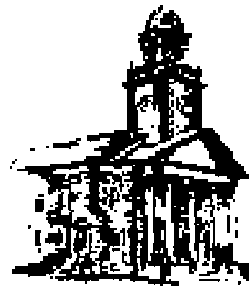


# **ANNUAL MEETING REPORT**

**JUNE 7, 2009**



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## Administrator's Report

Most of my time is spent on the day-to-day tasks of Temple operation. What follows is a brief description of some additional projects and programs which took place over the past fiscal year.

### Facility

Many needed improvements were made to our aging, heavily-used building in 2008-9. In addition to the usual routine maintenance and emergency repairs, the following are some projects accomplished over the past year:

- We had been unable to open most of the sanctuary windows. While some will need to remain closed permanently because they are too fragile to be tampered with, a carpenter was hired to free the windows (mostly on the Sewall Avenue side) enabling us to open them when weather conditions allow it.
- Classroom 8 changes: A semi-permanent divider was purchased and installed, new air-conditioning units purchased, and electricity in that room upgraded to accommodate the new AC units. The old carpeting was removed and new, commercial grade carpeting installed
- Assistive Listening devices: Four assistive listening devices and a base unit were installed in the sanctuary to help those with hearing loss at services.
- The chairs in Ehrenfried Hall are more than 50 years old and many were badly damaged. Half of these "Thonet" chairs were refurbished last year. Over the past winter, the remainder of the chairs were repaired and reupholstered using fire-safe materials.
- A large, leaking steam pipe over the school boiler was replaced.
- The flooring at the base of the school stairs, Ehrenfried level, was pulled up and replaced.
- Sanctuary wiring: Last year, much of the sanctuary wiring was upgraded. To complete this project, the balcony level wiring was redone this year so that all of those lights are now on a switch. Previously, our custodian needed to ascend to the balcony and lean over the railing to manually turn off each light. While a bit of Sinai quirkiness was lost, a bit of "modern" convenience was gained.
- New small reading lecterns in sanctuary: To complete the lectern replacement project, two small reading tables were designed and crafted, to be used on the floor level of the sanctuary. These compliment the new, larger lectern for use on the bimah which was built last year. A Torah reading top was also designed for use with the small lecterns, so that the Torah can be read from the floor level. Among other things, this makes reading from the Torah handicapped accessible. These lovely and useful pieces of furniture were designed and built by carpenter Rees Tulloss, with guidance from Temple members.

## **Rentals**

Temple Sinai's regular tenants include the following, Am Tikva, Artbarn, the Asian Student Center, BNI-Fenway, BNI-Brookline, Hope Fellowship Church, the Israeli Complimentary School, the Jewish Recovery Network, Minyan Shaleym, Music Together, Music With Philip, and Princeton Review, along with a number of other groups which rent space here on an occasional basis.

Rental revenue is projected to top \$93,000 this fiscal year – a record high for the Temple. However, we have been informed by one tenant (Hope Church) that they will not renew their agreement after December, 2009 – which will represent a loss of income over the current year. We are in the final negotiation stages of acquiring another, smaller, tenant which will begin to use one of our classrooms on Thursday afternoons in September, 2009. Rental revenue represents a substantial portion of the Temple's annual income (12-13%) and helps us to mitigate increases in membership dues. Dealing with tenants – both current and potential -- requires an appreciable amount of time and a high level of patience!

## **Memorials**

In 2008-2009, two new plaques were installed on the rear wall of the Temple's sanctuary. The following individuals were memorialized: Selma Dana and Abraham Shulman. A printed Scroll of Remembrance was distributed at the Yom Kippur *yizkor* service, as it is every year.

