

## Random Thoughts... by Muriel Levitt

If you have never been at or gone to an old time wedding in the East Bronx, then this column may come as a revelation. However, if you have been an invited guest to such a simcha, then you'll know that everything I write is gospel.

Most wedding halls in the 1930's and 1940's were large lofts located right about assorted retail stores. An incredibly long staircase had to be climbed before you reached chasenah heaven. Once you puffed your way to the top the first stop was a coat room with an attendant. On a shelf you immediately spotted a saucer holding a few dollar bills. This was to remind you that individual tipping was requested since in those days such responsibility did not belong to the host. You had to ransom any and all belongings parked there for the evening.

The hall itself was immense and terribly attractive. Walls were covered with heavy damask and the windows were draped in matching cloth. For some reason I could never fathom, the color was always a hideous yellow gold, maybe to give the affect of opulence and class. It didn't work.

Before the ceremony, the bride was hidden from view in an adjoining room. She sat upon a large, carved thronelike chair and only female friends and relatives were permitted to gaze on such startling beauty. Although the groom was busy socializing and bolstering his courage with a schnapps of two, she was in nervous seclusion. The fewer people who saw her, the more oohs and ahs there would be when she walked down the aisle.

The bride, the bridesmaids, mothers, aunts and other female relatives all wore gowns made by lower east side couturieres. These dressmaking shops catered to every figure and every purse. They created designs to suit each individual at prices that would seem ridiculous today. True, they were a bit ornate, but going all out for a family wedding was the way it was done.

The groom and his ushers sported rented tuxedos. There were no fancy colors. A tuxedo was black and that was it. Sleeves were too long and pants were too short. A really good fitting suit was rarely to be seen. None of this counted. Everyone was too excited to pay attention to such a detail as proper tailoring. They were dressed up and they were there, and that's all that really mattered.

The ceremony itself took place in a separate room referred to as "The Chapel." A room it was, a chapel it wasn't. However, all the necessary ingredients were present. There was a rabbi, a chuppah, and the lucky couple - everything that was necessary for a nice Jewish

wedding. The participants marched down the aisle to the music of a three piece band and appropriate comments from the guests. Everyone was happy, the mood was jubilant, and the groom crushed the wine glass with just one zetz. Shouts of Mazel Tov rang free.

Next came the dinner. The waiters who worked these affairs are a vanishing breed, if they haven't gone altogether. They were elderly men who had retired from restaurant jobs. Their union kept them solvent by assigning them to weddings. All of them wore ancient tuxedos with the greenish tinge of age. Many were infirm and walked with a shuffling gait resulting from so many years of being on their feet. Almost uniformly they were testy and ill humored, too old to work yet too young to remain idle.

The meal itself was the same no matter who did the catering. Each table had a dish of sour pickles and tomatoes, a plate of olives and celery, and abundant sliced challah. A bottle of ginger ale and one of seltzer (the kind with the shpritzer handle) stood like two sentinels flanking a fifth of rot gut rye. We had not yet grown sophisticated enough to appreciate scotch.

Fruit cup, chicken noodle soup, roast chicken with kishkeh, potatoes, plus peas and carrots followed. The inevitable dessert was fruit ices and a cookie. The finale was tea or black coffee.

Immediately following the beverage, your waiter passed around a plate filled with toothpicks. This was your cue to take a toothpick and deposit a dollar bill on the plate. The hosts did not spring for the tip, you did.

All through the meal and long after, the band hocked and banged away. Everyone danced. There were plenty of horas, lots of jittersbugging and ample waltzes so that everyone got a chance to show off. Grandpas danced with little girls, mamas danced with sons, and small kids slid back and forth across the highly polished dance floor.

On and on it went into the wee hours of the morning. Bottles and bottles of schnapps were guzzled, mountains of cookies were consumed and both sides of the meshpuchah enjoyed a temporary truce to share in the festivities.

Well, many years have passed. We now hold weddings in classy hotels with elegant surroundings and gourmet meals. Cheap liquor has been replaced by fine wine and imported spirits. No more three piece bands, no more rude waiters, and no more toothpicks. Today we strive for refinement and propriety.

As for me, I'll go wherever you invite me. But for a really hotsy-totsy evening, find me a tacky hall, chicken soup, kishkeh, and a waiter in a moldy green tuxedo. That's what I call really living!

## L' Chaim

By L. Louis Albert, ACSW  
Director Federation  
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A month has gone by and you're still looking for that certain job. You've discovered that it's not going to be as easy as you had hoped. Many, many people are out there looking for employment. In the last article I discussed the process of defining your job requirements as the necessary start to a serious job search. Now I would like to suggest to you some of the ways to research possible resources and job opportunities.

Keep in mind that looking for a satisfying job is hard work. It takes a lot of organized effort and cannot be done in an hour or two every few days. So before you do anything else firmly determine that you're going to put your full time effort into this search.

The first step is to get a pad of paper to list down resources and companies that may fit in your needs. Writing things down not only helps those of us with less than perfect memories, but it also allows you to see how many contacts you've made and with what result.

Most of the 'good' jobs are not advertised openly. This means that you must go and literally dig them out. Let people know that you're looking for a job. Tell your friends, relatives and acquaintances that you're in the market for a new job. Most people are reluctant to do this because they view unemployment with some embarrassment. However, expanding your sphere of contact can only result in more potential leads. Now is not the time to be shy.

Researching the job market can be overwhelming if you don't know where to start. Two excellent and overlooked resources are published by the Greater Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, and can be purchased at the Chamber of Com-

merce or consulted at the Public Library. "Charlotte/Mecklenburg Major Employers" list companies by categories. It also lists addresses, the number of employees, a contact person and whether the firm has its headquarters in the area. "Charlotte/Mecklenburg Directory of Manufacturers" does the same thing only by general product categories. It also tells you the types of products manufactured by company. Both books can be enormously helpful in focusing your search on a particular type and size business.

More extensive in its listing is the Yellow Pages in the telephone directory. Although it is not descriptive it can be helpful in generating a list of agencies or companies offering specific products or services.

Both the City and County publish weekly job listings. The types of positions are varied and cover all levels of experience. These are available at the city and county personnel offices and I also receive copies of them.

A resource often overlooked is the employment agency. Try to stay with the one that receives their fee from the employer rather than from you. There are a number of very good agencies in Charlotte. Many of them specialize, for example, in sales or technical work, clerical or administration jobs, temporary or permanent assignments. If you inquire beforehand it's less likely that you'll waste time with an agency not geared towards your needs.

Let's not forget the classifieds in the newspaper. We all know that many of the advertised jobs are either not real or have already been filled. This becomes apparent as you make phone calls. Nonetheless, it's critical to look at the ads each day and to become familiar with the information which they contain. For example, which companies are ex-

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