

## **Alan Roy Vice President Speech -- Rosh Hashanah 2014 / 5755**

Shana Tova and a happy and healthy new year to you all. My name is Alan Roy and I am pleased and proud to serve as Vice President of this illustrious and historic congregation.

Firstly, I would like to thank Rabbi Saks, our President Norman Silverstein and the entire Board of Trustees for their continued efforts and endeavors in making Temple Beth Mordecai such a special and enduring presence in our lives. Also thank you to Elliot Rubin our executive director who gets all the craziness accomplished.

During the past year the Rabbi used a phrase, not sure if it was in a sermon or discussion which struck me as the spirit of our Temple. "Find your own voice". It remains a goal for me to help each one of us to "Find your own voice" in this Temple. While we are fundamentally a religious organization, we are so much more to our members. It remains my belief that whether you feel the need to pray or feel the need to belong, this Temple has it all.

It's been an active year both religiously and socially and more is on the way for this year.

Some of the activities and functions we have enjoyed and accomplished over the past year include

1. A **Chanukah Party** with a very entertaining magician
2. The **Rubber Duck Race**, a fun filled event in which we raise money through selling and racing little rubber ducks in the

pool of the YMCA here in Perth Amboy. The race is now an annual fund raiser which will occur this year on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

3. An **Alumni weekend** with celebrations both within the temple and a reunion schmooze cruise on the Raritan Bay. People attended who had not been here for nearly 30 years, and growing out of this is now an Alumni group that is taking responsibility for special projects and fund raising.
4. **Safran Hall** and the side entrance hallway have been renovated. Our plan is to use these spaces for Shul functions and to rent out.
5. We had 1 **Torah repaired** brought back another Torah that was on loan.
6. A few weeks ago we hosted an event funded by Middlesex Federation centered on the **Israeli / Palestinian question called "One Land, Two Worlds, One Painful Hope."** This was the first event of its kind in North America. Why was this an important event for us? It puts us on the map as a destination for discussing and debating important Jewish issues of the day. People from all over the State attended this wonderful program that was supported by the larger Jewish Middlesex community. Thanks to Rabbi Ari and our myriad of volunteers for organizing this event.

7. Three short years ago the Temple membership stood at 83 family units. Today our membership is 115 family units. That is a **membership increase of 34% over three years.** There's more we can do, but that's still pretty great.
8. During the year we had a **Community Seder** and several **Shabbat by the sea** services. **Baby namings, Brises and bar and bat mitzvahs** were again celebrated here.
9. The Rabbi has established a program of **"Ask the Rabbi"** every Wednesday at Noon at the food court at the Menlo Mall, at 9 am on the same day he conducts **Yeshivat Panera** where he offers opportunities to learn more about Judaism.
10. Younger members of the community have established **"The Young Jewish Professionals of Perth Amboy."** The goal is to build an active, thriving community of young Jews to center around our Temple. The first event was very well received and attended.

Plans for the coming year:

- 1) We do hold **services every Friday night and Saturday.** Thought I would mention that! With few exceptions we always have minyan and I would like to encourage you to attend services when you can.

- 2) On Friday November 7<sup>th</sup> we will be **visiting the world renowned B'nai Jeshrun synagogue** in Manhattan to attend their unique service and to learn more about their connection with the Argentinian Jewish community. This special Friday night in New York City will be a fun experience for our community and will help us prepare for our synagogue trip to Argentina in November 2015.
  
- 3) **December 7<sup>th</sup> Duck race.** We raised in excess of \$10,000 at this inaugural event last year. You should have received a brochure for the next race when you walked in today. If you do not have a brochure, please pick one up when you leave. They will be in the vestibule. We need help with attracting sponsors and selling tickets. Every duck sale adds to the temple's funds. Tickets will be distributed in the next few weeks. Please call in any potential sponsors to the office.
  
- 4) In honor of the holiday of Hanukah and its theme of rededication, we will **rededicate our newly renovated Safran Hall with a special Hanukah party on – Sunday December 21<sup>st</sup>**
  
- 5) We have a special **Murder Mystery night** for the congregation that's in the planning stages scheduled for late January or February.

6) We are also in the planning stages to host a **fundraising event to upgrade the kitchen.**

7) **Hilary Cole, the noted jazz singer, has kindly donated a concert.** We are currently looking for a location and any suggestions as to a location or any relationships that you may have would help tremendously in hosting this special event. Please liaise with the office so we can assist with these potential sponsors.

8) During the year there will be **Shabbat by sea services and many more opportunities to enjoy services in different and fun settings.** Please see the revamped newsletter that we all receive every month.

In addition to these wonderful programs, I also want to touch on some of the issues that are always going to be priorities:

### **1) Membership:**

While the board continues to strive to find new members, the most effective way is when existing members talk about the Temple and what it has to offer to their friends. As an example, we have a new couple in the Temple who visited our temple on the occasion of a friend's bar mitzvah. They liked what they saw became members and brought people along who have also become members. They contribute time and effort to the temple. We know there are more people out there who are looking for a place to find their own voice. There are many people just like us who are looking for a "Home for the Soul."

Please think of your Temple when the opportunity comes up in discussion. We have the lowest membership fees and no building fund. Nobody is turned away for financial reasons.

## **2) Cemetery:**

Our responsibility to this cause is the highest honor we can give our ancestors and is a special project for me personally. Planning is centered on marketing our 200+ plots and increasing the available funds to provide perpetual care. Currently this item is a big expense to the Temples budget and must be addressed.

## **3) Budget and Finance**

The efforts and contributions of all are highly appreciated. Thank you all for this support and we hope we can count on your continued support.

I am not going to get into any appeal for money. That is Norman's pleasure, suffice to say that we need your continued support in everything. Some can and do more than others, that's terrific. We only ask you to do what you can do, whether this is money and/or time for our Temple's future.

Have a great year

Shana Tova