

Congregation B'nai Israel

TEMPLE TOPICS



May 2006

3 Iyar – 4 Sivan, 5766

My Dear Fellow Congregants

Inspiration. The word itself conjures up excitement. So many things have the potential to inspire us each day; many of them are often overlooked. In our synagogue, we find many inspirations: the sanctuary itself, our beautiful Torahs, our Yahrzeit wall, our stained glass, our children, our elders, our Rabbi, our laughter, our song. How do we celebrate this richness? How do we honor those who came before us and those who have yet to be born? Perhaps, just by celebrating our heritage, we have succeeded. As family and friends gathered for the Passover Seder, we remembered, we honored, we celebrated and most importantly, we passed along the story so that generations to come will be able to do the same. In Spartanburg, our Jewish community is small but very strong. Our strength comes from enabling and encouraging our children and, simultaneously, honoring our elders.

In May, we celebrate Mother's Day. For some, it is a time to remember. For others, it is a time to embrace. From Abraham's mother, who, sadly, is not named anywhere, through the next Jewish woman to give birth, please join me in taking a moment to thank each one of them for their love and for allowing our beautiful religion and heritage to continue. In our community, our newest Mother is Leslie Pearlman, who will soon move to Atlanta, and our Mother with the most experience is Dottie Cohen. We join together to thank you both and everyone in between. More than anyone or anything else, you, by far are our inspiration.

As your president, I was inspired by having the opportunity to participate in the Scheidt Seminar for temple presidents in April, presented by the Union for Reform Judaism. More than 100 synagogue presidents from throughout North America met in Atlanta for four days to discuss how we might better serve our congregations. I found that my greatest fear, of somehow failing my beloved congregants, is all but universal. Happily, I am surrounded by people who regularly call to offer support. Such is not the case for every temple president. OK, so I returned with new found inspiration and vigor. Now what? How do we harness that, share it and proceed even stronger? Often, we are invigorated, only to return to our place of comfort. Yes, we like progress and oh, how we fear change. This happened following our Leadership Retreat in February and I don't want it to happen now.

I look forward to hearing from each of you, to learning your thoughts and to working with you on making our Temple an even more productive, exciting spiritual center in our lives and in our community.

Wishing you Shalom, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Barry Nickelsberg

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