

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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From The Desk of Marty Schneer —JCC Executive Director

As I am sure many of you are aware, the final architectural plans for our new facilities have recently been submitted to contractors for bid. The involvement of various community groups in refining the plans has continued throughout the entire process. From the JCC's perspective I think most would agree that the vast ma-

majority of our "wish list" items will be incorporated if the numbers come out right.

It is difficult to envision the magnitude and scope of the new "J" unless you have been intimately involved in the planning process and only recently have some of us begun to fully appreciate the aesthetic beauty and sophistication of the whole



Editorial

Judaism Is Not Dead In Our Colleges

Having just recently spent a weekend in Chapel Hill I was extremely happy to hear of the renewed activity at their Hillel House. More of the Jewish students are availing themselves of the various programs which Hillel offers, the camaraderie of other Jewish students, and, of course, the twice-a-month Deli. Whether it's the classes, the dances, the food, the services, or maybe a blend of all them, Judaism is coming alive on campus.

Through the interest of the Charlotte Chapter of B'nai B'rith Women, a kitchen shower was held to furnish additional items badly needed in the Hillel kitchen. The house has been recently refurbished to some degree, even to the inclusion of a new refrigerator. During the Jewish holidays it is the students' home away from home. Services are held there during the high holy days and many who can not get home for Passover avail themselves of the seder there.

This year, the ZBT fraternity made their own seder, with the preparation of the meal being done by certain brothers and 'little sisters.' Originally 8 people signed up for it, but seder night it was close to 25. Each member participated in the seder as if it were a rededication to Judaism. Experiences like this will continue to keep our young people aware of their heritage. No, Judaism is not dead in college...at least not in Chapel Hill.



project. I am confident that the tremendous effort put forth so far to reach this point will merely help to provide the impetus and motivation for the major tasks that lie ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the J's call for volunteers from the membership to sit on one of the many new adhoc committees that will be established to set policies, procedures and guidelines for the new center.

May will be a busy month for the JCC as we close out our spring programming. Following the community-wide Israel Independence Day Celebration on May 6th, the Center's cultural Arts Committee chaired by Florence Jaffe has secured an exclusive Charlotte Symphony Concert free to JCC members. In a similar vein during the coming year, we plan to continue to provide our members with special extra activities and programs. The JCC will sponsor a Mini-Adult Jewish Institute to commence on May 3rd. Each Rabbi has chosen an informative and thought provoking topic to address during this four week series to be held on successive Thursday nights. A fifth guest lecturer has been added to the program offering a special slide presentation on the history of Greek Jewry during a Sunday brunch scheduled for June 10th. In addition another family Bike-A-Thon is planned to take place in May.

The above program listing demonstrates the JCC's commitment to providing activities and events for all segments of our membership. The continued success of our programs of course depends on your participation. Our staff is always willing to hear your ideas and suggestions for new programs so don't hesitate to call on us. I look forward to greeting you at a JCC program sometime during the month of May.

On The Issues... Ira Gissen, Director NC/VA Region Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

The "Moment of Silence" Is A Trojan Horse

Now that the Constitution has survived the school prayer assault, we can breathe a grateful sigh of relief. Or can we?

The effort to sanction either officially sponsored organized prayer or silent prayer failed to win the necessary votes in the Senate. By contrast, the current "Moment of Silence" issue seems inoffensive.

But the "Moment of Silence" is a subterfuge whose advocates seek to accomplish by circumvention, what otherwise is Constitutionally prohibited.

The issue now before the Supreme Court concerns an Alabama law which authorizes teachers to begin the school day with a "period of silence not to exceed one minute in duration...for meditation or voluntary prayer," and during that time "no other activities shall be engaged in." Twenty-two other states including Virginia have enacted similar laws. The Alabama law was upheld by the District Court. Thereupon, Justice Lewis F. Powell, acting upon a motion for a stay of the decision and an injunction pending appeal, ordered a halt to state-sponsored prayer sessions in Alabama's schools.

The Court of Appeals cited the 1946 Everson decision: "The 'establishment of

religion' clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another." Striking down the "moment of silence", the Circuit Court stated: "We do not imply that simple meditation or silence is barred from the public schools: we hold that the state cannot participate in the advancement of religious activities through any guise, including teacher-led meditation."

The Reagan Administration has urged the Supreme Court to overturn that decision. Its lawyers contend that: "Permitting school children to maintain a moment of silence in the public...evinces a benevolent neutrality."

To the contrary, the "moment of silence" law is a Trojan Horse which is designed to penetrate the wall that separates Church and State. That result is recognized by another Federal District Court ruling which overturned a New Mexico law that had authorized "contemplation, meditation or prayer" during a moment of silence. That decision declared: "It does not matter whether the moment of silence would be regarded as a proper devotional exercise by

a cleric or another person knowledgeable in such affairs. The ill lies in the public's perception of the moment of silence as a devotional exercise in public school classrooms, the effect of the state's action is the advancement of religion."

The effort to disguise the true purpose of the "moment of silence" reached its zenith in the most recent version of this legislation, in a law enacted by the New Jersey legislature which provided that the students be permitted to "Observe a 1 minute period of silence to be used solely at the discretion of the individual student, before opening exercises of each school day for quiet and private contemplation or introspection."

The legislators had crafted language that artfully avoided any reference to religious activity. However, it was abundantly clear, from the legislative debate, that the purpose was to circumvent the Constitution. The Governor's veto was overridden.

The Anti-Defamation League's brief in the New

Jersey case pointedly exposed the true purpose of the statute: Its legislative history clearly indicated that intent was to reintroduce religious activity through the schools' back door. The ADL explained: "Knowing full well that it could not constitutionally mandate prayer in school, after the 1963 decision so barring...the New Jersey Legislature instead chose 'silence' with a wink."

The Federal District Court in Newark ruled against the New Jersey "moment of silence" law.

The scene of the struggle over school prayer has now shifted from the Senate to the Supreme Court.

JEWISH CALENDAR

Candlelighting

- May 4 - 7:54 p.m.
- May 11 - 8:00 p.m.
- May 18 - 8:05 p.m.
- May 25 - 8:10 p.m.
- June 1 - 8:15 p.m.
- June 5 - 8:17 p.m. (Erev Shavuot)
- June 6 - 8:17 p.m. (Shavuot)



Holidays

- Lag B'Omer - May 20
- Shavuot - June 6-7

We encourage our readers' viewpoints. Letters should be submitted typewritten and double-spaced and signed. We reserve the right to edit.