

The Jewish Traveler

By Maxine Silverstein

BUENOS AIRES

I've always wanted to go to Argentina. It was definitely one of the top destinations on my "travel wish list." This past April, we had the opportunity to travel to Buenos Aires. We were honored by American Express for being one of their top agencies in the country.

Buenos Aires is the glamorous capital of Argentina. This beautiful city is often called the Paris of South America, although the city is a relative bargain. What fun to stroll through the wonderful

neighborhoods of Recoleta or Palermo, full of buildings with marble neo-classical facades on broad tree-lined boulevards or tour the historic Agenda de Mayo, which was designed to rival Paris's Champs Elysees. European immigrants to Buenos Aires, mostly from Spain and Italy, brought with them the warm ways of Mediterranean culture, where friends, family, and conversation were the most important things in life.

This city is also home to fabulous restaurants, incredible Argentina wine, wonderful boutiques for beautiful leather goods, tango bars, and an incomparable amount of theaters and all available at reasonable prices. Buenos Aires's vast array of museums is as exquisite as the treasures these museums hold inside.

Argentina is the second largest nation in Latin America and boasts the largest Jewish community in the region. From an open door policy of immigration to the

harboring of Nazi war criminals, Argentina's Jews have faced periods of peaceful coexistence and periods of intense anti-Semitism. Jews first settled in Argentina in 1492. In 1860, the first Jewish wedding was recorded in Buenos Aires. A couple of years later, a minyan met for High Holiday services and eventually formed the Congregacion Israelita de la Republica.

We were able to visit this synagogue and it is amazing to see. The Byzantine-style building is one of the stars of Plaza Libertad. The synagogue is also known as



Gary and Maxine get a tango lesson.

greatest Jewish centers, this is the only kosher McDonald's in the world outside of Israel. Located in the Abasto Shopping Center food court, there is no dairy at all. Rabbinic supervision makes sure that kosher rules are strictly followed here.

Do take time to have a tango lesson. We were lucky to experience a session at the Café Tortoni. This is the oldest coffee shop in the country built in 1658 and has a rich history

of visits from intellectuals, politicians and artists. You can't come to Buenos Aires and not visit this important institution. This the perfect place for a tango lesson and what fun we had – great exercise, too.

This is an incredible city to visit. We were fortunate to stay at the Alvear Palace Hotel, one of the most elegant hotels that we have ever visited. The food, service and ambiance were five-star deluxe. The hotel's location in the Recoleta district is perfect for dining, shopping and sightseeing. When a city is as wonderful to visit as Buenos Aires, it seems no matter how long you spend there, it's never enough. Buenos Aires is definitely a place that never sleeps. I can't wait to go back and visit again. ✨



Congregacion Israelita de la Republica



Maxine and Gary at the Kosher McDonald's in Buenos Aires.

"Libertad" because of its location. The Libertad synagogue was dedicated in 1932. The small building housing the temple's administrative office also contains the Jewish History Museum, known also as

the Museo Kibrick after its founder. You'll find material related to the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, with both Sephardic and Ashkenazi items from their homelands. Menorahs, altar cloths, spice holders, and various pieces of religious art make up the bulk of the collection. Argentina's Jewish community numbers more than 250,000; of that, 200,000 live in Buenos Aires. Most of Buenos Aires's synagogues are traditional. There are 50 Orthodox synagogues, 21 Conservative synagogues and a few Reform synagogues. Most of the synagogues built before World War II are still in use today. Certainly we didn't come all the way to Argentina to eat at a McDonald's, but the one in Buenos Aires is certainly unique. In keeping with Buenos Aires's reputation as one of the world's

Schools

Charlotte Delegation Attends 2010 PEJE Assembly in Baltimore

Over 1100 participants from North America, Canada, Australia and Panama –heads of school, board chairs and members, development professionals, and leaders from federations, central agencies for Jewish education, and foundations – had the opportunity to engage in a national conversation about institutional sustainability and affordability, the shifting con-

text of leadership, and the relationship of day schools with the communities they serve. Over the course of the three-day conference, more than 100 sessions, labs, keynote presentations, and events focused on core elements of day school sustainability including the role of professional and volunteer leadership; the power of case-based learning for

professional development, institutional change and community building, and promoting the value proposition of Jewish day school education.

