

President's Perspective . . .

L'Shanah Tovah!

It really happened. I gave the state of CAT at Rosh Hashanah. Please wake me up and tell me that I am sleeping. Well the Cowboys and Liverpool have begun their seasons, so I should not be surprised that I was installed 3 months ago and the High Holidays soon followed.

Seriously, it was my privilege to address you on Rosh Hashanah during this 20th anniversary year of our innovative, dynamic, and vibrant congregation. While so many congregations have been declining, I can honestly say that we continue to head in an upward direction. Our shul has evolved over time, but at the heart and soul of it is you, our congregants. We are also blessed to be led by the inspirational leadership and guidance of both Rabbi Weinberg and Rabbi Kushnick. I would like to thank the High Holiday Committee, led by Josh Socoloff, our Executive Director Harvey Swento and his staff for making sure that we are able to pray together in our safe and comfortable sanctuary.

The state of Anshai Torah is positive and we have a lot to be proud of. Our Early Childhood Director, Rachel Blum, continues to lead our Preschool in providing a top-notch educational environment for our youngest members. Last year the preschool hit its highest numbers in many years. Sharon Wechter has taken over the helm of our Religious School with great enthusiasm and creativity, giving our children the very best religious school education. This year we have already surpassed the amount of children enrolled from last year. Our children will continue to receive the best Jewish experiences from preschool through high school and are fully ready to continue their own Jewish Journey thereafter.

We have been very busy the past 12 months. Our flourishing and active auxiliaries continue to provide our members with a variety of programming throughout the year.

Diamonds & Dice has been and will continue to be a special night for all of us. Last year we honored Stuart Blaugrund and NOW, I am privileged to unveil that Debbie and Manuel Rajunov will be this year's honorees for this wonderful and fun Event. December 8th will be a night to remember. Come celebrate as we honor the Rajunov family for all that they have done for Anshai over the years.

Our Arnie Sweet Scholar in Resident program continues to be a yearly pillar of our congregation. Last year we were embraced with the vast knowledge of middle east peace expert David Makovsky and we are thrilled and privileged to welcome Rabbi Naomi Levy as our scholar-in-resident this coming January.

Project 613 was an emotional and Special Event with the culmination of the spectacular new Wende Torah. That beautiful day in April where Rabbi Weinberg, his family, our congregation, and hundreds of you walked from his house into our Shul with the new Torah is a day that I, like so many of you, will never forget.

The Financial Stability Committee is beginning to assist in recommendations and providing information on tough topics such as our growth, the size of our current physical structure, proper endowment and investment programs.

Other highlights from the past year include our deliveries of Shalach Manot baskets, adult education, several Israel Advocacy programs, security committee initiative programs, Spring Fair and Tikkun Olam committee initiatives. We continue the success with our twice-daily minyanim to insure that all who need to say kaddish for a loved one can do so.

I believe it is vitally important that we maintain our sense of intimacy and personal in-reach even as we grow. We are aware that we must engage our members in targeted ways, with specific experiences and opportunities for all congregants. We have worked hard to keep our financials stable within a balanced budget and fiscal responsibility.

We are working hard to improve communication and connection and believe that our Technology Committee has begun that process with the rollout of ShulCloud. It will allow more efficient communication to you while making life easier for our staff and members going forward. The Technology Committee worked tirelessly and spent countless hours making sure that the ShulCloud launch was successful. We will work and strive to better the PR and marketing of our synagogue and programs within our congregation using ShulCloud and throughout the community on a larger and more effective scale.

Our new social media presence has effectively provided our members and outside community with a positive vibe about our congregation. If you have not done so, please join our Facebook Page after the conclusion of Rosh Hashanah.

As we begin to look into the future of our next 20 years, we must explore the concept of the "Visionary Synagogue," how does Anshai Torah embrace new programs and possibilities while maintaining our uniqueness and holding true to what Anshai Torah has always been about (the Personal Touch with traditional conservative Jewish values).

We will continue to improve our membership cabinet in order to 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. Our membership committee has been hard at work and I am pleased to say that we are still over 550 families here today. In addition, our Chai Membership Program has never been stronger with many new families joining to ensure that all who wish to become part of our family, regardless of financial ability, can do so.

I will be working with our Rabbis and the leadership to create a New Leadership Cabinet. There will be a concerted effort to identify and develop new leadership for the congregation so we continue smooth transitions between committees, boards and executive leadership.

We began this working calendar year with the spectacular Weinberg Family Golf Tournament, where Todd Shores and the assistance of so many volunteers and 120 participants raised thousands of dollars to assist our Anshai children with summer camp scholarships.

Now we look forward to our 20th Gala where we will be honoring Dot and Basil Hayman for all that they have done to make our shul a better second home for all of us. The committee is hard at work to put in place an event that will blow our socks off. I can't wait to dance the Horah and have a Dram with all of you on March 31 at the Hilton Granite Park celebrating our 20th anniversary as a shul. Mark your calendars.

I could not have asked for a better Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Our new board is enthusiastic, engaged, proactive, and innovative. They, along with the many committee chairs, staff, Rabbis and volunteers, have

become the Anshai Torah Doers that I envisioned three months ago. Remember 'DO' OR 'DO NOT' — THERE IS NO 'TRY.'

Thank you for all that each and every one of you do for our congregation. Let's continue to be a model congregation and look to continue the success we have achieved over the past 20 years.

Jana and I are so proud to be raising our family inside of Anshai, our second home. I am thrilled so many of my family and friends that I grew up with are with us . . . I could not be more proud and honored. Please join me for Shabbat Services and all of the upcoming events we have on the calendar that make our shul so special. Also, if you want to get involved please let me know; we will make it happen. We have built a special place and you can make it even better.

Also, I hope that the Rangers, Cowboys, Stars or Mavericks can find their way to success again over the next 20 years. At least I know that Liverpool is going to have a great year.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President. On behalf of our Board of Directors, Jana and I, along with Bailey and Sawyer, wish you a L'Shana Tovah. May you have a beautiful, sweet, and meaningful new year and be inscribed for a year filled with health and goodness.

Shalom!

Warmest Regards,

Barrett