## **Temple Sinai's Computer Network**

This year, a number of improvements were made to the Temple's computer system. Two computers were purchased at a greatly discounted price and were provided to the Rabbi and Education Director. Now, four of the five temple computers (for the Temple office, Education Director, Rabbi and Cantor) are three years old or less. Last summer, a Windows Home Server was purchased and installed. This hardware provides remote access to Temple files, improves the ability of staff to share files, and most importantly, provides automated centralized back-up of the Temple's files. (The Temple is still attempting to deal with the problem of creating off-site backup of those files.) In addition, over the past year, we migrated the Temple's e-mail hosting. This changeover, a time-consuming and labor-intensive one, had been planned for the future, but the addition of a new staff member to our system accelerated those plans. Our IMAP system stores e-mail messages on-line and improves remote access to incoming and sent e-mails. While progress has been made, important elements of the network continue to present regular operational problems. The expense of maintenance is high, and I believe that the Temple will need to consider investing in infrastructure upgrades in the future.

## **Committee Fair**

In September, on the first day of the school year, the Temple sponsored its first "Committee Fair," with the chairs of many of the Temple's committees setting up tables which showcased their activities to recruit new members. This morning was well attended by long time and new Temple members and provided a start to the Temple year which was both social and informational.

## **Oneg, "Shabbat@Six" Nosh and Greeter Guidelines**

New instructions were written, old ones heavily revised and all were posted on the website. In addition, an on-line greeter and oneg sign-up form was created and posted on the web. While the web-based signup worked well technically, it did not solve the difficulty we face in finding an oneg sponsor for each week.

### **Publications and On-Line Newsletters**

Our on-line newsletter, the Sinai Update, is e-mailed to approximately 700 people each week and the number of recipients continues to grow. This electronic vehicle allows us to provide information on Temple events inexpensively and in a timely manner. This year, a new publication was added for communicating to the Sinai community. The former "Sinai News" was renamed Lu'ach ("Calendar") and shortened to focus on upcoming events. A new, additional publication, Kolot ("Voices") was launched and is published every three months. This newsletter contains columns from the Rabbi, Cantor, Education Director and President, along with articles and *divrei* Torah written by Sinai members and articles about events which have taken place in recent months. Our printed news publications are sent to almost 400 members, prospective members, and friends during the September through June period.

### **And.....**

I continue to gain enormous benefit from the collaboration, tutelage and assistance provided to me - with good humor! -- by members of the Temple Board and its committees. I am sincerely grateful for this help and look forward to another fruitful year ahead.

*Linda Katz,*  
Administrator

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### **Caring Committee Report: June 2008 – May 2009**

1. We have concluded our 9th year as a Caring Committee. During the past year:
  - a. We have reached out to ~65 individuals, couples and/or families in both happy and troubling situations, including those who had babies, moved, suffered a loss, an illness, an injury, an operation or were in a hospital, a rehabilitation center or were isolated at home .
  - b. We personally delivered or sent shiva platters, plants, bouquets of flowers or get well gifts and provided meals to families in need of our support or celebrating the arrival of a new baby. We made visits, check-in telephone calls and sent messages of cheer, condolence, encouragement and congratulations too numerous to count.
  - c. We provided rides to temple services to several congregants.
  - d. We have made several connections between congregants that have involved visits or telephone contact some of which are ongoing.
  
2. We have continued the rotating monthly Co-Chair leadership model to better distribute our work and to support the Rabbi and the committee chair in providing support to the congregation. There were two Co-Chair teams each month. 18 Co-Chairs will be returning for the 2008-2009 Caring Committee year. We thank our past, present and future Co-Chairs for their generous donation of time, caring and commitment to our community. We also thank Shirley Partoll and her staff of volunteers for sending out notes of congratulations in such a timely manner.

