

President's Message March 2008

My position as President of our congregation is becoming exciting. Like most of the previous significant positions I have held, it is starting to become one that cannot be completed within the time I can devote. This was true when I taught at Purdue, worked in clinical and market research at Pfizer Pharmaceuticals and ran my own consulting company.

In each of these previous positions, the "lightbulb" went on at some point, and I was able to move forward with some success. I know that will happen soon while serving our Congregation, and I know I have the support of the [Board](#), and members to make things happen. I hope many of these items can be addressed fully before our annual meeting in June. For issues involving significant budgetary requirements, they will probably have to wait until the Congregation can vote on them at the annual meeting. This may seem bureaucratic, but the Board has limited freedom to spend outside our annual budget.

With the above preamble, here are some of the key unresolved items on my plate.

1. Security for our Temple. I remember visiting the beautiful grounds of Shalom Park in Charlotte, NC. I believe the land houses a Reform Temple and a Conservative Synagogue. I was there in the middle of the week, and unable to attend services. However, there was much activity on the property, and it was patrolled by private security guards. Our post 9/11 security "fixes" are not as substantial. They currently consist of a direct beeper to the Washington Borough police, activated by the touch of a button. During events with large attendance, when requested, we have contracted with the Borough police for more active physical presence on Youmans Avenue. The issue of security for our Sunday School is real. As of the present, no cost-effective solution has been identified. The Board is working on the issue, but may need more input from the Congregation if non-budgeted expenses are required.
2. Closely related to 1. above, but hopefully easier to solve, the issue of fire drills for our Sunday School classes. Most public and semi-public buildings like ours have "escape" routes clearly marked in each room of the building. Anyone who has stayed in a Motel 6 or more elegant motel/hotel knows the existence of these signs on the door of the room. Working with the local fire department, this issue should shortly be improved.
3. Our membership has increased impressively. Double digit numbers of new members have joined our Congregation in the last year. We hope this continues, and I will spend more time with our Membership Committee to help continue this encouraging trend.
4. Every one of my 20+ years at Pfizer, we would actively develop a "five-year plan." I always found it amusing that a "capitalist" business entity would develop a plan similar to the former Soviet Union. Nevertheless, irrespective of the name, this plan served very good purposes for moving forward. It created a reasonably level playing field so that all management and staff knew what was expected in the next few years. I propose that we try to develop a similar approach (with a better name) for our Congregation. I look to those

members of the Congregation that can help in this area, especially if there are any appropriate software tools that we should utilize.

5. I look forward to attending the Bar/Bat Mitzvahs in the coming months. I also look forward to "relaxing" in the audience when other members can serve on the bima.

Any suggestions will be gratefully appreciated, either by phone (917-941-4332, e-mail at arvesen@att.net) or at an Oneg or other Temple function.

Shalom,

Jim Arvesen

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