

Reflections from Rabbi . . .

REMARKS AT DEDICATION OF ANSHAI TORAH CEMETERY...

On Sunday morning, November 9, 2014 a formal dedication of Anshai Torah's Cemetery space was conducted. Joined by our High School students and members of Kol Rina, together we marked this special moment in the history of the congregation.

Excerpts from remarks by Rabbi Weinberg, and Andy Cohen, chair of the Cemetery Committee:

This week's Torah portion is called Hayeh Sarah. While Hayeh Sarah is translated as "the life of Sarah," the Torah portion records the death of both Sarah and Abraham. When Sarah dies Abraham is tasked with the responsibility to acquire a proper burial place for his wife. Having recently arrived in the land of Israel, Abraham does not own land or a burial plot. He is offered a plot of land for burial purposes by the resident Hittites. However, Abraham is resolute; he wants no gifts—he wants to purchase a plot of land for his wife and future family members.

Subsequently, Abraham purchases the cave of Machpelah as a final resting place for his wife. Indeed, the sedra of Hayeh Sarah records the first purchase of land in Israel by a Jew. It also documents the first purchase of burial land in the Bible. How special it is that we are reading the sedra of Hayeh Sarah this week as we formally mark the purchase of our congregation's burial space! We are maintaining a very old tradition of according our loved one's a proper final resting place—a place of dignity and honor.

We have fulfilled our religious obligation—our "hovah"—as has every other generation of Jewish people throughout history.

We are able to stand on this land today because of the vision and diligence by many members of our congregation. Sixteen years after the founding of Congregation Anshai Torah we are fortunate to mark this important milestone. Just as the Torah portion recorded the death of Abraham and Sarah, it pointed to the marriage of their son Isaac to Rebekkah. Life moves forward and we strive to appreciate the blessings that are ours. Today, we know that our congregation is properly situated to care for its loved ones, having made the necessary commitments to ensure the proper transition from one generation to the next.

One person, Andy Cohen, assumed the responsibility to complete our task. With a very able committee and some very wise counsel along the way, Andy guided the com-

mittee and the synagogue along a track that would culminate with this morning's dedication. I want to publically thank you, Andy, for your willingness to do whatever it took to accomplish your task. On behalf of the membership I say 'thank you' for your dedication to this task.

It is my pleasure to invite you, Andy, to share a few words with all those assembled this morning.

Rabbi Weinberg

Remarks from Andy Cohen...

A successful project takes a committed, dedicated and passionate group of people in order to reach their goals. Our cemetery is the perfect example of what a group of people can do when their desire to do something for their organization is the goal. I would like to thank the following people for their time and commitment to making this eternal resting place a reality.

Hal Babitch, Phil Balis, Harry Benson, Sonia & Carl Goodman, Mark Heidenheimer, Fred Rabinowitz, Stuart Rosenfield, Warren Rubin, Bonnie Rubinstein, Jerry Schechter.

Further, a few special thanks.

Through the years, Jerry Schechter has been a stalwart when it comes to sharing his wisdom and passion with the establishment and growth of Congregation Anshai Torah. This cemetery is another example as Jerry was there to share his personal story of growing up watching his father work on a similar project. These personal journeys were instrumental in achieving our goal.

I want to specially thank Warren Rubin and Stuart Rosenfield who not only were instrumental in getting the original agreements done but they joined me in signing the first legal documents.

Professional leadership is a critical component of success in a not for profit organization. Nothing gets done in our synagogue without the strong work, ethic and will of Harvey Swento. Harvey is more than our Executive Director, he is our partner in doing all of the things we do every day to make Anshai Torah our home and in establishing our cemetery. Harvey was instrumental in our discussions and negotiations and I thank you for being such a big part of this success.

Andy Cohen's remarks...cont'd from page 2

If you have never heard the story, I stood up a few years ago in the back of our sanctuary and promised Rabbi Weinberg that we would fulfill our obligation to our Shul community and establish a cemetery. Please understand that when you promise Rabbi something, the responsibility and the pressure is enormous. Personally, I appreciate Rabbi because he does have such high expectations of who we are, what we do and how we will treat each other. I am eternally grateful for the trust and commitment of Rabbi Weinberg to this

project and our congregation. Without his high standards and commitment to us, this project could never come to fruition.

Today, we can all appreciate that responsibility as we have taken the first step to ensuring that every member of Congregation Anshai Torah will have a final resting place to call their own.

Thank you,

Andy Cohen