3. We continue to expand our volunteer base by encouraging members of the congregation to help us with our work. Our goal is 100% participation of the congregation in doing mitzvot for one another. High school students in the Religious School assisted the Caring Committee by preparing several meals to be distributed as needed. New volunteers are always needed - please contact Zippy Ostroy to sign on to help. We thank the many volunteers too numerous to list who have so generously and unselfishly served us behind the scenes during the past year.
4. We continue to reorder and restock the pastoral care pamphlets from Jewish Lights Publishing Company and MiSheberach cards on a regular basis to help our members and visitors deal with the various life and death challenges that they find themselves facing. They are presently found on the tables in the back of the sanctuary, and outside the restrooms next to Ehrenfried Hall. Donations to the Caring Committee which help to replenish the supply are always welcome.
5. We collaborated with The Board of Trustees and the Religious School in organizing, preparing, assembling, and delivering Shalach Manot Purim gift bags to approximately 30 of our senior congregants. We are grateful to David Kornetsky with assistance from Julia Malkin and Heidi Smith Hyde for making this happen. Many individuals and families in the congregation and several classes in the Religious School were involved in some part of this project.
6. We celebrated our 9th anniversary of Healing Services this past May, coordinated and coled by lay leaders Deena Blau of Temple Sinai and Marvin Kabakoff of Am Tikva (the gay-lesbian alliance) along with volunteer musicians Dayse and Roberto Weissman.. Healing Services took place every other month. Average attendance ranged from 10-18 for each service. The service is open to the outside community. Our fourth Yom Kippur Healing Service took place this year in conjunction with Am Tikva.
7. In the library there is a collection of books donated by the Caring Committee on topics ranging from death and dying to mourning, addiction, divorce, the power of prayer, caregiving, coping with cancer and illness, gay and lesbian issues, etc.
12. This past year our expenses were covered by \$250 from the Temple Sinai budget, plus the Aryeh Friedman Fund and the Caring Committee Fund. We have received numerous generous in-kind and monetary donations from congregants and friends.

Respectfully submitted,  
Zippy Ostroy

## Education Committee 2008 - 2009 Report

Submitted by Heidi Smith Hyde on behalf of the Education Committee  
Co-chairs: Abby Cox and Merav Socolovsky

### Enrollment

# Students 2007 – 2008 115

# Students 2008 – 2009 123

# New Students 2007 – 2008 34

# New Students 2008 – 2009 31

# New Families 2007 – 2008 20

# New Families 2008 – 2009 21

### Teacher Retention

In 2008 – 2009 we employed 18 teachers, a part-time youth educator and Jewish Life Educator. The following teachers are leaving at the end of the year – **Hila Brukman** (Hebrew tutor), **Naomi Levin** (Kindergarten), **Bryanne Mahoney** (Grade 7) and **Dana Shulsinger** (Grade 5). As of now, 14 teachers are returning. **Amy Salinger** (Family Educator) and **Benn Waters** (Youth Educator) will not be returning next year. Benn is making *aliyah*!

### New Family Educator and Youth Educator Hired

We welcome our new Family Educator, Sandi Intraub, a student at Hebrew Union College who brings with her a wealth of experience teaching adults and children. We also welcome new youth educator, Elyssa Cohen, a graduate of Brandeis University and a former community organizer.

### Boston-Haifa Connection

We embarked upon an exciting parallel learning program with the Kishon School in Haifa, entitled, “You, Me and Our Jewish Holidays.” The program involved Grade 2 students, who regularly sent packages back and forth to an elementary school in Haifa. Grade 2 also completed a special holiday curriculum along with their new Israeli friends. In addition to “You, Me and Our Jewish Holidays,” Grade 5,6 and 7 were engaged in a pen-pal project with the Kishon School, culminating in a videoconference conducted right here at Temple Sinai in May. Although the Kishon School is closing this year, we will try to find another elementary school with whom we can communicate next year.

### Religious School Shabbaton

Grade 2,3 families participated in our first religious school Shabbaton. Almost 70 people attended this overnight retreat in Groton, Massachusetts. The Shabbaton included parallel learning for adults and children, a Shabbat nature walk, a family quilt project, boating and rock climbing, and a family Shabbat service led by Rabbi Vogel. The theme was time travel and the story of Creation.

