

Dennis Prager to speak on December 7

World renowned author, scholar, television and radio personality Dennis Prager will be in Charlotte on December 7 to speak to the community at 8:00 p.m. at Temple Israel.

Considered "one of America's five best speakers" Dennis Prager is one of America's most respected radio talk show hosts and commentators. He has been broadcasting on KABC Radio in Los Angeles for 15 years and has his own daily national television show.

Prager is also a respected scholar

and author. His most recent book, **Think a Second Time, 44 Essays on 44 Subjects**, was published by Harper Collins. Bill Bennett called it "one of those rare books that can change an intelligent mind," and USA Today columnist and Professor of Law Susan Estrich called it "Brilliant, a tour de force."

His next book **Happiness is a Serious Problem** due in January 1998 from Harper Collins, is his long awaited book on happiness, about which he has lectured around the world for ten years.

For ten years Mr. Prager has



conducted a weekly interfaith dialogue on radio, with representatives from virtually every religion in the world. Since 1985 he has been writing his own newsletter, first the quarterly journal *Ultimate Issues* and now, twice monthly *The Prager Perspective*.

This is the second time that Mr. Prager has lectured in Charlotte. Both lectures have been sponsored by the Gorelick families. ☆

White House conference marks first step in reducing hate crimes

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON(JTA) - When President Clinton convened a White House conference in November aimed at countering the scourge of hate-driven violence, a major breakthrough was achieved: a president had put the weight of his office behind such efforts.

Calling hate crimes the "antithesis of the values that define us as a nation," Clinton announced a series of law-enforcement and prevention efforts to address the problem, including plans to create a network of local hate-crime groups to coordinate investigations and prosecutions. He said the Justice

Department would assign more than 50 new FBI agents and prosecutors to work on hate-crimes.

During the conference, Clinton participated in a panel discussion that included a Jewish woman from Billings, Montana who rallied her community against an outbreak of anti-Semitic activity four years ago.

Tammie Schnitzer, who had converted to Judaism, said she was rudely awakened to anti-Semitism when a brick came hurtling through her son's window, where he had displayed a menorah.

In an extraordinary show of solidarity, the people of Billings

responded by posting pictures of menorahs in their own windows, ultimately driving the perpetrators out of town.

"We came together as a community, we fought back with weapons of the spirit — determination, commitment, compassion, empathy and understanding — and we won the battle of Billings," she said.

Clinton praised Schnitzer as a "remarkable citizen who changed the whole psychology of a community," and others pointed to Billings as an example for other communities to follow. ☆

Russian speaking families come to Charlotte

By Ellen Dubin, Volunteer Coordinator, H.I.A.S. refugee resettlement

It is mid October and Yom Kippur has passed; we have asked forgiveness from our fellow man and have prayed to G-d that our fate for the coming year is sealed in the Book of Life. While fasting I think, "Have I done all I could this past year 'to lessen the severity of the decree?' No! I did not ask the Charlotte Jewish Community or the recently resettled Russian speaking Jewish community to forgive me for my oversight. Ah, but it is too late." Then I remember, "no, it's not. Some believe that the Book isn't totally sealed until Hoshana Rabah, the seventh day of Sukkot." So although you will not read this until December, I am asking your forgiveness now and will try to make amends for not informing you of all the families which arrived in 5757.

Semen and Yelena Shvarts came at the beginning of the year, along with his grown son, Alex, and their baby daughter, Sophia. Semen has been working for an electrical construction firm and Yelena's baking and cake decorating talents are appreciated at the Fresh Market in Strawberry Hill. Alex works for the Marriott City Center.

Yakov and Angela Yashayev arrived in Charlotte at the end of December. Their children, Tatyana and Alex attend Lansdowne Elementary. Yakov keeps himself busy with various jobs and Angela is employed at the Westin Hotel.

Iosif and Eitel Gorentsvay were reunited with their son, Vladimir the end of December. He teaches mathematics at UNCC and can often be seen driving his parents to various Chai Group events at the JCC.

Valeriy and Larisa Felmetsger came here in February. Valeriy has been working for an electrical construction company but is looking for a professional position as an engineer/physicist. He has a dozen patents (in the FSU) and authored numerous papers and technical reports related to vacuum and plasma thin film technologies.

Larisa is a housekeeper at the Westin. Her previous experience was as a bookkeeper.

