

President's Message May 2010

This past weekend, I did something that I very much like to do. I rode up to Boston to play percussion with friends that I have been playing music with for the last 30 years. We are all in our early fifties, with me being the oldest. The entire band is located in the Boston area except for me. This gives me a lot of time to think about why I will drive 11-12 hours to play music with my friends for 3 or 4 hours.

In thinking this over, I guess the first part is that it is just plain fun. We have been playing twice a year for the last 7 or 8 years consecutively and I always have fun. But I think it is more than that. Part of it is that we have formed a small community. These are people that I have grown as an adult with. While we were young and crazy when we started, we have all become responsible adults, with families and careers. Our families are intertwined, although I am somewhat out of the everyday loop by being so far away. Part of it is tradition. When you start doing something and then continue to do it for a number of years, it becomes part of your traditions. We are also there to support each other in times of trouble. This week, our drummer's father-in-law passed away. His wife insisted that we play on Saturday, part of this acting as our form of a wake for her father.

So far, I have talked about family and tradition. To me, these are some of the core values of Judaism. There is little that is more important to me than my family, my temple family and the traditions that I have celebrated throughout my life. I believe that these values define who I am and what I stand for. They tend to give me a base stability that enables me to deal with issues in my life. Knowing who you are, where you have come from, and what you stand for gives you a starting point when you have tough decisions to make. It gives you somewhere to lean upon when times are tough and places to go when it is time to celebrate.

I wish you all a very healthy Spring. Enjoy the flowers and take time to hug the ones you love.

Love,
Howie