

## President's Message January 2006

As I was sitting on the Bimah for the healing service this past Sunday, just as the service was beginning, I saw the lift door open and two people who waited patiently for the lift to be installed came out of the lift and proceeded into the sanctuary, without help from anyone else or without a major effort of climbing the stairs. They came out of the lift with grins on their faces a mile wide. It was a moment I will cherish for as long as I live. It made all the hard work and the efforts of so many people feel like it was all worthwhile. I want to thank everyone in the congregation for their support of this project. All of us should be very proud of what we have accomplished this year. Making the building handicapped accessible is a remarkable feat and we all need to take a step back and give ourselves a pat on the back.

I have a few people who deserve special consideration as their help was immeasurable. Rochelle Ostenfeld for her vision and being the latest person to bring this idea to the board. To her husband Tom for his help in overseeing the architecture of the building and for his wonderful design ideas. To Paul May and Stan Ehrlich for overseeing the fiscal responsibility of spending our temple's assets. To Rabbi Lewis, without whose wisdom, guidance and moral support, I do not think I would have gotten this far, as well as her generosity in allowing us to raise funds during her 25th anniversary Shabbaton. To Jeff Berkowitz, whose fundraising abilities are unmatched in this congregation as well as being there for me on days when things were not going so well and being there to listen and advise. To Gwen Nagorsky, who drew up a plan almost identical to the one we built over 7 years ago, for her knowledge, wisdom, and guidance (and not once saying "I designed this a long time ago"). To Laurie Post, who helped me remove the storage closet so that the lift had its place. To Roland Bakonyi, Marsha Gross and Helen Mattson who were able to open the center when the workman did not have the code to get in, for stopping whatever it was they were doing and opening the center. To my three past presidents, Gwen Nagorsky, Sharon Herson and Helen Mattson, you give so much of yourselves to this center and to me. Thanks for teaching me how to be president. To Laurie Hessels, who while working on her own major project, still was able to lend advice and support when asked. To the board of directors over the past 8 years, for all of your friendship, advice, camaraderie and support. To the families of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah this fall for their understanding that the long term good that we were doing outweighed any short term inconveniences.

To everyone else in the congregation, for your good wishes and support along the way. Just coming up to me at services and saying a kind word about the project was one of the things that kept me going.

To our contractor, Brad Bartow and crew, who while doing a superior job of renovating our synagogue never once failed to remember that they were working at a house of G-d, and always showed the respect this building deserves. They also are due special thanks for having the building always ready for our services. Once you were inside for one of this fall's Shabbat, Bar/Bat Mitzvah or High Holiday services, you would be hard pressed to know that construction was even going on.

And lastly to my wife Iris, who pushes me to do the best that I can, as well as her sacrifices of not having her husband/handyman around as much as she would like. Without her, I would be much less of a man than I am today. Iris, I love you with all my heart and soul.

Howie