

From Our President Robert Weintraub

“Epilogue”



Robert Weintraub

This is my last Lev La’am column as president of Bet Am Shalom. It is meant to be a message of praises, thanks, apologies and appeals (and it reiterates some of what I expressed at the Annual Congregational Meeting).

Praises

I came into my job of president thinking that Bet Am Shalom is an extraordinary place. After serving my time, so to speak, that thinking has only been enhanced. In all humility, I can say that being part of this enterprise gives me a feeling of *kedushah*, of being set apart and uplifted.

Many of us think of Bet Am Shalom as carrying a covenantal torch which was lit some 4000 years ago. Many of us think of Bet Am Shalom as carrying a Reconstructionist torch which was lit almost a century ago. Many of us think of Bet Am Shalom as carrying a community torch which was lit 62 years ago.

For the most part, that feeling stems from the care, concern and competence that so many in our community apply to making it special – ethically, ritually, educationally, culturally and socially. From those who lead the spiritual practices of our community, to those who participate in its governance and

administration, to those who chair over 70 committees and programs, to those who care for our facilities – “the people’s heart is in the work.”

Thanks

I am honored that you allowed me to help lead these efforts. Thank you so very much!

Apologies

Yet, I know there were times when I failed to fulfill the needed tasks at hand, and I ask your forgiveness:

For the sin of failing to upgrade the coffee.

For the sin of serving the same old tuna fish, week after week after week.

For the sin of not serving enough of the tuna fish.

For the sin of not providing enough seating at kiddush – forcing you to juggle a plate of food, utensils, a black and white cookie you needed to grab and hold before the kids took them all, and a cup of that coffee you never liked, AND forcing someone else to wipe the tuna fish you never liked off your clothes.

But, seriously, please forgive me for the times I didn’t listen carefully enough and didn’t adequately respond to needs you expressed, or even just those I should have noticed.

Appeals (and more Thanks)

Before I leave my presidential podium, I will exert a final prerogative by asking something of you. Let me address myself to two groups, and you are welcome to place yourself in either one or both.

To the younger members of our congregation. First, I want to thank you for your support, your energy, your ideas, your action, your passion, which give many of us hope for the future of our community. But, here’s my ask. Many of us think of Bet Am Shalom as carrying a covenantal torch which was lit some 4000 years ago. Many of us think of Bet Am Shalom as carrying a Reconstructionist torch which was lit almost a century ago. Many of us think of Bet Am Shalom as carrying a community torch which was lit 62 years ago. I don’t know where you stand on any of these profound traditions, but I ask you to take each of them seriously. Most likely you came to Bet Am because you found something special in your Jewish communal experience here. You will be the ones to whom we pass the torch. We know its look and feel will change, but we ask that as your hands raise it aloft you seriously consider the miraculousness of its unending light and warmth.

And to the older members of our congregation. Thank you, too, for your support, your energy, your ideas, your action, your passion, AND your concerns. Here’s my ask of you. Recognize that many of the younger members are not so unlike you were in your earlier days at Bet Am Shalom. Know that they are on their own learning curve. And remember how older members grasped your hand as you rose on that curve. I certainly do. They knew it was their responsibility to ensure that the torch would not go out – that our civilization and our community would remain strong, even as their composition was reconstructed.

