



Temple Beth Am

The Minyan Monthly



An occasional news letter from the Temple Beth Am Library Minyan

Volume: 10 Number: 2

Shevat 5758

February/March 1998

HOSTILE TAKEOVER?

Ronnie Cohen to Sit on Temple Board

Los Angeles, California. I would like to take the opportunity, in this, my first communication to the Library Minyan since my elevation to this exalted position, to thank all of you who supported me in this bitterly contested campaign. It was a hard fight, but with your effort and G-d's help, we can put divisiveness behind us and come together as one united minyan to meet the struggles that lie ahead. To my opponents, I would like to express my compliments on a well fought contest, and to reassure you that I bear no personal animosity toward you for the cruel and baseless ad hominem attacks to which I was subjected by your supporters. While I thought some of the election pranks clever, others I feel went too far, and I would be indebted to anyone who could recommend a process for removing the ovine aroma from my closet.

As for my hopes and aspirations for the Library Minyan while I am at the helm, I really don't think that I could expand on the detailed plans set forth in my campaign literature, of which you all received countless copies. As I pledged during the campaign, I will limit myself to fighting for those, and only those, initiatives which gained the support of the majority of minyan members who participated in the L'Egg poll conducted last Purim.

Once again, thanks to everyone for your support and confidence.

Ronnie Cohen

MINYAN MEETING TO BE HELD SOON: There will be a meeting of the Steering Committee of the Library Minyan on Sunday evening, ??????, 1998, at 7:00 pm. Among numerous items on the agenda are reconsiderations of: Full Kri'at Hatorah and Use of Microphones **KEEP YOUR EARS AND EYES OPEN FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON OTHER UP COMING MINYAN EVENTS.**

HAGBAH HOW-TO AND GELEELAH GUIDANCE

Carl Sunshine

Here are a few tips on how to accomplish these honors with confidence and safety. the key to successful Torah lifting is leverage. The Hagbah should unroll the scroll on the reading table until 2-3 columns of text are visible, and then pull the scroll towards you until the lower rollers are about 10 inches off the near end of the table. Then grasp the shaft handles firmly in each hand, and push down, so the table edge serves as a fulcrum to push up on the top end of the scrolls. Do not try to tilt up the full weight directly from your hands.

Once you have levered the scroll to nearly vertical, you should take the full weight on your arms, back away a bit from the table, and raise it up higher to be seen by the congregation. While doing this, maintain the distance between the shafts so the open part of the scroll remains stretched, and does not

RECONSIDERING THE MICROPHONE

Mayer Alan Brenner

As I write, the Days of Awe are a memory barely hours old, and Steve Spiegel's exhortation on the importance of forceful moderation stills ring fresh in my ears - but perhaps that is due to the fact that I was sitting in the front, close to the speaker. Be that as it may, I believe the experience of the holidays just past demands that we revisit the vote taken last year concerning the use of a microphone during certain services.

Are those gasps of horror I hear? Perhaps so, but not from everyone. Over the holidays, I spent time in the back of the room, and also spoke to many of you to gauge your experiences as well. Last year, when I voted against the use of a microphone, I was swayed by the argument that the chapel space had not yet been acoustically fine-tuned, and that an accurate determination of whether a problem exists could not be made without a full-scale trial free of amplification. The recent days have provided just such a trial. I believe - and from my conversations, it seems that many of you also believe - that an unfortunate situation still persists.

Put simply, those congregants seated from the middle of the expanded chapel back toward the rear of-

ten cannot hear what is going on in the front. If we are going to continue to allow this number of people to share our service, it is our responsibility to provide them with an adequate environment for being involved.

Last year, a one-day trial testing the use of amplification in the expanded chapel did take place. I felt that that test was a failure, and I recall this as being the general consensus as well, but it was also the conclusion that the microphone used at the time was the wrong type (being highly directional), and that various other technical considerations were also not properly aligned. Accordingly, I would like to see a new test (or series of tests) conducted, with full consideration being given to having the microphone and amplification system set up in the optimum fashion. Following these tests, I propose that the minyan vote again to determine whether a microphone should be available during services where an expanded chapel space is configured.