Mariashi Groner, Richard Osborne, Julia Greenfield, Gale Osborne and Alison Lerner attended the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) conference representing Charlotte Jewish Day School (CJDS). "It was very exciting to meet so many professionals and volunteers who work at a variety of Jewish Day Schools from across the US and Canada. Speaking with them exposed us to many different ways of addressing challenges. The commitment to advancing Jewish education is consistent, but the approaches vary. It was a great learning experience," Richard commented.

The assembly was a source of inspiration to Mariashi because one of the most confirming and validating outcomes of this conference was finding that the purchase decisions that were made as a school after winning the \$500,000 Kohl's Cares award were in line with best practices in education, encouraging recruitment and building enrollment.

One of the goals that CJDS has set forth is to enroll in the global classroom program that the National Association for Independent School (NAIS) sponsors. The NAIS program provides an opportunity for schools to partner with classrooms in another country to solve a specific global problem. It was very exciting to hear NAIS president, Patrick Bassett, speak at the plenary session and to hear him point specifi-

cally to the global classroom as one of the indicators of 21st century education.

Another workshop that was attended by the group from CJDS was run by one of the schools in the Solomon Schechter network of schools, where they shared how they attracted students to their schools from local respected private schools. A school bus, science lab, and upgraded technology were all on their strategic plan, all of which proved to be wise choices. Once these improvements were put into place, their enrollment grew steadily. Wouldn't you know that these improvements are also on the CJDS Kohl's Care for Education contest spending plan?

Julia Greenfield left the conference with a renewed understanding of the importance of a strong relationship between Jewish day schools and the communities they serve. She said, "As most of us know, there is strength in numbers, there is strength in supporting one another and there is power in having strong relationships. This message was present at some level throughout the course of the lectures/conversations in which I was a participant, whether the focus of the session was on the relationship between day schools and their communities, building a committed donor and alumni base or fundraising and the financial health of the school. Strong day school/community relationships are vital in supporting the message of a Jewish day school, vital in all fundraising efforts and vital to a day school's enrollment."

"The most important thing that came out of this conference for me was seeing the passion people had

and the importance, and value that people from around the country placed on Jewish Education. It's not a luxury or even an option, it's an imperative. We've got to figure out ways to attract more prospective families, and to financially support those who want the education but cannot afford it," Alison Lerner remarked.

Of special interest to Assembly attendees and stakeholders within the Jewish day school field was a surprise announcement during the opening plenary. PEJE's Executive Director Rabbi Joshua Elkin stated that PEJE has committed an initial one million dollars in cash to fuel the financial sustainability and affordability efforts of Jewish day schools in 2010-2011.

"PEJE is excited to launch this focused capacity-building initiative to strengthen development efforts across the Jewish day school field," Elkin said. "The investment is intended to stimulate and ignite aggressive affordability programs and support collaborative community work, with the goal of helping schools maintain academically excellent, financially sustainable institutions."

"The PEJE Assembly always feels to me like a giant celebration – 1100 people from across the continent deeply committed to day school education coming together to gain inspiration, ideas and new friends," Prager said.

Once again, the PEJE conference transformed and encouraged all who attended! Fresh ideas coupled with optimistic outlooks will foster far-reaching progress for the Charlotte Jewish Day School. ✨

No one has yet fully realized the wealth of sympathy and kindness and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true educator should be to unlock that treasure – to stimulate the child's impulses and call forth the best and noblest tendencies.

– Emma Goldman

Saturday, January 8
Gates open at 7:30 pm

Samuel R. Grier Center for Cultural Arts

\$36/person
\$30/person - by December 15

Admission includes:
Drink, Track Snacks, & "Gambling" Money

For reservations, contact
704.366.4558 or gosborne@cjdschool.org

A Night at the Races

To benefit the Charlotte Jewish Day School

MICHELLE RUSGO / CHAIRPERSON