

President's Perspective . . . Installation remarks

Thank you, and welcome all of you, especially my family and friends, who have come here tonight for our installation in support of all our outgoing and incoming officers and board members.

To Rabbi Weinberg, Rabbi Kushnick, Harvey, fellow officers, members of the board, members of the staff, fellow congregants, family and friends: Many of you know me as either a jokester or a straight up here is what you get type of guy. Sometimes I am both. But as most of you know, I am a loyal, trustworthy, and patient person who believes in the work of collaboration. I am open to new ideas and willing to implement ideas that will progress our congregation going forward.

Jana and I were both raised with strong Jewish values and the importance of leadership. My grandfather Pops was the President of his Synagogue, my Grandmother Bubbie and my mom were Sisterhood Presidents, my father has been a member of the hevra kadisha for decades, and my father-in-law was the President of his Synagogue. I guess it is just in the blood.

About 16 months ago, I went to a meeting with Marcy and Howard. Their only topic on the agenda (unknown to me, kind of) was that they wanted me to be the next President of our congregation. Actually, their first item was to offer me any drink at the bar. When they got down to discussing the presidency, I thought "what will Jana and the twins think?" and then I thought "do you think that Rabbi Weinberg would have ever thought this would happen when he was officiating my Bar Mitzvah almost 30 years ago?" Well, after discussing the opportunity with Jana for a while, I called Howard and accepted the position of Executive Vice President and to become the next CAT President. That decision was not easy, as I have almost 8-year-old twins, my own business, and still enjoy running and coaching.

Some of you have asked, why or how are you going to do this? First, this is an opportunity of a life time. To be able to lead a vibrant and young conservative congregation with great professional and lay leadership is somewhat unheard of. Our congregation has continuously done a great job with areas of membership, spiritual growth, leadership, mentoring, financial stability, staff, and security to name just a few.

I, like so many before, would have loved a couple of extra years of preparation before taking on this position, but when called upon to join this fraternity of presidents it is not always on your timetable. It only comes around once and you have to grab it.

promote community, teamwork and success. Let's continue to be a model congregation and look to continue the success we have achieved over the past 20 years.

I could not have asked for a better Board of Directors and executive committee. I look forward to working closely with Marcy, Jay (Go Orangemen), Andrew, Beth, Warren, Dan, Cheryl, and Jen on the exec committee.

Howard, you have been a mentor to me and I thank you for all of the great work you have given Anshai over the past years. You will be missed around the table. I want to personally thank Marcy for all she has done to transition the position to me over the past year. She kept me in the loop with everything and every email. She did a wonderful job as President and I hope I can attain the bar in my two years at the helm that she set. Both you and Howard are not just mentors, but friends. Thank you.

The great and famous Yoda once said, "DO OR DO NOT. THERE IS NO TRY." I want my two years to live up to this famous saying and I urge everyone who takes on a position, whether as an officer, committee member or chair, to put your heart and soul into that position. We are to be Anshai Torah Do'ers! We have succeeded in our 20-year life span as a congregation and with each and every one of you we will continue to expand on our successes.

Personally, I feel that we should continue to improve our membership cabinet in order to hyper focus on our membership retention as well as always keeping our doors open to new members and families looking for an exciting and vibrant congregation. Happy members mean a happy congregation! This means that we need programs that can reach our vastly different population of members as we continue to grow. I have a vision that our congregants feel the passion to be more engaged and take the opportunities that are there for each of us here at our shul. We must prioritize locating members that can one day be our future leaders so that we begin to have an efficient and seamless line of succession.

I see a continued vision of a vibrant religious school from Kindergarten through High School that prepares our children to become better Jews with the Jewish skill set to assist them in the real world. I see a Religious School Committee with an active group of parents that will assist our new Religious School Director, Sharon Wechter, in connecting the classrooms, calendars, and staff with our Religious School Families in a positive, productive way.

I believe our new Financial Stability Cabinet will provide us with the proper information needed to look at tough topics, like the size of our current physical structure and proper endowment and investment programs. We have already implemented many of the recommendations from our last strategic plan, and we must continue to use the plan as a guideline into our needs through the next two years. We have worked hard to keep our financials stable. While other synagogues are closing their doors or swimming in debt, we have reduced our debt while raising our positive cash flow.

How can I not be excited about being able to work with Rabbi Weinberg, Rabbi Kushnick, Harvey and his staff, Sharon Wechter, Rachel Blum, our new board, executive committee, and all of the committee chairs and lay volunteers.

I see my role as a collaborator who will keep the organization of all our Shul's moving parts in sync in order to

Finally, I want to thank Bailey and Sawyer and my wife Jana. Without your patience and understanding this would not be possible. You give me the passion to take on this great opportunity, even if it means taking a little time away from the three of you. I promise you that I will continue to make the three of you my first priority. Bailey and Sawyer, if you ever need some extra Daddy time, just let me know. We will make that happen.

I will work hard to live up to the standards that our past Presidents have set, and I look forward to a wonderful, meaningful, most special two years with all of you. Thank you for this honor, privilege, and opportunity to serve each and every one of you.

Shabbat shalom and Mazal tov to our new officers and board.

Barrett A. Stern, President