### “Coming of Age” Curriculum

Grade 6,7 students completed a new Holocaust curriculum entitled, “Coming of Age.” The curriculum, designed for bar and bat mitzvah students, presents the stories of thirteen young

people who came of age during the Holocaust. Students reflected on the challenges these survivors faced before, during and after the Shoah. As a result of studying this curriculum, students grew in their understanding of the Holocaust and of themselves.

### **High School Curriculum**

High school teachers, Benn Waters and Lev Nelson, developed an exciting new curriculum for our Tuesday evening students focusing on the different denominations of Judaism. We took field trips to different synagogues and even visited Chabad. Guest speakers included Orthodox rabbi, Gershon Gevirtz, and reconstructionist rabbi, Karen Landy. The high school students also studied comparative religions. As part of this unit, Congregant Dennis Cerrotti came to class to talk about Protestantism.

### **Tefillah and Class Services**

Rabbi Vogel and Cantor Toubes led Tuesday afternoon Tefillah services for students in Grades 3 – 7. Twice a month students gathered in the sanctuary to learn songs and prayers, and the meaning behind them. Throughout the year, various grades showcased their Hebrew reading skills at Saturday morning class Shabbat services. At Friday evening services, students sang, recited poetry and shared their unique perspectives of the Torah portion of the week.

### **Junior Choir**

Cantor Toubes formed a new Junior Choir for children in Grades 3 – 5. The choir performed at Shabbat services, the Coolidge House Nursing Home, and the End of Year Assembly. It was a great opportunity for our students to learn new music and perform in front of a group. Many thanks to Cantor Toubes!

### **Hebrew Tutoring**

We participated in the “TeenAde” program, sponsored by the Bureau of Jewish Education. Every Sunday, an intern from Maimonides worked with our students on their Hebrew reading skills. In addition, we employed a Hebrew tutor on Sunday and Tuesday. This year the Tuesday tutor created a new Hebrew conversation elective for Grade 3 students. Temple Sinai is part of a special education collaborative that meets regularly to discuss good practices and share ideas. The collaborative includes Temple Ohabei Shalom and Temple Israel.

### **Social Action Programming**

- ✧ All religious school grades regularly donated food items to Family Table.
- ✧ Conducted visits to the Coolidge House.
- ✧ Assembled Purim gift baskets for our senior congregants.
- ✧ Had a Chanukah party at the Anna Bissonette House for formerly homeless seniors.
- ✧ Many students participated in Mitzvah Day on March 29.
- ✧ Every class did a mitzvah project.
- ✧ Planted trees in Israel.

### **Community Programming**

- ✧ 28 new students were consecrated in October at the Simchat Torah celebration.
- ✧ The intergenerational Sukkot Shabbat dinner was enjoyed by nearly 100 people.
- ✧ 40 children and their families attended the Megillah reading and gragger making event.
- ✧ 120 congregants participated in Mitzvah Day, co-sponsored by the Social Action Committee.
- ✧ Jewish Life Educator, Amy Salinger, led regular holiday and family programs for all grades.
- ✧ Some grades enjoyed Havurah Shabbat dinners at each other’s homes.

### **Goals for Next Year**

1. Enhance our family learning program for K – 7 families, and offer more opportunities for parallel learning with Rabbi Vogel and Sandi Intraub.
2. Develop a new “Beit Midrash” style of learning in Grade 5, with children and adults studying Torah together. Create opportunities for parent/child learning in the high school program, as well.
3. Bolster the Grade 11, 12 program by moving it to Tuesday evenings.
4. Build our informal youth program with more local events.
5. Plan a religious school Shabbaton for Grade 5,6 students at Camp Eisner.
6. Develop a Rosh Hodesh group for middle school girls.
7. Improve the “room parent” system and involve more parents in the religious school.
8. Develop social action programming for Grade 7.
9. Create opportunities for parent/child *Divrei Torah* on Friday night.
10. Invite speakers to the school to talk to children about tolerance.

