

President's Report

Glen Wolland

Well. Year one is in the bag. And what a year it has been. I felt after 2 years on the Board of Trustees, and 5 on our Executive Committee, I was as prepared as I would ever be to take on the role as your President. My first year in the position would also be the year of my son's Confirmation, and shortly after that, my daughter's Bat Mitzvah. I felt very lucky to be able to take this on at a time when my family is so deeply involved in Temple life. Alas. My warm and fuzzy feelings lasted less than a day.

Day 1 of my Presidency began with my very first correspondence in the President's mail slot. It was a letter, from the Town of Yorktown, indicating that we had lost our tax-exempt status for our property there. The impact to the Temple would be close to \$60,000 per year if nothing were done. Welcome to the job, Mr. President. More on that later.

A few months later, and again I was surprised to be informed that our Director of Education was resigning. In September. You know, when School starts. We very quickly mobilized and formed a search committee, headed by Ben Wiesen, our now incoming new chairperson of the Education committee. Working with Ben, Helen Lynn (our outgoing Education Chair) and a wonderful committee, we were able to craft a happy ending to that story as we brought Rabbi Wendy Pein into the Temple Israel family to run our education program. The transition was virtually seamless and I could not be more delighted with the ultimate result.

After a long due diligence process, and much contract review, we completed the installation of a solar power system for the Temple's electrical needs. The financial and operation model we created is now being used as a template for installations at other religious institutions. In our first full month of operation, we are producing significantly more power than we are using. We get to bank that credit for use in months where our usage might be greater than what we generate. Conservatively, we should see savings in the thousands of dollars over the course of each year. Just as importantly, our carbon footprint has almost disappeared.

In February, I attended the Scheidt Leadership Conference for Temple Presidents, created and run by the URJ. It was four days of lectures, seminars, and workshops about Temple leadership. It was also four days of Talmud study, singing, and prayer, reminding me that my duty to you is a sacred one. We are a Temple, not a business, and we must always remember that. I was lucky enough to get one-on-one time with the President of the URJ, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, and was proud for TINW to receive an Aliyah at Shabbat services. It was an altogether moving experience and I will strongly recommend that all future TINW Presidents attend.

Item one on my to-do list for year one was to update the vision and mission statements for our congregation. Evan Janush and Barry Feinberg did yeoman's work, interviewing many groups and individuals over the course of months to come up with the framework that became our new statements, which you can see printed at the top of this page. I believe these statements do an outstanding job capturing who we are, and who we want to be.

Along those lines, we participated in a Temple-wide survey program, created by Brandeis University and Sponsored by SYNERGY, a UJA group. The purpose of this survey was to

determine how we view ourselves as a congregation; what we do well, and what we need to work on. It is designed to inform our decisions about the directions we need to move in order to keep ourselves relevant and vibrant. We hoped for a 50% response rate, which is basically a pie in the sky number for surveys. We've been told that a response rate of 30% would have been adequate. I'm proud to say we achieved 49%. A meeting to review the survey results has already been scheduled for mid-June. Again, we were lucky enough to have a wonderful committee, led by Evan Janush, to bring this together.

You will read about the details and accomplishments of all of our various committees on the following pages, but I'd like to take a moment to thank our wonderful outgoing committee chairs, who have served tirelessly and brilliantly over the years. They are: Iris Levine, Ellen Greeley, Terry Kardos, Sue Feir, Helen Lynn and Jack Judd.

And now, back to the Yorktown property tax issue. After a full year of meetings with the Yorktown Tax Assessor and their legal counsel, and with a great deal of help from Jim Rice and Michael Bogin, I am proud (and hugely relieved) to say that our full tax exemption has been reinstated for 2017. In order to maintain that status, we have planned to create a nature/prayer trail for congregants' use on the property. Schematic plans have been created and a committee is being formed to achieve that goal.

Last year, we were faced with the possibility of a crippling budget deficit. We rose above that threat under the leadership of Steve Rubinstein, who thankfully agreed to take over the finance committee this past year. This year I am proud to report that due to the fiscally conservative actions we took, in combination with some very conservative projections, we are looking at a healthy budget surplus for the past fiscal year. More details will follow in the Treasurer's report, but hurray for us!

We did not accomplish everything we set out to do this year, but we certainly tried. We are actively working on a new TINW website that will integrate all of our back-office bookkeeping and data entry, to bring us up to date with current standards of user friendliness. We hope to roll out the new site in the coming months.

And now, some year one thank yous:

First, and foremost. Our wonderful Rabbi, who's door was literally open to me any time I poked my head in there with a question, a complaint, or a bad joke. It must not be an easy job to have to train a new President every few years. I think I'm getting the hang of this now... The Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee. For your time, for your effort, and for your dedication. For those of you leaving the Board this year, please understand that you will be missed!

Our Cantor, for uplifting us at services and spearheading a brilliant music program (with help from our ridiculously talented professional music staff) that should be the envy of every Temple in the Union. NOBODY does L'cha Dodi like you!

Rabbi Pein, for coming into a new building and an established program mid-stream, and making it your own without missing a beat.

Roberta Robinson and all the rest of our fantastic staff, including our teachers and tutors, our custodial staff, and Sandy Goldstein, for making sure they all get paid....

Lastly, to Robin Safarowic, without whom the walls would crumble around us.

I am sure I have left people out. I am sure that I have not covered everything that went on this year. But I am also sure that you are tired of reading by now...

If you heard my Rosh Hashanah speech, you know that I am a builder. One year down. What can we build together in year two?