



TEMPLE SINAI ANNUAL REPORT

AV-ELUL 5767

2006-07

Saratoga Springs, New York

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees welcomed two new members this year, Amy Rosoff and Cheryl Hoffman. Amy is serving on the Board for the first time while Cheryl is returning to the Board and has agreed to serve as treasurer. Major goals of the Board for the coming year are to develop new leadership, strengthen the committee structure and improve efficiency at Board meetings. To that end, the Board will require each committee to submit written reports at least one week prior to each board meeting and has established a new Administrative Committee to handle more of the day-to-day operational issues of the Temple.

Rabbis' Report

Temple Sinai is truly blessed with two of the most wonderful rabbis in the world --- Linda Motzkin and Jonathan Rubenstein. We will celebrate their 21 years of service at Temple Sinai this year at a special Shabbat service on November 9th and a fundraising dinner on November 10th. In January, Linda and Jonathan will embark on their second six-month sabbatical, enjoying a well deserved respite from their responsibilities at Temple Sinai. As they did during the previous sabbatical, Temple Sinai members will step forward to lead services in their absence.



Temple Sinai Religious School

Our religious school serves about 190 students, ages 3 through 10th grade. We have over a dozen B'nai Mitvah scheduled for 2008-09. Next year, the school will have nine Sunday School Judaica classes, five Wednesday Hebrew classes, four Adult Hebrew classes (using Rabbi Linda's textbook series) and two Confirmation classes. Last year, the school launched Mitkadam, a brand new Hebrew curriculum developed by the Reform Movement and continued to offer "Packing for College," another URJ curriculum for 11th and 12th graders.

Temple Staff

Last year Temple Sinai welcomed Nadine Keisler as our new Temple Administrator. Nadine is responsible for developing new systems for keeping our temple operating efficiently and nurturing new and present programming. She is also responsible for developing systems to operate and maintain our facility as well as building upkeep and repairs and is working with a committee to support the "Caring Community" project. Nadine has good people skills, creative ideas and a high level of energy. A warm and engaging person, Nadine describes herself as a "builder of communities."

Always a rebel with an adventurous soul, Nadine spent one year after high school attending a Yeshiva in her home state of Massachusetts. "It was this experience, and my year in Israel after college, that influenced me the most when it comes to my Jewishness," Nadine said. She and her husband Randy and three children have created a home and lifestyle oriented towards Judaism.

Temple Sinai Youth Groups

Temple Sinai has three youth groups open to all children in the community and supported with a grant from the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York. The Elementary Youth Group (grades 3,4,5) has monthly programs to develop social connections. The Junior Youth Group (grades 6,7,8) created a board last year and held monthly events. Five members attended the annual junior youth

group shul-in in Brookline, Massachusetts. The Senior Youth Group (Grades 9-12) hosted three band which netted over \$600 to support their program activities. The group also completed renovations of their youth group room in the basement at Temple Sinai. Skidmore students serve as advisors for all three groups.

Bread and Torah

The Bread and Torah project has been extremely active this year. Rabbi Linda and Rabbi Jonathan conducted presentations at the Union for Reform Judaism Northeast Region Biennial in October 2006 and presentations at Smith College Hillel in March 2007. Students from the Waldorf School, a Christian women's bible study group, members of an Irish youth service club and many individuals visited Temple Sinai for scribal arts and baking sessions.



Rabbi Linda completed the Megillat Esther in March 2007 and the Women of Valor Scroll of Honor (which served as a major fundraiser for Temple Sinai). She continued to work on parchment making at her home with frequent demonstrations for visitors. Rabbi Linda did a scribal arts presentations and demonstrations at the Women's Rabbinic Network Conference in May and the National Havurah Committee Summer Institute in August.

Rabbi Jonathan has continued his weekly challah baking with increased production and an increased number of volunteers helping with production and delivery. In May 2007 he began staffing a weekly stall at the Saratoga Farmer's Market on Wednesdays. Bread and Torah has engaged two interns from two agencies for adults with developmental disabilities and two groups of developmentally disabled young adults regularly

nights, which were open to the community, netting

participate in Friday challah baking. Rabbi Jonathan also works monthly with the Parent/Toddler group and has conducted an inservice training for Capital District disability professionals and the Glens Falls CWI agency.



On August 6, 2007, Bread and Torah began work on a new kitchen using grant funds from Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust.

Facilities Initiative

The Board of Trustees called two special membership meetings during 2006-07 to discuss the facilities initiative. A third meeting is scheduled for September 10th. The Board considered proposals from two different architectural firms and, after listening to the concerns from the membership about the cost and focus of the first proposal, will be asking the membership for approval of a scaled down proposal from a local architect, John G. Waite. He will prepare a cost estimate and rendering for expansion at the current 509 Broadway location and a cost estimate for new construction elsewhere.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee has worked on redesigning the Tablet to make it make it better looking and to make the content more interesting, relevant, and informative. A new assistant editor was appointed, Ronnie Silver, to help the current editor, Nicole Weinstein. The Committee has also focused on implementing the Communications Plan developed in 2006, including providing more information on the

website, posting Board minutes on the bulletin board, and improving communications from the Board. The Committee was also able to generate a great deal of press coverage this year for Rabbi Linda's Scroll of Esther project.

Strategic Planning Council Disbanded

The Board of Trustees decided to disband the Strategic Planning Council, after five years of hard work. A new committee has been formed to develop a long range plan for Temple Sinai. They have been charged with responsibility to develop a five year plan for all aspects of the synagogue's mission.

A new Facilities Initiative Committee (FIC) has been formed to take responsibility for ongoing efforts to expand and update our facilities. Initially, the entire board will sit on the FIC and will assign ad hoc subcommittees to complete specific tasks and assignments. As the facility initiative goes forward, this committee will form the basis of the steering committee for the expansion project.

