

President's Message March 2012

This is going to be one of the hardest columns I have ever written. When I left for California to celebrate my father's birthday, little did I know what would happen while I was away. The passing of both Charlotte Fels and Eric Edelstein has left a giant hole in my heart.

Charlotte and I had the pleasure of teaching adults to read Hebrew over the last four years. This experience has changed my life, as it was my first "real" teaching experience. Charlotte taught me that slow progress is still progress, and that learning is never a straight line from point A to point B. I learned that each student learns at a different pace, and that some students need a gentle pat on the back and some need a little more prodding and encouraging.

But the main thing that I learned from Charlotte was that you can teach and learn at the same time. I thought Charlotte and I made a very good team, because I was able to assist the class with the actual reading, and Charlotte could make the words come to life and give them meaning. I am going to miss my time spent with Charlotte; we will always have her always stimulating reading of Jonah to remember her by.

The loss of Eric was a complete shock to our community. Eric was an extremely private man, but was one of the most knowledgeable people in the congregation in regards to Torah and Hebrew learning. On the days when I made it to Torah Study, Eric always had a fresh perspective, but he also loved to quote Rashi while discussing almost any topic. Eric did many things for the temple, but was a humble man and always requested that his contributions remain anonymous. Eric was our caller for the Shofar service for many years, and when our previous Shofar blower left the congregation, Eric took over the responsibility of blowing the Shofar at the High Holidays.

Eric was a proud man, and was embarrassed one year when he had issues blowing the shofar. After Yom Kippur, Eric took his shofar home and discovered that there was an actual bug in the shofar, and that was why he was having difficulty. I had the pleasure of calling the shofar calls for Eric for the past few years, and I was always proud to have him on the bimah performing this mitzvah. My remembrances of Eric will be those of him being the ultimate "mitzvah man". As I look towards the rear of the sanctuary during services, I will still feel Eric's presence in the back row.

Charlotte and Eric, may you rest in peace.
You will be missed.
I love you both,
Howie