charlotte Jewish News*. From this seat, I have witnessed astonishing growth and maturity in this small community. Two large education wings for children from preschool through high school; a summer campsite of independent buildings for activities beyond imagination; a second swimming pool with slides and a splash area; expanded synagogues and additional religious choices in worship and education – all this in less than ten years.

The *Charlotte Jewish News* has always tried to keep up with this amazing growth. Our mission is to be the voice of this community and as it increases in size, both the number of agencies as well as the population, so must this newspaper. But with expanded responsibilities comes higher costs. And so we find ourselves needing to come to you, our loyal readers for help.

On the bottom of this page is our voluntary subscription form. Please look this over and consider making a donation to *The Charlotte Jewish News*. A return envelope has been inserted into the paper this month for your convenience.

Please remember that there are some agencies in the Jewish community that cannot communicate with you without *The Charlotte Jewish News*. Please help us maintain the high standards of reporting and breadth of communication that you have come to expect from *CJN* by sending your tax-deductible donation today.

Today rabah.

Letters to the Editor

Editor's Note: No single op-ed or article published has garnered more mail than the opinion expressed by Ruth and Julius Silverman last month regarding the establishment of a Jewish facility to house active seniors. By an overwhelming majority, the letters received agreed with the Silvermans. Following is a clarification on the situation by Eric Sklut, president of the Foundation of Shalom Park, a defense of the Oasis program by one of its participants, and one letter typical of those that agreed with the Silvermans.

The History of Senior Housing in Shalom Park

As President of the Foundation of Shalom Park, a native Charlottean, and long-time part of the Park leadership since its inception, I can attest to a variety of efforts for Seniors that I have been personally involved with, or that were presented to me over the past 24 years.

First and foremost, the Senior population is at the forefront of everyone's list nearly any time the Foundation meets to discuss growth with the JCC, Federation, and other agencies. As recently as a few months ago Butch and I were in a discussion regarding property acquisition that might have made something like this a reality. We even gathered up some of our "founding fathers" of the Park to discuss this. However, the sellers of the property had expectations of grandeur, wanting far more than their property was worth at the time, or might be worth in the next ten years. We still stay in contact with the property owners, and in fact, we met with them this week to further the discussion.

Even if we were to acquire property, that would not guarantee an immediate development. When Hal Levinson was President of the Foundation, he and I along with a handful of people went to this community to raise the dollars for our latest expansion at the Park. That effort was over the course of many long years, and raised a total of nearly \$40 million. Some of these pledges are still being paid.

It is not feasible to assume anyone, or any group, could raise the funds needed to build a Senior Center today. This does not mean we don't want to, nor does it mean we don't plan to. It just means the timing, the space, and the available resources are not in play.

The only housing anyone recalls was in a very early part of our master plan at the Park, in the early-mid 1980s. That drawing showed numerous items that did not come to fruition, or were altered or moved to other parts of the property.

[The] comment about money being raised and set aside is in error. There has never been any funding for Senior Housing that was set aside. There was no such "promise" that was dropped by any of us. There was significant funding for the Weinberg Senior Center along Main Street (Oasis), and those funds are fully engaged for that space. ... We have a very strong and engaged Board of Directors, who carry both a responsibility to and compassion for this community. We are in touch with every facet of the community, and each demographic is represented in the makeup of our Board. ...

In conclusion, Seniors are very important to our community and to the success of our Park. We are very much open to the idea of Senior Housing on or near Shalom Park. But until the funds and land are in place, it would be unreasonable to assume this could happen. And due to the timing of other campaigns currently underway, it would be difficult to raise this

money right now. We are, however, willing to listen to any group with ideas on how to make this happen.

Eric Sklut, President, Foundation of Shalom Park

Oasis Group Deserves More Recognition

As stated in the article there is a need for a kosher facility for the elderly in the city of Charlotte. It is my fervent prayer that the wonderful Jewish community in Charlotte will respond in a positive manner to see that this happens.

I arrived in Charlotte in 2005 after having lived in Englewood, NJ for many years. I have two daughters and their families living here. The ultimate decision to remain in Charlotte was due greatly to the Oasis Group at the JCC. That, together with my family and friends at Congregation Ohr HaTorah has given me a very happy, meaningful and fulfilling life.

The concept of the Op-Ed article and the needs of the elderly in Charlotte was on target. However, to call the Oasis Group a "barely adequate" program is something I very strongly disagree with. For me and I am sure many others the Oasis Group is a major blessing in our lives. Linda Bass, Senior Adult Program Director and Jodie Iagnocco, Adult Dept. Assistant, are doing a tremendous job in programming that includes field trips, educational programs, computer classes, senior exercise, drama, writing, poetry, health and wellness, exercise of the mind, first aid, craft projects, art, clay, tai chi, pickle ball, healing touch and meditation.

Once a month there is a general meeting and at that time the group can request any programs they would like to have added. Input from the seniors is definitely encouraged. Linda and Jodie are both caring, supportive and always available to listen and to respond to any senior who has a problem and needs help. May they go from strength to strength.

At this time in my life (age 73)

the Oasis Group more than fulfills my every need. Do I have concerns about the future? Yes, I do. I wish that I could have the peace of mind of knowing that there is a kosher facility that I can live in when the time comes that I will need it.

Since I have been in Charlotte I have seen that this is a caring Jewish community. I have no doubt that further improvements are on the agenda seeking ways to enhance the lives of the elderly.

May all who work to help the elderly be blessed.

Lynn Gelper

L'Dor v'Dor

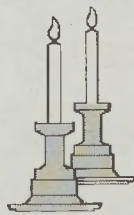
We commend Ruth and Julius Silverman for articulating the need for a Jewish Retirement Home in Charlotte. We have lived in Charlotte for 33 years and remember well what limited Jewish facilities were available in Charlotte, where one could congregate and meet.

A group of our Jewish community leaders conceived a brilliant solution, namely Shalom Park, which today is the envy of larger Jewish communities throughout the U.S. Shalom Park was conceived to be a place where all Jewish groups could meet and socialize, but especially, it was to be a place where our children could meet and get to know each other in a Jewish environment. The original plan included space for a Jewish Retirement Home. This has not materialized. During the years that we have lived here, we have supported the endeavors to enrich Jewish life in Charlotte. Now that we are of the older generation, and will in the near future have the need to move into a Retirement Home, there are no Jewish options for us. A non-Jewish solution will not work for us. We are certain that the leadership that conceived and implemented Shalom Park, can understand our dilemma. Other communities the size of Charlotte, have Jewish Retirement Homes. If we put our efforts into it, so can Charlotte. *L'dor v'dor.*

Irving and Lillian Bienstock

SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING FOR MAY 2008

- Friday, May 2, 7:52 PM
- Friday, May 9, 7:57 PM
- Friday, May 16, 8:03 PM
- Friday, May 23, 8:08 PM
- Friday, May 30, 8:13 PM



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