As I have now stepped out in front on this issue, I eagerly await your response - whether or not it includes arrows in the back...

Hagbah and Geleelah

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slump down on the rollers. Be careful not to raise the scroll too high so it bumps into the sound board above the bimah. After raising the scroll, you may turn around to show the written side to the main part of the congregation. Then lower the scroll to a more comfortable height and walk carefully down the stairs on the side of the bimah to the waiting chair, taking care not to bump the scrolls into the sound board above the bimah.

As the Hagbah prepares to descend from the bimah, the Geleelah should be close at hand, ready to steady the tops of the posts as the Hagbah walks to the chair and sits down. This is specially important when one side of the scroll is much heavier than

the other. Once the Hagbah is seated, the Geleelah should roll up the scroll tightly while steadying and turning the tops of the posts. If necessary, the Geleelah may push up the parchment so it lays properly on the rollers.

Next the Geleelah proceeds to dress the Torah by putting on the *wimple*. Some are elastic and close with velcro, while some need to be tied. In the latter case, the wimple should be long enough to go around the scroll twice, and be tied in a bow in front of the Torah (which will be opposite to where the Geleelah is probably standing). Then put on the mantle and hang the yad in front of the Torah, over the post of the Bereshit side, to the reader's right.



Kiddush Reservations

We all like a nice kiddush, and Temple Beth Am now ensures that the Library Minyan has a basic kiddush every week. Occasionally we are able to celebrate a simcha with someone who sponsors a more elaborate kiddush for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, a birthday, an anniversary, or some other happy occasion.

It is easy to arrange to sponsor a kiddush by calling Amy Rabin, our facilities coordinator at TBA. She can explain a number of "standard options" to enhance the basic kiddush (fruit plate, crackers and dip, herring, cakes and cookies), or work with you to create something different. You just send in a check for the amount agreed upon, and the shul will make all the arrangements, do all the setup, and place a notice of your sponsorship in the Shabbat Bulletin.

We all have good intentions, but in the press of daily life, even that simple call to Amy may get put off until the opportunity is past. To help make it easier, we encourage you to fill out the following reply form, and we will contact you in plenty of time to arrange for your event. We can also pair up people requesting the same (or close) dates to share the cost of a kiddush, making it more affordable.

Please fill this out NOW while you are thinking of it and send it to: Amy Rabin, TBA, 1039 S. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035.

Library Minyan Kiddush Resevation

Name _____

Telephone # _____

Occasion to be celebrated: _____

Date: _____

Do you want to share kiddush sponsorship with another person?

Yes _____ No _____ Maybe _____

Minyan Monthly Occasionally?....

Maybe you didn't notice, but this is the second newsletter of 5758 year. *The Minyan Monthly* has turned into "*The Minyan Occasionally*" without hardly a whine or whisper. The only way we can have this newsletter on a monthly basis is if we have enough information to print in this type of format.

During the past two years as editor of *The Minyan Monthly*, it has been difficult getting enough material to print an entire publication (at least 4 pages). In the past we have reprinted a D'var Torah to take up space instead of printing other items more timely or pertinent to the Library Minyan or TBA. I don't know if the original intention of *The Minyan Monthly* was to be a forum for Torah study and/or discussion of outside issues, or if it was implemented to be a place to communicate current Minyan/Temple-related information, such as meeting minutes and up-coming events, to members who may miss announcements during services on a regular basis (for what ever reason).

I'd like to suggest that we no longer try to accomplish a monthly newsletter, but instead schedule it for quarterly distribution. The printing and mailing of a six page document (3 pages front and back) costs the synagogue over \$150.00 (The Library Minyan use to pay for this out of our treasury, but has not paid anything for many years). When the information that is being communicated is important and timely, we are better off putting a two-sided document in the "White Envelope" which the Temple sends out to the membership mid-month, every month.

I am happy to continue as editor of *The Minyan Whatever*, that is, unless someone else wants to take over. Plan for the next issue to be released in April, assuming there is something to publish.

