

# The Charlotte JEWISH news

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## Demographic Study Completed

By Cynthia Chapman

If you were in the JCC in mid-March, you couldn't have missed the roomful of folks hunched over telephones and paperwork in the front lounge. People were busily completing the demographic study commissioned by the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. The director was Dr. Ira Sheskin, a geographer whose work with statistics has led him to conduct demographic surveys for 15 Jewish communities nation-

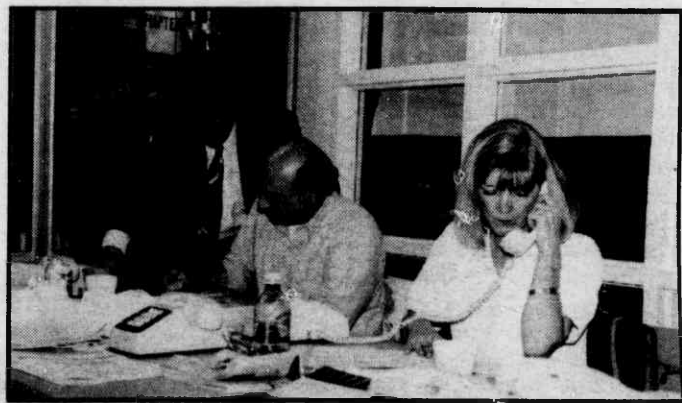
receive the call and answer the questions get a chance to assess their own relationship with the Jewish community and its organizations because of the range of questions asked. Likewise, the person recording the answers gets a chance to reflect on issues for the community at large.

Sheskin said that he expects to wrap up the survey with around 700 surveys completed. He explained that larger projections about the Jewish community at

Sheskin noted with pride that demographic surveys completed in other cities have made definite impacts on decisions made within the community. When Del Ray Beach, Florida was surveyed, it came as no surprise that 92% of the residents were 65 years old or older. When they discovered that 75% of these people were Jewish, the Federation pursued and got a \$5 million grant to help meet their needs. The study in Dade County made the Federation there realize just how many of the Jewish residents would be affected by changes made in welfare laws.

Does the current high growth rate of the Charlotte Jewish community mean that the results will not be valid for long? Sheskin stated that demographic surveys, like the U.S. Census, should be repeated no longer than ten years apart. He also noted there are ways to determine how well a survey still reflects the community at intervals within the decade after its completion. The demographic survey will therefore remain a useful tool which the Federation and community leaders can use to make plans for the future.

The results of the demographic survey will be released in the fall. Dr. Sheskin is confident that the survey will confirm some of what is already known — the areas of Jewish concentration, for example — but he is just as sure that the data will hold some surprises. Then, as Federation hopes with its commissioning of the study, we will be able to make Charlotte an even more successful Jewish community. We can all become clearer about our needs, our goals, and start planning more effectively how to reach them together. ✧



When I talked with Sheskin near the end of the random telephoning one evening, he explained the random dialing process, and while doing so, kept his eyes on everyone working in the room. He kept his ears open as well, making sure that any questions the surveyors had were promptly answered, quick to suggest to an interviewer another strategy to use with an unresponsive caller. Dr. Sheskin has no doubt that the demographic study will help the Jewish community as it plans for the future.

Even the workers have "learned a lot," he said. People's responses and attitudes reveal a great deal about the community at large, and there is no doubt that workers get an interesting exposure to human nature as well, from talking to people who volunteer all sorts of details about their lives, to those who obviously don't listen to the questions, to those who simply hang up. Through it all, the identity of both the caller and the respondent are kept hidden.

An interesting aspect of the survey, he said, is that people who

large and assessment of its needs are based on percentages. For example, if the random sampling identifies 2% of all those called as Jewish, comparing that percentage to the figures provided by local government for Charlotte's entire population will lead to an accurate figure for the total number of Jews in the Charlotte area.

The demographic survey was tailored to the Charlotte Jewish community, with questions targeting organizations and needs here. One question, for example, asked if people read *The Charlotte Jewish News*. Other questions offer a way to assess the support for a new day school and the needs of the elderly. According to Sheskin, when the data is compiled and analyzed in every possible way, the report that will be released to the Federation will offer a detailed evaluation of how community agencies are doing — does the community know about it, is it viewed as successful in meeting community needs, and so forth. It provides, he said, "a way to assess the effectiveness of what is already being done."

## The CJN Gets New Editor Next Month

Susan Kramer will become the next editor of *The Charlotte Jewish News*. Susan is active in the community and has been the editor of the *Temple Beth El Wise* for three years. She is enthusiastic about her new position and looks forward to further broadening both her desktop publishing and graphics skills, as well as connecting

with the community at large. Another newcomer to *The CJN* is Shari Naman who began in March as an advertising sales representative. Shari, readers may recall, was profiled in November, 1996 as the Volunteer of the Month for her involvement with the JCC swim team program.