Havurah Pardes

Havurah Pardes, a new group for Temple members in their 40's, 50's and 60's, hit its stride last year and has a core group of regular participants. Next year the group will keep to the same pattern as the past two years of having activities about every two months, with a mix of social, cultural, and educational events. In August, the Havurah sponsored a comedy night at the synagogue. The planned activities for next year for the Havurah include a visit to Kedem Winery, a bus trip to New York City, a murder mystery night, a Latke/Hamantaschen Debate and a June pot luck dinner.

Membership

Naomi Tannen stepped down from her role as chair of the Membership Committee after four years in this position. The Temple has had 90 new members during these four years and has established a format of welcoming new members and having Open Houses for prospective members.

The Temple welcomes Julie Marks as the new chairperson. Julie has been on the committee for a year and is poised to take on the leadership role. She will be working with a group of new committee members.

Havurah Vatik

Havurah Vatik, Saratoga area's program for Jewish seniors 55 and older, celebrated its third anniversary in May 2007. The project has now offered 39 monthly events that include a speaker/performer, catered lunch and opportunities for socialization. Attendance at events ranged from 40 to 72, with average attendance this past year at 51. A committee of 16 members representing the diverse attendees - Jewish people in Saratoga retirement communities, the two synagogues, and unaffiliated Jews - plans the events and provides support for the project. Close to 200 different Jewish seniors have attended the monthly events.

Caring Community

The Caring Community Committee has been making good progress towards setting up the mechanisms so that we can be responsive to the needs and nachas of Temple Sinai members and Havurah Vatik seniors. They are ready and eager to be of help to new parents, and those who are coping with illness or loss. They can bring a basket, a meal, do a home visit, and help with some chores such as shopping or some transportation.

If you are in need or know of someone in the Temple community who might like a visit or could use some help, please don't hesitate to contact either the Temple administrator or the rabbis. They will contact the Caring Community coordinator for the month, who will arrange to respond to your need. The committee welcomes new members and looks forward to sharing the mitzvah of responsiveness with the entire Temple Sinai community.

Endowment

The purpose of the Endowment Fund is to secure the future needs of the Temple. It is the goal of the Temple Board and the Endowment Committee to increase the endowment over time so that distributions from the fund can be used to reduce the burden placed on congregants. David Wren joined the Committee last summer and has recently been selected as chair. As of Dec 31, 2006 the Endowment Fund had a balance of \$50,211. This amount reflects a gain of \$3,370 or 7.2 percent since the funds were placed with the Federation in mid May of 2006. This is an exceptional return, particularly in light of the conservative allocation of investments in the overall fund.

Library

The Temple Sinai Library Committee was formally established as a committee by the Board in August 2007, although it began work at the end of 2005. During the past fiscal year, the committee organized a used book sale on Mother's Day and a smaller impromptu sale to coincide with Hats Off to Saratoga. Together, the sales netted \$562, bringing the Library Fund to a total of \$6,000, a considerable increase from its initial kickoff donation of \$1000 in September 2005. Donations of used books for the sales were overwhelming, and the Committee kept many books of Jewish interest for the Temple Sinai library collection. The library also received Naomi Tannen's donation of the collection of her late father, Eli Tannen, a man versed in Jewish learning. In December 2006, the Committee received a grant of \$1,300 from the Federation of Northeastern New York to purchase a laptop. The laptop will help in cataloguing the Temple Sinai library and will eventually assist in the library's operation, once it is ready to function as a lending library. The Committee also purchased Elazar's Classification System for Libraries of Judaica and will join the Jewish Library Association, a valuable aid to small Jewish libraries. Four of the five committee members are professional librarians, and they have begun to organize and catalogue the present collection. Members of the congregation also helped clean, sort and organize the collection in the Board Room/Rabbis' Study.

Trip to Israel

Temple Sinai's first ever congregational trip to Israel was a terrific experience for all who participated. The group consisted of 43 people ranging in age from 10- to 84-years-old. Led by Rabbi Linda and Rabbi Jonathan, the trip was based on discussions between the participants, the Rabbis and the Ayelet Travel Agency, which then crafted the trip making certain that important sites were visited and a variety of activities were included. The trip began and ended in Jerusalem and included the opportunity to visit historical sites, climb Masada, roam the Old City, and float in the Dead Sea. The group visited synagogues, visited a school, participated in an archaeological dig, welcomed Shabbat with a progressive Reform congregation, spent an overnight at a kibbutz in Galilee and spent time at Yad Vashem.



Women of Valor Scroll is Dedicated

On March 2, Temple Sinai celebrated the dedication and presentation of the completed Women of Valor Scroll of Honor crafted by Rabbi Linda. The evening began with Shabbat dinner, music by Rabbis Monte and Anna Sugarman, and comments by Rabbi Linda and Rabbi Jonathan, explaining the significance of this long awaited evening. The framed list of names and photographs of many of the women honored were displayed for all to see. Services followed the dinner festivities. Rabbi Linda discussed the process of making the scroll and spoke of the many who were involved. During the Shabbat service, those people in the congregation who participated in the Women of Valor Scroll of Honor project individually mentioned the women whose names are forever inscribed on the scroll. The following night, Purim, saw the completion and dedication of Rabbi Linda's first major scribal work, the Scroll of Esther.

Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee has been reactivated with the leadership of Cynthia Guile. The committee met over the summer and will resume monthly meetings after the High Holy Days. Their attention will be focused on environmental issues as well as social justice and they will be exploring the best way to mesh their efforts with the activities of other Temple Sinai committees and programs.

For more information on Temple Sinai, visit www.temple-sinai-saratogasprings.org/ or call 518-584-8730.