Vladimir and Alla Bukengolts were reunited with their daughter, Julia Glauberman, and her family. They are very happy to be here with friends and relatives.

Sergey Krivoruchko, his wife Nataliya Zuyevskaya, and their daughter Anna arrived during June. While Anna attends Lansdowne Elementary, both parents are busy at work in the Fresh Market. Sergey is excellent at repairing radios, TVs, VCRs, etc. and would like to find employment in that field. Nataliya is a chemical engineer and has been seeking a position that can utilize her education, experience and talent.

Imagine arriving in Charlotte on the eve of the Fourth of July! That is just what happened to the Novikov family. Sergey, his wife Viktoriya, their daughter Julia, and his mother-in-law Eleonora Polichenko celebrated their freedom from tyranny as our nation celebrated its freedom! Sergey is working for an electrical contracting company while Viktoriya works at the Westin Hotel. Julia attends Lansdowne Elementary and Eleonora has been going to CPCC for English classes.

Leonid and Tatyana Beregovskiy came to Charlotte with their son, Dmitriy just before school started. Dmitriy is a senior at Myers Park High School and works part time at Papa Johns. Leonid repairs and assembles computers and you can see Tatyana at the Eckerd at Sharon Comers. The family is very computer literate and both parents are seeking employment that can better utilize their talents and education.

Alex Blyudov, his wife Yevgeniya, and their sons Dmitriy and Vladislav were reunited with family in late August. Alex is working at the Fresh Market. He is fluent in English and French and would like to teach locally; he is willing to tutor both languages as

well as Russian. Yevgeniya works at the Westin. The boys attend middle and high school.

Anna Esina came to Charlotte most recently. As of this writing, she is 'settling in' and looking for employment.

We are expecting an average of at least one family each month. On their way right now is a family of four that was able to flee war-torn Chechnya. They came to the Western Hemisphere on a freighter and need a lot of TLC.

Along with each of the new families, we continue to need volunteers, furniture and household goods. Beds, tables, chests and lamps are just some of the items in lowest supply. Please call Ellen Dubin at 574-8550 and let me know how you can help. Also, please accept my apologies for not introducing all of the families before now. Make and keep your commitment to help in 5758 so as next Yom Kippur approaches we will not need forgiveness. ☆

"Something Has Begun"

Charlotte's two-day Conference on Race Relations to Take Place December 7-8 at the Convention Center

On December 7-8, hundreds of area residents will meet to examine Charlotte-Mecklenburg's increasingly diverse racial and ethnic makeup and explore ways the community can build improved cross-cultural understanding. The conference, which opens on Sunday afternoon and concludes at lunch on Monday, is called "Community Building: Something Has Begun" and is being held at the Charlotte Convention Center.

The December 7-8 event follows months of work by a fifty-member Community Building Task Force zeroing in on how Charlotte-Mecklenburg is changing and how citizens are handling the city's increasing diversity. The conference's goal is to create an active community building process among people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. That process will begin by identifying key issues surrounding racial and ethnic barriers and energizing attendees who are willing to study those issues and make recommendations to eradicate those obstacles.

An Urban Institute report will be presented on Sunday, December 7, along with data being collected through focus groups and in surveys. The conference has been designed to allow for interaction, much of which will be conducted in small mixed groups with seasoned facilitators. Conference planners hope the format will create a safe zone for meaningful dialogue.

Speakers at the conference will include nationally-known diversity trainer Elsie Cross of Philadelphia. Cross speaks on Sunday and will help lead Monday's interactive discussion groups. National Urban League president, Hugh B. Price, speaks on Monday morning, December 8. Conference attendees will also get an update Monday on what other communities are doing on these issues from Paul DuBois, the co-director of the Center for Living Democracy. Community Building Leadership Team chair James Ferguson II will give a welcome on Sunday and Task Force member Reverend Claude Alexander will close the conference on Monday afternoon.

As important as the two-day conference will be, it will begin an even more intensive six-to-nine month period when groups will study the issues identified during the conference. They will examine existing programs on race relations and possibly suggest others. They will create an oversight mechanism to continue the work begun at the conference. They will design long-term solutions in an attempt to build a better, more culturally diverse community.

To sign up for the conference or volunteer to work in the follow up, call the Community Building Task Force at 704-333-2595. ☆

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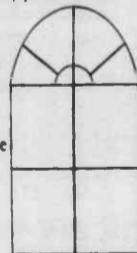
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