If you would like to submit something for a future publication, please send it to me in one of the following formats: e-mail--Do not send document as an attachment, please place it in the body of your e-mail. Send all e-mail to my address at: urbanmom@earthlink.net ; disc--Mac or P.C. okay. Save as Word, Word Perfect, or Text document, only; Fax--(213) 934-8515.

I am happy to be of service. *Sandra Braun*

An open letter to the Library Minyan community:

I've enjoyed the structure of the Library Minyan for many years now, but have also had concerns regarding it, and since a particular incident occurred during the holidays recalled these concerns, I've decided to express them openly. There are two: the first concern is the lack of friendliness of the Minyan, an observation of mine that has remained constant over the eight or nine years I have been attending; my second concern is the lack of friendliness toward children, which seems to me to be a more recent development.

I am not confusing lack of friendliness with lack of ability to form friendships. It seems to me that a worship congregation should have friendliness as a value, and that the formation of friendships is a by-product of attendance. I have made some good friends over the years at the Library Minyan - when I was single, when I married, and when I started my family. My critique of the Library Minyan is that it does not foster the value of friendliness, and the Minyan leadership is the body most responsible for fostering that value.

Any member of the Minyan who stands at the bimah, to lead prayers or make announcements, or who assigns alliyot or acts as usher, is a leader of the minyan and as such, carries the responsibility to be not only warm and welcoming, but to be aware of the Minyan's membership. This is true of leadership in general terms, but according to Jewish wisdom, being of cheerful countenance and greeting others first is a Mitzvah.

Imagine if Rabbi Rembaum or Netter, or Hazzan Lipton, were cool and acted as if they were strangers to their congregants? What a sorry synagogue we would become! I think that the lay leadership carries the same responsibility as our paid and elected leadership - to move outside of their own comfortable circle and inward stance, and to actively reach out toward others. This is one of the ways that a congregations stays alive and active.

Here are my personal examples - in the eight years I have been present at the Minyan, most of the leadership still don't greet me, smile or say "Shabbat shalom." (Never mind knowing my name). I have regularly through the years complemented or made comments regarding the drash, or said hello in various situations - I even spent a Shabbat lunch many years ago in someone's home only to be completely unrecognized at subsequent Shabbat services! Six years ago I said Kaddish for my father, every Shabbat for one year, and frequently while crying. In that time, only one person in the Minyan ever asked me who I was saying Kaddish for, and had a kind word of condolence. Contrast this with my annual visit to the morning and evening minyan for yartzeit, and the warm and welcoming group of gentlemen who make the moment sweet, even while I still shed tears.

My second concern is regarding our children. My observation is that the Minyan's rejection of its children is a relatively recent happening. I remember, back in my single days, children happily skipping in and out of services, and certainly gathering at the bemah for Adon Alom. Now, the fierce looks and admonitions from people who either have grown children, children old enough to participate in youth services, or none, have kept many of us from bringing our little children to the Minyan. I find this a very sad and sorry state.

At Kol Nidre, I brought my young children into shul, because the provided child care in the school consisted of an agency - not our own teenagers who my children know and love. They were not providing good care - and so I removed my children (I rarely bring my children into the Minyan - they regularly attend "Tot Shabbat").

The tradition for Kol Nidre is that all of the congregation is present, men, women, and children. I understand, of course, that during the drash, it is courteous to the speaker not to allow children to be disruptive, and I ended up needing to take my children out during the drash. I was astounded that one of the "old time" Minyan leaders started to admonish me, rather harshly, just as I was taking out my children. This was from a person who I had several times in the past greeted and attempted to make pleasant conversation with, but with no response. So my first connection with this individual was a negative one.

And at the conclusion of Yom Kipper, the children were not invited up, nor invited to participate in Havdalah. (I heard that at Temple Valley Beth Shalom, all the children were invited up, and were given small flashlights with which to light up the darkened room - how sweet.)

