

opinion

Danger: Israelis At the Wheel

by Alan Levant

Israelis are notorious drivers; many more people are injured and killed in car accidents each year than by terrorist activities.

Aggression and poor driver training are the major reasons for the well deserved reputation of Israeli drivers, according to Shimon Hyon, claims manager of Israel's largest insurance agency, Pel Tours Insurance.

"People live under great stress and pressure here," Hyon explained. "They take out their tension behind the wheel. I'm not sure the Israeli driver is worse than other drivers in the world but they do drive poorly."

Hyon feels that Israeli drivers tend to overestimate the capacity of their automobiles and exhibit too much self-confidence. Serious collisions sometimes result because a driver just will not allow another to pass.

"We need to develop a program to teach our drivers to be more polite and considerate," Hyon explained. "Unfortunately, we hear about the Israeli coming back from the U.S.A. or Europe speaking about how nice people abroad drive but they don't seem to change their habits once they are back."

In 1976, Israel instituted no-fault insurance which provides unlimited payments from the insurance companies to each participant in an accident. Hyon expects insurance to greatly increase, although exact classifications and charges will probably take 3-4 years to develop. The schedules could not simply be developed along the highest accident rate highest premium ratio. For example, motorcycles and scooters are the most dangerous vehicles on the road. "However," Hyon commented, "most of the drivers are too poor to purchase cars, so where is the justice if they must pay the highest premiums?"

Academy Temples Stage Hanukah Arts Festival

A fire in the boiler room at Temple Beth El on December 17, 1978 meant no heat for the Hanukah Arts Festival that afternoon, but over one hundred fifty children and parents generated their own warmth singing and dancing at the Hebrew Academy sponsored event.

The festival was an intra-community project involving children from the Academy, Temple Israel daily school and Temple Beth El. Students from all three schools exhibited art on Hanukah and Jewish themes. Beth El youngsters submitted imaginative menorahs made from all kinds of materials, even a paper plate. Temple Israel's four year olds showed bread dough sculpture. The kindergarten and first grade students from the Academy displayed batik pillows and older students, linoleum block prints.

Rabbi Sanford Tucker served as master of ceremonies. Dressed in white shirts and sweaters, Academy second through sixth graders sang several contemporary American and Israeli songs, in Hebrew and English, relating to Hanukah and peace. They danced an Israeli dance led by Renee Tucker. The Academy kindergarten and first graders also danced and sang.

Four year olds from Temple Israel, under the direction of Lila Josephson, joined with Academy five and six year olds to sing and dance to Israeli dances. The Temple Israel students, dressed in bright red, also sang a spirited version of "Am Yisroel Chai" punctuated with raised fists.

Rose Massachi of the Hebrew Academy and Lila Josephson co-ordinated the refreshments for the festival.

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Send Us Your News

Have a story the Jewish community should know about?

Want to announce a public event, voice an opinion or send us a photo?

The NEWS deadline is the 8th of the month prior to an issue's publication date. If you want a news item to appear in February, give us the information in writing, typed and double-spaced by January 8th. Mail to: Charlotte Jewish NEWS, c/o J.C.C., P.O. Box 220188, Charlotte, N.C. 28222.

Guidelines for putting your news item in proper form are available from the NEWS editor, Ann Langman. Photos must be black and white glossies.

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Federation Acquires New Name

The Charlotte Federation of Jewish Charities at its November meeting adopted a resolution to change its name to the Charlotte Jewish Federation. This was done as a way of indicating its expanded role in community affairs and its deep-felt obligation to serve the entire community in all necessary capacities.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS WAS HELD. Harry Lerner succeeds Morris Speizman as President of the Federation. In his comments upon taking office Mr. Lerner praised Mr. Speizman's leadership over the past two years, pointing out the many areas of Federation growth and achievement which had taken place during his administration.

JCC Plans Return Visit To Caracas

Plans are now being made for a group from the Jewish Community Center to visit the Jewish community in our Sister City, Caracas, Venezuela, during spring vacation, Saturday, April 14th to Saturday, April 21st. After the successful visit here last summer by the children and adults from Hebraica, this return trip will focus on culture as well as provide opportunity for sports.

The children ages nine to thirteen, will be housed with families. If older children wish to go, our friends in Caracas can make arrangements for these children also.

Being planned at Hebraica, are a community Seder, trips of interest around Caracas, sporting competitions, and other exciting events for our week long visit.

The cost per child will be \$280.00 which will cover everything except spending money. For further information call Sara Schreibman at the J.C.C. 366-0357.

JCC Hosts Great Decisions Course

Great Decisions, a nationwide program in its 25th year, will be presented under the auspices of U.N.C.C. at the Jewish Community Center. The purpose of the program is to learn and understand the major foreign policy issues facing the United States today. To participate in this eight-week Lecture-Discussion course, you need only to attend and purchase the book, which will be available prior to the beginning class. At the end of the session, an opinion ballot may be filled out on each of the issues, which will be tabulated countrywide by Columbia University. The results will then be presented to Congress, The White House, and the National Media. The following are the topics to be covered:

Feb. 8th, The Technology Explosion, How to Harness it for Peaceful Change - Professor, Carlos Bell (Dept. of English - U.N.C.C.)

