

November 1939
(written by J.R. Neger)

The Annual Dance of the Jewish Community Center of Verona occurs at a time of grave crisis for the entire world. Although all men are filled with anxiety concerning the future of European civilization, we in America are buoyed up in our hope by the firm foundations of our democracy and our love of liberty. We look to the future with confidence and faith.

There are, however, many whom the havoc of war has reduced to extreme suffering and distress. There are hundreds of thousands of Jews in Poland whose existence has been placed in jeopardy as the result of the conquest of that country. Others who have fled to neighboring countries today are without homes or hope.

This year, for the first time in the lives of any American, the United States, through divided opinion, had two Thanksgiving Days. Let us give thanks daily not once or twice a year that we live in a country where a Jewish Community Center is permissible and allowed to grow.

The division of Jewry as evidenced in the Old World is destructive. The division is also destructive to organizations and community spirit. This is the one time when it is imperative that we make a united stand. We must unite in our efforts and program. We must knit our community life and spirit homogenously. We must secure the respect not only of the Christian but our Jews as well. Our organizations must perform harmoniously, not individually but collectively for the entire benefit of Judaism.

The banners of Judaism which have flown loftily for thousands of years will carry on, only through the unity of the Jew.

Here in the Jewish Community Center of Verona where we have striven for complete unity to achieve our ideals we will carry on.

Each and every one of us is called upon to lend their assistance to all the Jewish organizations representing our ideals.

June 1958 (written by Alter Kriegel following the death of J.R. Neger)

*Way back in 1936 when the organization of the Jewish Community Center in the borough of Verona became a reality, **Joseph R. Neger** was elected as the first president. The high office of president as we understand it today was not as glorious in the first year of the history of the Jewish Community Center. This honor meant work, work and yet more work. He was a pioneer blazing a trail through a virgin forest. Joe Neger was capable of fulfilling this task which confronted him as the representative of this organization.*

Years later when no leadership appeared on the horizon, Joe once again took the helm as captain of the stately ship called the JCC. The glory was already his. His imprint on history was established. His only reason for assuming the presidency years later was the necessity of preserving our organization. His sudden passing filled us all with remorse. Our sympathy is extended to his wife Florence and children.