

## Community News

# Song, Spirit, Yiddishkeit in Full Force at 34th Annual Charlotte Yiddish Institute

By Michael J. Solender

Nearly 100 from across the U.S. enjoyed four days of Yiddish programming including music, storytelling and the Blue Ridge.

They came from Los Angeles, CA, Washington, DC, Crown Heights, NY, Rockville, MD, and Boca Raton, FL. There was a large contingent from Charlotte, of course, and nearby Carolina towns of Durham, Hendersonville, and Huntersville. For four glorious song-filled days, the burdens of aging and distance between friends were lifted and replaced by spirits kindled anew in the crisp Blue Ridge Mountain air of Little Switzerland, NC.

Here at WildAcres retreat, nearly 100 intrepid souls from virtually every corner of the country came to share in *hawerschaft*,



The attendees of the 34th Yiddish Institute at Wildacres.

camaraderie, storytelling, song, and nature's splendor. The 34th annual Charlotte Yiddish Institute held August 16-19 was much anticipated and completed far too soon for the *balebetishen yidden* in attendance.

When the group assembled for initial introductions including the

origins of their parents and grandparents, the lineage shared was a road map from the Jewish Diaspora dating back to the 1400s. Odessa, Warsaw, Minsk, Pinsk, Vienna, Budapest, Galicia, Berlin, Paris, and the Bronx were all amongst the roots of those at the rustic retreat. With a smattering of first-time attendees and a number attending for more

than a decade, Thursday's new acquaintances were Sunday's *mishpoche* as the communal nature of the long weekend encouraged exchange and dialogue through numerous classes, readings, services, and song.

Jewish music was indeed the true highlight of the weekend as

each day's programming was peppered with both formal concerts and informal, Hazzan-led singing and dancing. Special guest performers included:

\* **Joyce Rosenzweig**, an acclaimed pianist and arranger from New York City. She is a dedicated educator of cantors and synagogue musicians, having served over twenty-five years on the faculty of Hebrew Union College-School of Sacred Music where she is both Artist-in-Residence and professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary since 2004.

\* **Robert Paul Ableson**, noted cantor who has received recognition as a concert and opera performer.

\* **Hazzan Moische Freidler**, spirited former Hazzan for the Congregation ACIBA, the Israeliita Community of Buenos Aires and in Mexico City for the largest synagogue in the city.



Abe Luski tells Yiddish stories at the 34th Yiddish Institute.

\* **Gene Kavadlo**, Principal clarinetist with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra since 1975 and founder/leader of Viva Klezmer!, an enthusiastic ensemble that tours extensively in and around the Southeast.

\* **Alice Kavadlo**, Principal Violinist with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, active participant in local chamber music concerts and violinist with Viva Klezmer!

\* **Paul "Pesach" Nitsch**, pianist and professor of music at Queens University where he is also Artistic Director for the Friends of Music.

Klezmer music, folk songs, traditional Jewish melodies, and music from the Jewish liturgical catalog were augmented by Jewish inspired theater music and even contemporary Jewish influenced Hollywood scores were shared in a series of concerts, each seemingly topping the last.

In addition to the above performers, Institute participants were treated to the lovely singing voices of Elana Rosen-Brown, a student of both Rosenzweig and Ableson and recently appointed cantor, and Cantor Martha Novick of Temple Emanu-El in Westfield, NJ.

Perennial favorite Yiddish readings by Abraham Luski had the crowd in stitches as his assorted *bubbe meises* and comic stories from Yiddish masters were punctuated by animation, facial expressions and gestures developed over years of retelling and practice – even novice Yiddish students could easily follow along. Ever the charmer, Luski knew how to tug at the heart-strings as well with his own poetry honoring his children drafted many years ago left few dry eyes in the audience for its touching poignancy.

Mother Nature cooperated with crisp cool mornings, sunny afternoon skies and star filled evenings that for this group of revelers went well into the early hours in song after song. ☆



Josh Kipnis, Junior  
Vanderbilt, Sports Journalism

CJDS pointed me in the right direction!



I can't imagine there are many people that can say their elementary school had a profound impact on their life. But then again, most people didn't attend the Charlotte Jewish Day School.

CJDS is a special place, beyond compare, that exudes warmth, caring and...yes, academic rigor...lots of it.

Without CJDS, I would have never learned my potential as a student. I would have never been able to attend a school like Vanderbilt University. And I certainly never would have dreamed of becoming a published writer.

Without CJDS, I never would have found my Jewish identity at eighteen and become North Carolina Council's BBYO President. And I never would have learned the words to the *Modeh Ani*, a prayer that, to this day, I say each and every morning when I wake up.

Lastly, without CJDS, I never would have met my three best friends: Ryan, Andrew, and Sam. I count myself fortunate to know these incredible guys, and over time we've established lifelong friendships that simply cannot be replaced.

CJDS, in one way or another, has impacted nearly every aspect of who I am today, and for that, I am forever grateful to call myself a CJDS alum.

Open House! October 24, 9:30-11am OR October 25, 12:30-2pm  
Parents, please join us! RSVP to 704-366-4558 or bfoxx@cjdsschool.org