

In Celebration of Our Land

By Janice Bernstein, President, Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah

The loss of beaches and waterfronts, the contamination of water, soil and air throughout many parts of the country, particularly in recent months, reminds us once again of our immense responsibility to the land. Before the hurricanes and natural disasters across the nation and, to be sure around the globe, it was easy to lose sight of the ongoing loss of trees and forests in our national parks and the decline of flora and fauna which help balance nature. As Americans, and as Jews, these conditions demand our attention; we cannot become complacent; we are obligated to concentrate on the preservation of our natural resources.

While Americans may view ecology and the protection of our environment as a modern phe-

nomenon, Jews have focused on ecology since the days of the Bible. We have a love affair with the land and the rabbis understood and taught us that the integrity of the land must always be protected and preserved. Our holidays and celebrations are tied to the land - the fruits and bounty of the land provide a spiritual link for all our observances.

With the advent of the modern Zionist movement, one of the first acts of the Zionist Congress was to establish a Jewish National Fund. The fund purchased land and reclaimed it in order to restore it to its natural beauty. Hadassah became the largest contributor to and supporter of JNF. Even our name is rooted in the soil of Israel, for the "hadass" is the myrtle that grows abundantly throughout Israel.

As we celebrate the Jewish hol-



iday of Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for the Trees, we accept the responsibility to continue to restore the land of Israel. At the same time, we are equally cognizant that here in America, we have an obligation to continue to advocate for the protection and preservation of our natural resources so that we may be blessed for having provided our children and grandchildren a healthy and beautiful world, rooted in Jewish tradition, in which they will grow and thrive.

The Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah will be celebrating Tu

B'Shevat on Monday, February 13, 2006 at 10:30 AM at the home of Drs. Joyce LiBethe and Gary Raflo. Guest speaker, Jeff Knight, a master beekeeper, will tell us all about bees and the health benefits of honey - and will offer a taste of various kinds of honey. Refreshments will include deli-

cious foods made with honey and there'll be recipes for you to take home. Please bring your Blue Box or a check made out to Hadassah. All proceeds will be given to the Jewish National Fund. Call Joyce at 704-544-0003 for information and directions. ☆

Book Club Discusses "Weeping Susannah"

The Women of Reform Judaism at Temple Beth El held their second book club meeting for 5766 on Wednesday, January 4 at 7:00 PM.

We thank the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library and Resource Center for hosting us that evening.

Amalia Warshenbrot shared some knowledge and insights with us on the subject of Israeli literature, followed by a book discussion of *Weeping Susannah*, written by Alonah Kimhi, translated by Dalya Bilu, and led by our own Gail Fagan.

Our third selection for the year,



Joanne Jagodinski, Lynne Cojac, Gail Fagan, Maggie De Leon, and Amalia Warshenbrot.

Fateless by Imre Kertesz, is on the subject of the Holocaust.

This highly recommended book

will be discussed on Sunday, April 23 at 3 PM in the Temple's Silverman Social Hall during the season when we remember and commemorate Yom HaShoah. Our reviewer for *Fateless* will be Maggie De Leon. Also of interest is that a movie, *Fateless*, is being released nationwide in February 2006 is based on this novel [See www.thinkfilmcompany.com for details.]

Please plan to join us April 23 and feel free to bring friends. No RSVP is needed but you can contact Lynne Cojac with any questions at LCojac@aol.com or 704-541-3358. ☆

Jewish Family Services

JFS Celebrates in December

Jewish Family Services had plenty to celebrate in December.

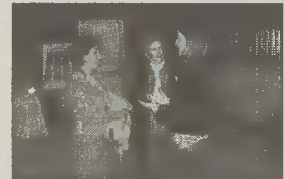
Although 2005 marked the 25th year in operation for Jewish Family Services, it also marked the first year as an independent agency. In honor of these milestones, JFS held its 1st Annual Meeting for board members and the general community in early December. After a two-year term, Amy Mullen passed on the responsibilities of Board Chair to Karen Knoble. The evening



There was a big crowd at the Hanukkah Party

Director Aree Skolnik was also recognized for producing the agency's first Annual Report.

And for the third year, JFS hosted its annual Hanukkah Party at Temple Israel, sponsored by Norman Steinberger. Approximately 80 senior guests from assisted living facilities came to the event to enjoy a special luncheon, music, sing-alongs and door prizes. "Each year, I hear such wonderful things from those who attend our party," said JFS Executive Director Penny Wagner-Schuster. "Everyone loves the camaraderie, and they truly appreciate the chance to celebrate the holiday with lots of other Jewish people in a festive setting. It means so much to them, and for everyone at JFS, it's a great way to end the year." ☆



Sue Worrel, Executive Director of Federation, Jill Newman, past president of Federation, and Dana Meiselman, board member of JFS, chat at the Annual Meeting.

included recognition of Volunteer of the Year Nancy Bernstein, who works many long hours assembling JFS Mitzvah Baskets for special events. JFS Marketing

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