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## **Israel Education & Action Committee Annual Summary 2008-2009**

**Study Theme: “A Taste of Israel”** Our goal was to explore different aspects of Israel and our individual connections, as well as provide opportunities to develop or deepen this connection.

### **July 2008 – Follow me to Israel**

Caryl Hull & Karen Stoler (co-chairs) had the opportunity and honor to travel to Israel with Rabbi Vogel on the *Follow-me to Israel Mission*. This trip was both educational and inspirational. It served to deepen our personal connections to Israel and our commitment to fostering our congregation’s (particularly the youth) connection.

### **October 5- Discussion “Exploring our Relationships with Israel”**

Charlie Homer facilitated this Sunday morning discussion; approximately 30 members attended. Many participated, offering their interesting, diverse and heartfelt perspectives. Caryl Hull and Karen Stoler showed slides and shared highlights of their summer trip.

### **December 14 - Book Discussion**

This was our annual collaborative program with Temple Sinai book group, and we read *If a Place Can Make you Cry* by Daniel Gordis. Approximately 15 members, as well as some guests, participated in an interesting and respectful discussion of this moving book.

### **January 31 “An Evening of Israeli Culture”**

This was a very successful Saturday evening venue with about 80 participants, representing an impressive cross section of our Temple. All enjoyed this community building event in which we ate delicious Israeli food and enjoyed the movie *The Band’s Visit*.

### **April 24 Yom Ha'atzma'ut**

Our committee invited Consul Rony Yedidia from the Consul General of Israel Office who spoke about “Current Events and the New Government’s Prospects for Peace.” In addition, members shared their hopes and reflections on Israel. The committee co-sponsored the oneg. There were approximately 40-50 in attendance.

In our planning meeting on March 24, we selected the following theme for next year: **Deepening our connection to Israel.** Besides our TBA programming, we will be having regularly scheduled committee meetings to allow for dialogue and discussion. In addition, it is the expectation that there will be a congregational trip to Israel, which will be incorporated into our programming.

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### Membership Report 2008-2009

This was a good year for Temple Sinai. Even with an increase in dues and the state of the economy, we continued to grow. This year we held our Fall and Spring Prospective Member Shabbats and our Parlor meeting in the Spring.

As for advertising, we continued to advertise in the Brookline Tab, post events on our website, and hang flyers throughout the Boston/Brookline/Newton area. As always, our most successful way to attract new members is word of mouth.

For those people who inquire about Temple Sinai either by attending services or participating in K'tonton or Tot Shabbat, they are all reached out to by either someone on the membership committee, Rabbi Vogel or Heidi Smith Hyde. This is an area Temple Sinai is the strongest. Everyone in our congregation does a wonderful job making people feel welcomed and this is reflected in our numbers. Please see the tables below for the analysis of our membership.

**Membership count as of:**

|           |           |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| June 2009 | June 2008 | June 2007 | June 2006 | June 2005 |
| 281       | 266       | 251       | 258       | 236       |

**The Breakdown:**

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2008-2009       | 2007-2008       |
| 35 new members  | 40 new members  |
| 20 resignations | 23 resignations |
| 0 deaths        | 2 deaths        |

**Our New Members demographically:**

|                    | 2008-2009 | 2007-2008 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Under 33</b>    |           |           |
| Single             | 1         | 2         |
| Couple             | 3         | 4         |
| <b>Ages 33-65</b>  |           |           |
| Single             | 4         | 7         |
| Couple             | 11        | 16        |
| "H" families*      | 10        | 8         |
| <b>Over 65</b>     |           |           |
| Single             | 2         | 1         |
| Couple             | 1         | 2         |
| <b>"P" Members</b> |           |           |
| Single             | 2         |           |
| Couple             | 1         |           |

- \* “H” families-are families that do not pay membership dues, but tuition only
- \* “P” new category for Jews-by-Choice, first six months free membership

As you can see, Temple Sinai has continued to grow. We had 35 new members this year and we demonstrated that even with the dues increase our membership dues are competitive and we will continue to grow.

