

# In My Opinion . . .

By Amy Krakovitz Montoni

Those of you who were born outside of New York City need no longer worry. I am here to dispel the myths created by native New Yorkers about the greatness and superiority of the big city. On a recent weekend trip to Manhattan, Mr. M. and I were confronted with several examples of New York not living up to its oft-touted reputation.

**Myth No. 1: You can get anything anytime in New York.**

At eleven o'clock on Saturday night, Mr. M. and I entered a midtown Manhattan brew pub called the Commonwealth Brewery ("Let No One Go Thirsty for Lack of a Real Ale"). After being eyed suspiciously by the hostess at the door, we explained that we came in for a beer. We thought that would have been self-evident. Her look of suspicion transformed into one of sympathy. "We just gave last call," she said. Last call at eleven o'clock on a Saturday night in midtown Manhattan? You can get anything you want except a beer at the Commonwealth Brewery. Needless to say we left thirsty.

**Myth No. 2: Everything is better in New York.**

We did find an open bar that evening in Times Square. For all of its glitz and noise and incredible location, the Times Square Brew Pub served some not very tasty hand-crafted beers. Guess what, New York? The locally brewed beer in Charlotte is better than New York. Actually the locally brewed beer in Vermont was better than what I got in New York.

And speaking of food, Mr. M. and I made the mistake of ordering chili in Manhattan. No, they don't do that better either.

The truth is some things are better in New York. Like delicatessens and bakeries. But one thing New Yorkers haven't got down at all yet is airconditioning. Our hotel lobby was a numbing 42 degrees; it could have kept meat better than my own refrigerator. The hotel elevator, which we had to take up 36 floors, was about 107 degrees. Sometimes it was crowded. 'Nuff said.

**Myth No. 3: People move faster in New York.**

I don't know where in

Manhattan they move faster than anyplace I've ever been in the world. They walk slowly on the streets, particularly on 5th and 7th Avenues where people were positively lollygagging. You'd better not have an appointment up ahead on either of those streets; you'll never make it.

Every line I stood in ("on") took hours; waiting to be seated at restaurants was excruciatingly long; and once we were seated, I expected the Messiah to come through the door by the time the waitstaff even offered us drinks.

So, Charlotte, shake off that inferiority complex that's been pounded into your head by transplants from New York. For all that one can do in New York, it isn't any better than Charlotte, or Houston, or Chicago, or Boston, or Los Angeles. They all have their problems; they all have their advantages. My weekend in Manhattan was fun, but I sure am glad to be home.

Many thanks to all of you who have expressed words of encouragement to me in this, my first issue of *Charlotte Jewish News*. I hope that what you see here meets and exceeds your high expectations of me. I have learned so much in just the last few weeks putting this issue together that I feel certain that future editions can only improve. ☆



## Point of View

Each issue of the CJN features an article written by one of three rabbis active in the Charlotte Community.

*This Month:*  
Rabbi Murray Ezring  
Temple Israel

## Am Echad in Shalom Park

When I first moved to Charlotte, I was amazed, astounded, and extraordinarily impressed by Shalom Park. In the four years that I have lived here I have received phone calls from all over the country asking how Charlotte was able to build a Jewish location like our Shalom Park. How was it possible for the Federation, the JCC, and both major synagogues to form a partnership and live together at one location. During every phone call people tell me how unique our Charlotte Jewish community is.

In four years, I have learned how true that statement is. Shalom Park represents the dream of the Jewish people, that we should be *am echad*, one people who believes in one God. Shalom Park, like the Jewish people, is a work in progress. As our people and our religious observances have evolved and developed over the past 3500 years, so Shalom Park is continuing to evolve and develop. Because we share one campus, we work together in many ways that are unheard of in other communities. Don't get me wrong. I do not mean to say that there are no politics and there are no disagreements at Shalom Park. The beauty is that we work together to overcome the difficulties.

Once more, the Jewish community of Charlotte, centered around the efforts of the JCC and its partners at the park, are doing something unique this summer. We will be hosting the Maccabi Games. What a wonderful and exciting time it is to be part of the planning for the visit of so many student athletes and the games in which they will participate. Charlotte is one of the smallest communities ever to host such games. The success of this summer's Maccabi is a function of our community's ability to work together to support each other and to realize that what is good for the community is good for us all.

I pray that the Maccabi experience will allow all of those who visit our Queen City to see the beauty of a Jewish community that works together in unity with an understanding of our joint mission in life.

May we all contribute to the success of these games and continue to create shalom, peace and contentment here at Shalom Park while we share our vision of shalom with those who visit. Have a wonderful summer. ☆

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