

The Charlotte JEWISH news

Vol. 20 No. 8

Elul-Tishrei, 5758-59

September 1998

Shana Tova from the Jewish
Federation of Greater Charlotte

Temple growth generates new ideas for New Year

By Amy Krakovitz Montoni

Suppose you're planning a dinner party for 10, but you set up 12 seats just in case. But — uh, oh — 17 people show up at your home for dinner! What do you do?

Well, that's a little like what has happened at Temple Beth El over the last five years.

Temple Beth El, which has seen nearly a 70% growth since 1993, has been wrestling with this issue for some time. Project Joseph, formed in May 1997, and headed by Alan Blumenthal and Geri Zhiss is a Long Range Planning Group that has come up with innovative ways to face the challenge of fast and furious growth. Among the committee's solutions are: increased staff, split sessions for Sunday religious school and weekday Hebrew school, off-site events, smaller and more intimate groups, committees, classes and chavurahs.

Returning to our "guests for dinner" analogy...now suppose you're expecting 12 guests, but you have the foresight to set up for 16. Then suppose, you receive word that 14 people want to come for dinner, but two of them need you to bring dinner to them!

Temple Israel has seen a scenario more like this one. In spite

of its impressive increase in membership of 40% since 1993, Temple Israel feels that the challenges ahead lie more in reaching Conservative Jews outside the immediate Shalom Park area. To cope with this, they have instituted satellite programs in the Lake Norman area: services on Friday night once a month, and Hebrew school once a week on Wednesday afternoon for young elementary age students, grades K-2.

"We need to diversify," says Rabbi Murray Ezring. "People are looking for a more spiritual and traditional version of Judaism." And he intends to bring that version to the people of Lake Norman, as well as to continue increasing spirituality in the services and programs available at Temple Israel in Shalom Park.

Back at Temple Beth El, Rabbi James Bennett says that growth isn't anything to be afraid of. He sees it as a challenge that has to be dealt with. And the recommendations made by Project Joseph have already begun to be implemented.

They have increased their professional staff from one (Rabbi Bennett) in 1993 to four: Cantor Linda Shepherd arrived in 1995, followed by Rabbi Adam Morris

in 1997. This year Rabbi Judy Schindler will be joining the staff.

In addition to the split sessions on Sunday and weekdays, the school has started to offer Hebrew instruction at the third grade level — an option that 85% of the third grade class has elected. There will also be a weekday Hebrew school class in the Lake Norman area as well. And Rabbi Morris' new innovative *Sheva!* program for 7th graders will meet on Saturday mornings to study Torah and to attend Saturday morning services.

The biggest impact on the membership growth has been the physical limitations of the sanctuary. This year, even opening up the Silverman Social Hall to additional seating doesn't seem to be adequate for the expected crowd at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. That is why morning worship for these two holidays has been moved to Central Church of God at the corner of Sardis and Randolph Roads. "As a congregation, we are happy to be able to worship all together on these important and meaningful holiday," says Rabbi Bennett.

The membership at Temple Israel has not yet outgrown its sanctuary. "We had 575 member



"People are seeking more traditional and spiritual ways of worshipping," says Rabbi Murray Ezring of Temple Israel.

families when we built this building and anticipated growth to 800 member families," says Robert Gleiberman, administrator of Temple Israel. "With our current member families at 750, we still have some room to grow." And

Rabbi Murray Ezring foresees that the growth will continue to be explosive for the next few years.

Temple Israel also made a change in staffing when they hired a full-time rabbi as educational

(Continued on page 5)

The Charlotte JCC and Jewish Community Embraces the 1998 JCC Maccabi Games

Fun, Athletics, Tzedakah, and Friendship Highlight Week of Competition

By Diana Ades

More than 700 Jewish athletes from around the country, Israel and Great Britain converged on Charlotte from August 9-14 for the 16th Annual JCC Maccabi Games. Produced and coordinated by the Jewish Community Center of Charlotte, the Games marked a "coming of age" for both the Center and the Charlotte Jewish community as the eyes of the world focused on Charlotte, watching Jewish athletes gain a greater appreciation for Jewish traditions, Jewish culture, and Jewish existence.