It is my conclusion that warmth in the Library Minyan is reserved for the set that either grew up together, live in the Beth Am adjacent neighborhood, have the title of rabbi or Jewish educator, or at the very least have the same level of Jewish education. Those outside of these cliques are excluded, including our children.

Make no mistake, if you volunteer to serve, speak or chair a committee within the Library Minyan-you are a leader. And not only a leader of the Minyan - you represent the whole shul as well, by virtue of your visibility. One of the responsibilities of serving as a leader of a worship congregation is to smile, and to be mindful and cognizant of who is there, and welcoming of those individuals.

In addition, welcoming, cherishing and finding a role for our children to play within the service is critical to maintaining the dynamic vibrancy that I think we all want to see in the Library Minyan.

Respectfully yours, Lori Harrison Port

LIBRARY MINYAN CONTACTS and COMMITTEES

Please don't be alarmed if your name appears on this list but you no longer hold the position that is stated, or your name is suppose to be here and it is not, please call Sandra Braun.

Steering Committee Chair,

Ronnie Cohen 213/

Minyan Treasurer

Dale Bodenstein 213/937-7443

Torah & Haftorah Reading

Batya Ordin 213/939-3945

Larry Wineman 310/276-4784

Gabai'im

(Shabbat/Holiday Services and Torah Honors)

Susan Grinel 310/559-6780

Drashot

Rachel Green 213/938-8110

Cathie Lippman 213/658-6917

Torah Gabai

Henry Morgan 213/935-9831

Ritual Committee

Bob Braun 213/934-3231

Child Care Committee

Teri Cohan Link 310/204-1401

Larry Harris 310/556-7778

Hospitality

Abby Harris 310/556-7778

Debbie Abeles 310/652-1505

Kiddush

Amy Rabin, T.B.A. Facilities Coordinator
310/652-7353 ext 213

Minyan Monthly

Sandra Braun 213/934-3231

fax 213/934-8515

e-mail urbanmom@earthlink.net

Scheduling LM Events (Bnai Mitzvot, etc.)

--Master Calander

Val Goldstein 310/837-5503

Shiva Minyans

Contact Beth Am 310/652-7353

TREASURY REPORT

On behalf of the Library Minyan, I would like to thank the following for their contributions to the Library Minyan treasury:

Luann Shuer Garber and William Garber

"In honor of the Library for the friendliness to their family at Pesah last year"

Prayer Books were donated in honor of Betty Lolloer's 75th Birthday

June and Vic Penso • Sarah Richtman and Family • Fran and Joel Grossman

Eddie and Ellen Rabin and Carol Sue Roenberg: In honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Susan Grinel

Ellen and Eddie Rabin and Arthur and Susan Mishler: Condolences to Susan Grinel of the loss of her brother

Susan Grinel: For the support the Library Minyan gave after the loss of her brother

Joseph and Marizon Nimoy: For a donation of five prayer books

Esther and Eliahu Silon: In honor of Barry and Kathy Rosenblatt's 20th anniversary

Joshua Kalex: In honor of the Gabbai who made us feel so welcome on Shabbat

Mr. and Mrs. L. Chameides: Wishing their so, David, well in his new home.

Louis Schatz: In memory of his wife, Molly Schatz

Mr. and Mrs, Alex Wagner for their Torah Aliyot

Albert and Linda Rosenblatt: Wishing a speedy recovery to Roz Miller and in honor of the birth of their granddaughter, Arielle Yonah Sunshine

Elon Sunshine and Shira Rosenblatt: In memory of Eli Rembaum, father of Rabbi Rembaum

Cathie Lippman and Jules Kamin: In honor of Joel Goldstein's graduation, Ari Beliak's graduation, David Fasman's Bar Mitzvah, Benjy Rosen's Bar Mitzvah, the birth of Shachar, daughter of Andrea Hodos and Aryeh Cohen. In memory of Molly Schatz and Susan Grinel's brother.