Welcome to them both! ✧

## 1997 Campaign Races Toward \$1.6 Million

The momentum for the 1997 UJA/Federation Campaign continues as the fundraising total climbs toward the goal of \$1.6 million. In one day, Super Sunday boosted the total by \$100,000. Now, that's really a super Sunday!

"We are thrilled with the pace of the campaign at this point," said Bill Gorelick, '97 Campaign Chair. "The Major Givers set the bench mark back in December and we are fortunate to have been able to use the momentum that they established to push forward to the goal."

\$1.6 million would be the highest campaign total achieved in Charlotte to date. "We realize that we will have to work hard to finish," said Jill Newman, Campaign Co-Chair, "but every penny is important to reach that goal and we all know how vital the Campaign is to our local, national and international institutions."

"Many, many thanks to all who have made their contributions and supported this effort."

As of March 15, Women's Division met their goal of \$350,000, also a record amount. "We put together a sensational team of solicitors who got the job done," said Ruth Goldberg, Women's Division Campaign Chair. "Each year we become more effective at telling the story and spreading the word on the importance of women's giving."

The Women's Campaign was boosted by increased giving

across the board, but in particular in many of the higher divisions. "This year we had six new Lions of Judah, which in itself is a record for Charlotte," said Bobbi Bernstein, who chairs the Lions Division with Lee Blumenthal. "Our numbers went from 13 Lions to 23 in one year — this is an unbelievable phenomenon. We can only hope that this will be the trend for many years to come."

The Men's Campaign cabinet has also been working hard to complete their assignments. "Men's Division provides the backbone for the overall campaign," said Mr. Gorelick. "We try to reach out to make personal contact with the givers to make sure that they have an opportunity to talk to us about what is important to them."

Bob Speizman, chaired the Major Gifts effort this year. Dr. Ed Newman oversaw the \$5000 - \$9999 division; Todd Gorelick and David Swimmer worked together again this year on the \$3600 - \$4999 group; Larry Brown and Ken Rivkin joined forces to supervise the \$1,800 - \$3,599 division; Steve Garfinkel and Craig Katzman worked the \$600 - \$1199 cards and Andy Dinkin and Scott Hirsch were in charge of the up to \$600 group.

The Campaign will close during the next few weeks. If you have not already made your '97 gift, please contact Cary Bernstein, Development Director at 366-5007, ext. 209. ✧

## JCC Director Participates in Israel Leadership Seminar

The JCC Israel Leadership Seminar was more than another fabulous Israel trip. It was a distinctly Jewish vocabulary lesson. For ten intensive days in January, 140 seminar participants (North American Jewish Community Center lay leaders and executive directors and JCC Association board members) probed the meaning of key concepts that often arise in connection with Israel, challenging their own definitions of the terms of Jewish life, and expanding the lexicon of the JCC movement.

Charlotte's participant, Jewish Community Center Executive Director Alan Feldman, called it "a thought-provoking, engaging Jewish experience that illuminated Israel as the vital stage for the day-to-day evolution of a pluralistic Jewish society and as a center for the creative unfolding of Jewish culture." The group quickly learned that although Israeli

pluralism may differ from pluralism in the American Jewish community, it flourishes nonetheless and can enrich our understanding of and approaches to the issues we face in diaspora Jewish communities.

The group was privileged to hear from a variety of preeminent speakers including: Professor Aviezer Ravitsky, chair of the Department of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; David Landau, feature editor for *Ha'aretz* newspaper and Israeli Bureau Chief of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency; Yossi Olmert, former advisor to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir; Uri Savir, Coordinator of Peace Negotiations for the Oslo accords; A.B. Yehoshua, one of Israel's leading authors and activists and Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert.

The Israel Leadership Seminar constituted a milestone in JCC Association history as the first

time a leadership study group this large traveled to Israel under the JCC banner. It brought into focus the JCC's commitment to Israel, not only as a learning opportunity for JCC leaders, staff and members, but as a crucial component of the Jewish mission of the Jewish Community Center.

JCC Association Executive Vice-President Allan Finkelstein, summarized the experience as "a trip where we have found a common language with Israel and among ourselves. We have come to recognize that the agenda for the Jewish people is the agenda for the JCC Movement. Centers — with a combined membership of over 1,000,000 adults and children — must be bolder about setting forth their agenda. There are issues that we can affect, but we have to take the struggles in hand. We cannot simply wait and respond, we must act!"

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