JCC Vice President and 1998 JCC Maccabi Games General Chairman, Lane Ostrow, had nothing but praise for the more than 300 families who housed visiting athletes for five nights and for the hundreds of volunteers who assured that the Games in Charlotte were the "best anyone

had ever seen! . . . I am humbled by the work done by so many people to help us accomplish what we have," Ostrow said. Volunteers did everything from loading buses and serving food to manning carnival booths and directing traffic.

Smallest Community Ever

"It's most impressive that we are the smallest Jewish Community Center ever to host the Games," said JCC President, Scott Menaker. "We have exceeded all expectations with the 1998 JCC Maccabi Games. The national recognition our Center receives when it successfully implements a program like the JCC Maccabi Games is a fitting tribute to our dedicated volunteers and professional staff. It also serves as a source of great pride for our leadership and Charlotte's Jewish community-at-large. This was truly a team effort. There's no question, the 1998 JCC Maccabi

Games have put Charlotte on the Jewish map."

The JCC Maccabi Games began in Memphis, Tennessee in 1982 as a way to provide Olympic-style athletic events to Jewish youth ages 13-16, while providing an enriching experience in Jewish values and practices. Basketball, baseball, tennis, soccer, track & field, swimming, bowling and dance were among the featured competitions that were held.

Over 4,000 Charlotteans raised the roof at the Opening Ceremonies, Sunday, August 9 at the Hornets Training Center in Ft. Mill, SC. Everyone knew they were in for a treat when the 15-plus shofar blowers signaled the commencement of the parade of athletes. Hosted by WFNZ's radio personality Sandy Penner, the crowd stood and cheered when the 29 delegations marched into the arena. While every group was heartily greeted, the crowd

reserved thunderous applause for the Israel delegation and a deafening roar for the 137-strong hometown Team Charlotte. A children's choir — made up of members of Temple Israel, Temple Beth El and Lubavitch of North Carolina — sang the national anthems of America, Canada and Israel.

A very special moment of the Opening Ceremonies was a tribute to the eleven Israeli athletes murdered in the Munich Olympics and to the four Australian athletes who perished in an accident at last year's 15th Maccabiah in Israel. Narrated by the Jewish Community Center's immediate past president, Eric Sklut, the ceremony captured the hearts of everyone in the audience as a cadre of former North Carolina Maccabiah participants draped medals on a large Star of David as part of the testimonial.

One of the former Maccabiah participants, Larry Horowitz, was

also there to show support for his daughter Jenny, 15 and son Jeff, 13, athletes for Team Charlotte. "This is an unbelievable feeling of unity," Horowitz exclaimed. Donna Sender, an Israeli athlete, said "We are having fun and they (Charlotte) have been awesome."

Another highlight of Opening Ceremonies was an "Israel at 50" audio-video tribute. The crowd was both moved and exhilarated by the fast paced retrospective that underscored 50 years of history of the modern State of Israel.

During the entire week, Jewish athletes competed in various sports at a variety of locations — UNCC, Charlotte Country Day School, Charlotte Latin School, Mecklenburg Aquatic Club, Charlotte Christian School, the Church of Christ and the Jewish Community Center were all venues for the Games.

(Continued on page 27)

Inside this issue . . .

Don't wait for Assad's successor . . . page 3
Dr. Ken Stein says to deal with current Arab leaders before new ones appear

Happy New Year . . . page 15
Special Shana Tova section with greetings, recipes and stories

Maccabi games a great success . . . page 26
The week in review: pictures and results of the best games in Charlotte

Also inside . . .

Point of View	page 2
Jewish Family Services	page 7
Temple Beth El	page 8
Temple Israel	page 9
Lubavitch of North Carolina	page 10
CAJE	page 13
The Jewish Traveler	page 19
Jewish Community Center	page 20-21
Dining Out	page 22-24
Speizman Jewish Library	page 28

Turn to
page 26 & 27
for competition
results and
photos from
Maccabi '98.