Simchat Torah Pledges

Elon Sunshine and Shira Rosenblatt, Fred and Diane Landau, Alan and Sheila Spiwak, Eric and Navi Lesin, Elliot and Marlynn Dorff, Marshall and Hannah Kramer Samel Jason, Barbara and Howard Wettstein, Larry Weinman, Max Stern, Joel Stern and Susan Jacoby Stern

Thanks to everyone for their most generous donations. The Library Minyan treasury has doubled in the last few months. At the next meeting, we should consider the best ways to use the money from these contributions. Dale Bodenstein, Minyan Treasurer
Mail your donations to Temple Beth Am or to Dale Bodenstein, 1121 S. Spaulding Ave., Los Angeles, CA, 90019.

But wait, there's more...from Sandra Braun, Editor of The Minyan Monthly

A response to Lori Port's "Open Letter to the Library Minyan"

Been There, Done That: It is because of the friendliness of the Minyan community that Bob and I left Valley Beth Shalom to become full members of Temple Beth Am. Yes, we left V.B.S., where children are not permitted in the sanctuary at any time if they can not stay quiet and in their seat, where children or preteens do not have a seat on the high holidays unless you've paid extra for their ticket, and yes, where they give out flashlights for havdalah after Yom Kippur--until they run out of enough flashlights and the sounds of the cantor and choir compete with the wailing of the poor children who didn't get a light or who got one that was broken.

Library Minyan's Reserved Membership: If the Library Minyan is reserved to a set who grew up together or who live in the adjacent neighborhood, then Bob and I should have not been able to join until five years ago. Neither of us is a Rabbi or Jewish Educator. Bob grew up in Encino and I'm from Michigan. When we started davening at the Library Minyan (about 14 years ago) we knew a handful of Minyan members and we lived near Rancho Park (about three miles from here). A year later we moved a mile from the shul. We both understood immediately that The Library Minyan was a participatory minyan and to become a part of the Minyan "set" you had to "pay, come and serve" i.e., pay your dues, come to services regularly, and volunteer to be of service. Since I was not prepared to serve as a prayer leader or Torah reader, I volunteered to purchase food and to help set up for kiddush. After Benjy was born, I became involved on the childcare committee and then later with Junior Congregation. I volunteered as treasurer of the Minyan and three years ago I learned with Hazzan Lipton how to read Haftorah and to lead services. I jumped right in and never got out. This community became our second home and five years ago, Bob and I moved into a house in the adjacent neighborhood to be closer to our community.

Rejection of Children: The Minyan is not a children's service or a "family" service--it is, or tries to be, a serious egalitarian, traditional service which encourages participation by adults, teens and children alike. For those who want a program specifically designed for families, Beth Am offers their "Beit Tfila Family Service" every Shabbat and on the High Holidays. For those who want a program geared to children, the Minyan, far from rejecting children, is the force behind Beth Am's Tot-Shabbat, Junior Congregation and holiday Childcare programming. For myself, when my children were younger, Bob and I spent most of our Shabbats taking turns in Childcare supervising our kids and other Library Minyan member's children because there was no Tot-Shabbat or Junior Congregation. We sat close to the door of Cafe Keshet so that we could leave the room if our children were noisy or wanted to eat. For the last 14 years parents have been asked to keep their children quiet during Torah and Haftorah reading and a D'var Torah. But children are and have always been welcome to participate in leading Adon Olam and Anim Z'merot, unless they are too busy with the wonderful Shabbat programs or playing on the roof following Junior Congregation.

Members or Leaders?: If the people who are active in The Minyan are being called the "leaders", then every member of the Minyan should hold that title. Only members of Temple Beth Am who "pay, come and serve" are to have membership privileges in the Library Minyan. The Library Minyan is and has always been a participatory Minyan, there are no other exclusions or rites of passage. My suggestion to anyone who has concerns or wishes to change anything about the Minyan is to become a "leader" yourself. It takes a desire and commitment to become a greater part of the whole. The Minyan can not do what it does without the support of the members who are devoted to making the Minyan, "The Minyan".

P.S. Shame on the person who admonishes anyone who is leaving the chapel with a nosiy child. Instead, you should be smiling, holding the door open, and thanking them for being courteous to the other members.

PURIM MASQUERADE* BALL

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