

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2023 TBT ANNUAL MEETING - May 17, 2023; 7pm

The 46th TBT annual meeting took place in person at TBT for the first time in three years with about 50 people in attendance. An additional 14 people attended on Zoom.

President **Karen Goldberg** welcomed everyone to the first Annual Meeting in our new social hall. Karen asked everyone to turn and look at the beautiful new Ark, she talked about the artist, and reminded everyone that this meeting is a sacred meeting. We continued with Shehecheyanu.

Noting that “this is the year that will go down in history that the wandering Jews of Temple Beth Tikvah will wander no more!,” **Rabbi Moss** remarked that it has been a wonderful year. We welcomed Dr. C., who brings us soul stirring melodies and spiritual reflection. Kol Ami and the Men’s Club (Haverim) have engaged us with spirited gatherings. He talked about our successful Kulanu event, the joyful sounds of children and ruach which fill both the Preschool and Religious School, and discussed Keshet, a new initiative to create connections. He stated that “extraordinary synagogue programs do not exist without extraordinary people.” Thanking Karen Goldberg, the Board, and the TBT staff, Rabbi Moss said he hopes that “TBT continues with many new blessings and key moments of connection.” Rabbi Moss says he has more work to do, and he invited anyone who is interested to contact him for coffee or an ice cream.

Tobie Meisel and Susan Lustig, **Membership Co-chairs**, spoke of how fortunate we are to have many new members since 2020. New members were asked to stand and introduce themselves.

Bruce Topolosky, **Building Committee Chair**, gave a brief update, “We are in!” Everything should be complete by August. The main sanctuary is 95% completed. Preschool will be completed after summer vacation begins on June 9 .

Suzy Frisch, **Capital Campaign Chair**, reminded us that at the 2017 Annual Meeting after the TBT 40th Anniversary celebration we asked, “What does the future of TBT look like?” Now we are reentering a building that has much of what we dreamed of.

Capital Campaign report: to date we have gifts from over 70% of the congregation, in addition we have 150 gifts from extended family members and the wider community. Suzy is astounded by the generosity. We have raised over \$7.5 million. As we finish the campaign, we are announcing a generous donor has come forward with a \$500,000 gift for a match challenge this spring.

Susan Lurie, **Treasurer**, reviewed this year and next’s budget. The current bottom line reflects a surplus of \$4000. While our membership is doing well, we see a decline in dues, as we are offering variances to many more families. The preschool revenue has increased a lot, religious school remains stable, the cost of maintenance of the building has increased due to the increased cost of utilities.

Kim Romine, **Administrative Director**, introduced our new staff including two new custodians Chris (daytime) and Herman (afternoons and evenings). Lydia Devlin is our new Communications and Administrative Coordinator. Kim encouraged the congregation to volunteer noting, "We are a small staff and a large congregation." We need volunteers for programs, services and onegs. Kim's quote of the day: "We are in the "house that hope built." Karen thanked Kim and reminded us that Kim is the glue that holds us all together!

Jeff Babbin gave a **Bylaws Committee update**. The committee is looking at our current bylaws and asking: How do we function? How do we govern? What is our structure? There are 3 guiding principles: to simplify governance, to create more flexibility, and to encourage more people to step up to leadership. The revised bylaws will be brought to the congregation for comment and the final draft will require congregational approval.

Dr. Leah Cassorla, **Cantorial Soloist - Educator**, thanked everyone who supports the Religious School. Our current enrollment is 85 students. Dr. C has been working to identify the strengths and areas needing change in our RS. Expressing appreciation, she pointed out that the success of the Religious School depends on the TBT teachers and staff. After 18 years (her chai year) of teaching, Judy Pozzi is retiring.

Jen Casillo, **Preschool Director**, updated us on the success of the preschool. There are currently 50 children enrolled in the "drop off" programs and 8 children in the parent/child program. We are at full capacity and have a waitlist. As Covid restrictions eased, parents were able to enter the PS for activities, birthdays, Thanksgiving feast, Passover seder, and the annual Mother's Day tea in person. Jen thanked the Education committee, her teachers, and TBT staff.

Karen Goldberg announced the winner of our annual **Kavod Award** - Bruce Topolosky. John Lesage spoke about his experience working with Bruce. "Bruce Toplosky deserves recognition." John expressed his deep appreciation for a remarkable individual who dedicated himself to the betterment of our community. As Bruce would say, "first and foremost... we need to be reminded of the immense value he [Bruce] has directed to our spiritual home. Bruce was here everyday and every night for this 3 year roller coaster ride. ... Our calendar became a cruel joke by the construction of G-ds." And, "We now get to shine the spotlight on someone who embodies the true essence of our community. Bruce never faltered, never failed to face a challenge. His presence is in everything you can see and, more importantly, everything you cannot see." After working with Bruce, John Lesage can now call him "friend." Bruce thanked John Lesage and called him his partner in crime. He thanked the Construction Committee, Suzy Frisch, and the congregation who supported the project. He thanked everyone who had confidence in him to steer the ship.

Presentation of **2023-2024 slate of candidates for the Board of Directors**. Karen called up the Board of Directors for the upcoming year. Jeff Babbin put in the motion, and the Board was approved. Kate Glazer, Education Co-chair, Jill Lesage, Programming Co-chair, and Andrea Tore, Youth Activities Chair will be completing their terms in June of 2023. Karen thanked them for their enthusiasm, energy, and commitment in service to our congregation.

Kesher Circles. Steve Eppler-Epstein spoke about our new program, Kesher, which emerged from the Design Team house meetings that talked about the roles of Jewishness and TBT in our lives. Key points: we have been impacted by Covid, electronic communication, and by natural generational changes. People are longing for opportunities to connect with one another. Kesher groups are small groups that will meet over the next year. The groups are based on interests and include biking and skiing, cooking, exploring questions for G-d, Shabbat dinners, caregiving, singing together, and meetings by Zoom. Each group will have a designated leader. Sign ups will take place at the end of the summer. At the end of the year, the Design Team will re-evaluate the program and decide... did it work?

Amy Lee and Leslie Hyman spoke about **Chesed** which is an update of the Caring Committee. Chesed means loving kindness. The mission of Chesed is to build and knit together a culture of kindness. The goal is to do this important work, but also to teach and nurture the concept for all of our congregants. It's ok and safe to ask for help, and it's also important to offer help. Chesed has launched a survey to determine the needs of the congregation, interest in helping, and best means of communication?

Sabrina Maurer spoke about **Creating a Jewish Legacy**. This is a collaborative initiative funded by the Harold S. Grinspoon Foundation and the Jewish Foundation of Greater New Haven. The goal is to foster legacy giving and ultimately to build an endowment ensuring that the vibrant community we are today remains strong into the future.

Ted Langevin introduced last year's **Beatrice and David Friesner Memorial Scholarship** winner, Noah Chorney, Colgate University. Noah reflected on the wisdom he learned his first year away from home. First lesson - if you want to make friends, do not let your mom buy you the expensive toilet paper! Ted also had the honor to announce this year's winner, Melanie Siegel who will be attending Lehigh University in the Fall and back at next year's meeting to tell the congregation about her first year's experience at school.

Karen thanked everyone saying that she feels lucky to be president during this time in our synagogue's history. Karen extended our blessings to Rabbi Susan Landau Moss on the anticipated arrival of Baby Moss. We ended the way we started - with song. Oseh Shalom!

Meeting adjourned 8:40pm