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Wearer of Many Hats — Man of Many Talents

An Interview with Marvin Bienstock

by Ruth Goldberg

Marvin Bienstock has worn two hats since he arrived in Charlotte six years ago. From his office at 600 North Sharon Amity Road, he served as Director of the Jewish Community Center and Director of the Charlotte Jewish Federation. Marvin officially removed his JCC hat on June 1, and donned a new hat, that of Director of the Community Foundation Project. He will continue to be Director of Federation.

In reviewing the past six years, Marvin spoke of how the Jewish Community Center has served as a common meeting ground for various groups to get together. Rather than fracturing the existing institutions and organizations, the JCC has helped to strengthen each of these groups by complementing each one's needs for recreational, educational, and/or social activities that respected the individual integrity of each group. Marvin added, "There have been times when we've goofed unintentionally, but in each case, we've tried to go back and undo problems. On the whole, I think we've succeeded. The greatest proof of this success is that all the organizations and institutions that were in Charlotte six years ago are still here, stronger and more active than before; in addition, there is a strong Jewish Community Center."

One of the strengths of the Center, according to Marvin, has been the communication between the professional and lay leaders of the various Jewish institutions. It's been a two-way street. The JCC or temples or clubs might initiate an idea or request consideration of an activity. Mostly the JCC board bent to the needs of other organizations. An example of cooperation was the plan-

ning for Friday night services the weekend that the Venezuelan soccer team visited. Marvin called the Rabbis and asked if everyone could worship together outdoors on the JCC grounds. One Rabbi felt that Shabbat services should be held in a temple; therefore, the temples decided to sponsor one joint service in a sanctuary, and the entire community prayed together with the Venezuelans. The ball games and other activities took place at the JCC.

When Marvin first came to Charlotte, some people wondered what he would have to do at the Center after the summer ended and the swimming pools closed. Little did anyone dream that an active twelve-months-of-the-year Center would not only require one part-time director, but additional staffing of professional and volunteer lay leaders would be needed for adult, senior citizen, children and family programming and activities. Several office workers were required also. The professional staff offers help to all organizations and institutions by serving as resource people to whom the volunteers can turn. People who belong to the Center feel there's a staff and lay leaders who care about the membership and are willing to set up programs to meet their needs. Members coming into the Center can see staff personnel any time of the day. The staff, in turn, calls on the appropriate lay leaders to coordinate activities.

When asked how he feels about his new position as Director of the Community Project, Marvin replied, "The Project is the ultimate example of the need for each institution to keep its own identity. A group of community leaders gave land to the community and contributed

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Project Box Score

As promised in the last issue of the *News*, the Building Committee has been hard at work coordinating the wishlists and has turned the preliminary results over to the architects. They, in turn, have been surveying the building site and preparing site plans for the various facilities.

In order to better develop these plans, the architect and the Building Committee are preparing to travel to a variety of communities to view recently constructed JCCs and Temples. Through the cooperation of the Jewish Welfare Board and the Conservative and the Reform national organizations, a list of such communities is being prepared. In addition, the committee and the architect will have access to the plans of numerous other facilities.

Determining where to visit has not been easy. All three of the national organizations have reconfirmed the fact that the Project is a first, and therefore there are no even remotely similar physical facilities on which it can be based. However, different communities have certain aspects of what Charlotte hopes to build. For example, one place may have a day school in a JCC, another may have well developed outdoor facilities on a site as large as Charlotte's, a third may have a Temple with attached recreational facilities, while a fourth may combine the needs of one temple and a JCC.

One thing is certain: with each new step being taken, more and more national focus is being turned on Charlotte as a possible prototype for future Jewish community life. This mitzvah of being the first does have its problems. One of the greatest is the need to proceed slowly and cautiously. This often leaves you, the community, feeling as if no progress is being made when, in reality, it simply requires tremendous effort to make continual, positive progress.

As a way of keeping you more closely informed and informed in great detail, the Foundation has selected a public relations committee whose task began with a recent letter to you from Mr. Herman Blumenthal. This committee will continue to develop mailings, printed materials and other ways of keeping you posted.

(See the "wishday" photographs on page 12.)

Charlotte Yiddish Institute

The wooden arrow, with deeply ingrained lettering, announcing the dirt road off the Blue Ridge Parkway as the approach to "Wildacres," is a deceptively simple marker. It hardly prepares the uninitiated for the glorious ascent awaiting them. Every curve of the road leading to the summit reveals awesome views of mountain ranges, lush forest growth, and for the springtime visitor a delicate sprinkling of early blossoms. The natural splendors of this environment serve as a gateway to Wildacres, a mountaintop retreat established by the Blumenthal Foundation for the betterment of human relations. For those attending the sold-out

Charlotte Yiddish Institute at Wildacres, April 30 to May 3, this was an apt prelude to the soul stirring weekend ahead.

Yiddish was the motivating force of the four-day Institute, bringing together devoted Yiddishists, many of whom travelled great distances, and all intensely interested in the history, tradition, culture and future of Yiddish. The pace never slackened, the riches of *Mameh Losh'n* spilling over into every facet of the Institute's full schedule. Lectures and workshops bore a variety of themes, from "Yiddish Dreams, Yankee Facts," "Sholom

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Panitz Resigns

Dr. Stephen Fishman, President of the Hebrew Academy, announced that Raphael Panitz, Director of the Academy, has tendered his resignation and will not return to the school this coming September. Mr. Panitz will be working on his doctorate in Biblical Studies

which he expects to obtain from the U. of Pennsylvania in the near future.

Dr. Fishman also announced that the Academy's Education Committee is presently seeking a replacement and expects to make an announcement in the near future.

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