Feb. 15th. Trade and the Dollar, Coping with Interdependence, Professor Harry Chernotsky (Pol. Sci. - U.N.C.C.)

Feb. 22nd. NATO & The Russians, Will the East-West Balance Hold? Professor Harold Josephson (Dept. of History - U.N.C.C.)

March 1st. Dealing with China, What's at Stake - In Asia & the World? Professor Lowell Ashman (Dept. of History - Lenoir-Rhyne College)

March 8th. The U.S. and Latin America, Facing New Facts of Power? Professor Lyman Johnson (Dept. of History - U.N.C.C.)

March 22nd. Black Africa: More Weight in U.S. Policy Scales? Professor K. David

Also elected were Sol Shapiro, Shelton Gorelick and Ira Schulman as Vice Presidents; Stanley Greenspon as Secretary and Robert Abel as Treasurer. Elected to three year terms on the board were Paul Fligel, Ruth Goldberg, William Gorelick, Richard Klein, John Pransky, Celia Scher, Al Segal, Marilyn Shapiro, Robert Speizman and Paul Stewart.

Division Chairpersons for the 1979 Campaign were also announced.

Leading the major gifts division of \$5000 and over will be Sol Shapiro, Paul Stewart and Herman Blumenthal. The \$2-5000 division leaders are John Pransky and Abe Luski; \$1-2000 gifts will be led by Stan Greenspon and Richard Klein. Gifts of \$500-1000 will be chaired by Paul Edelstein and Larry Farber; while Mort Turk, Richard Goodman and David Checkner will be in charge of the \$100-500 division.

French Hill School

by Leslie Fried

JERUSALEM — Israel's school system, split between 'state' and 'religious state' tracts, has long underscored the general schism between Israel's religious and secular populations.

Yet some Israelis, however benignly they accepted the dichotomy between religious and non-religious, wanted their children to receive a Jewish — though not Orthodox — education. They were apprehensive that their children might grow to think of themselves as "Israelis," less and less as Jews.

As a result, at Givat Shapiro State School #2 in Jerusalem's French Hill quarter a group of parents have sought to inject more Jewish content into the State school curriculum. In 1974, citing an obscure provision of the State Education Law which places an optional 25% of the curriculum at the discretion of local parents, they petitioned the Ministry of Education for permission to introduce a religious course of study with a traditional, yet open approach to Judaism.

"Religious schools here are exclusivistic," writes Reuven Hammer of the Conservative movement rabbinic school, the Jewish Theological Seminary. "They will not tolerate

youngsters who do not follow a traditional pattern of life. By attempting to control the outside lives and extra-curricular activities of their pupils, they effectively shut the doors of religious education to the non-observant youngster."

State schools, on the other hand, try unsuccessfully to inculcate "Jewish consciousness." Jewish subjects are taught only a few hours a week by teachers often apathetic of antagonistic to the spirit of the teaching. Hebrew language and literature are secularized. The students, roughly 70% of Israeli children, know only sections from the Bible and something of the festivals, with little other religious education.

The new curriculum is roughly parallel to courses in the religious schools, but unlike them, religious studies are open to boys and girls on an equal basis. The two sexes attend integrated services each morning; learning the prayers, their meaning and background. Bible, festivals, history, values, and literature are taught in all classes and the fourth grade begins Mishnah and Talmud. Boys must wear kippot only during prayers, religious studies, and meals.

Classes average 20 students and learning standards are high. This year the first grade completed the government required course of study in half the usual time. The same class learning script in a month. First grade students in an extra-curricular English course became fluent in both languages — those from English speaking homes now read on a par with third or fourth graders in America.

"The approach," says principal Barbara Levin, "is straight tradition. This is our masoret (tradition), and this is what our masoret says."

Again unlike the religious schools, no faith or ritual demands are made of the children or parents. There are no "shuls" or "shouldn't's." Observance, above all, is a family matter.

Despite this, the probing and enthusiastic response of the students to their religious studies has prompted many families to become more traditional.

B'nai B'rith Lecture Series

The Charlotte Lodge of B'nai B'rith will be presenting its annual lecture series this winter. Through the generosity of patrons they have been able to secure contemporary and controversial speakers. All the lectures will be held on Sunday evenings at 8 p.m. at the J.C.C. with no admission charge.

Don Rottenberg, author of A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy, will speak on "Finding Our Fathers" on January 14, 1979. On February 18, James Rudin, a Rabbi experienced in the Jewish response to evangelical religious and cult groups, will speak on "The Challenge of the New Religious Cults". Max Dimont, who has appeared on the lecture series before, and who is releasing a new book this month, will speak on "American Judaism, Wasteland or Renaissance". Mr. Dimont, who is best known for his book "Jews, God and History", will speak on March 18, 1979.

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