As you know, this was my last year as membership chair. It was an honor to serve Temple Sinai and I am proud of what has been accomplished over these three years. One of my goals last year was to have regular membership committee meetings and I am pleased to report that we had two, one in the Fall and Spring.

These meetings were well attended and we discussed ways to attract new members AND how to keep our current members interested and involved in Temple Sinai. A suggestion the membership committee has is for Temple Sinai to have more educational/social events next year. One idea was for the membership committee, with the help of other committees, to organize an event around the Jewish Film Festival. This would allow members of ALL ages to get to know each other better and further strengthen our sense of community.

As for next year, the membership committee chair has not yet been decided, but I am confident it will be someone warm, welcoming, and enthusiastic. I know Temple Sinai will continue to grow and our community will always keep on thriving!

Finally, I would like to thank those on my committee for their help and support over these past three years. I especially need to thank Rose Mandelbaum for overseeing the Spring Prospective Shabbat this year. I want to thank Debbie Jacobs and Peter Sacks for hosting our Spring Parlor meeting again!!! I appreciate everyone who spread the word about Temple Sinai among their friends, neighbors, and colleagues. I thank Rabbi Vogel for his guidance and Heidi Smith Hyde for being such a wonderful educational director and for being so welcoming to all prospective families and current ones. Lastly, a very deep heartfelt thanks to Linda Katz. She provided me the best support and I could not have done this job without her. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Jen Katz  
Membership Committee Chair

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### **Music, Prayer, Ritual (MPR) Committee Report for Annual Meeting**

From the MPR Mission statement:

The Music, Prayer and Ritual Committee advises and supports the rabbi and cantor in matters concerning the music, prayer and ritual activities of the congregation. As the voice of the congregation on these matters, the Committee strives to be aware at all times of the spiritual needs of the congregation. In partnership with the congregation’s clergy, the Committee formulates policy for ritual activities that are part of the life of the congregation.

- 1) Temple Sinai's liturgical health is good. Indications include the consistently good attendance at services, the number of guests who join us on Shabbat because they heard good things in the community, and the palpable energy in the congregation at services.
- 2) The congregation seems to be comfortable with the use of the Mishkan T'filah siddur.
- 3) A series of about a half-dozen Shabbat AM services has gotten us started toward regular Sat. morning worship. This is very much still a work in progress.
- 4) We have services throughout the summer. About half of these are lay-led.
- 5) High Holy Day services were logistically uneventful but we have some concern that growth in the congregation would make it impossible to accommodate everyone a single Kol Nidre (in particular) services.
- 6) We have not yet figured out how to make Bar/Bat Mitzvah services congregational events.
- 7) We have not yet figured out how to restore make the festivals (specifically Sukkot & Shavuot) significant events in the congregation's religious year.
- 8) We continue to work to make Shabbat worship part of the routine life of families with children. Monthly Shabbat@6 services have been well-attended, though not necessarily by families with grade school children.
- 9) Amy Pitter spearheaded a very successful effort to poll the school families (and others) via a web-based questionnaire. We would be happy to share the results with anyone would like to see them.
- 10) On the music front, a CD of our Shabbat music was given to every household this year. We are grateful to Cantor Toubes, Rabbi Vogel, and Hannah Shields for their work on this project and to a number of donors who helped to defray the costs of this project.
- 11) The use of a cello at High Holy Day services was well received last year. Because of the tight financial situation, we will have this additional music only on Yom Kippur next fall.
- 12) This year's Passover Music Festival is actually being held in June for a variety of scheduling reasons. It will feature a 17<sup>th</sup> century setting of the Shabbat liturgy by Salamone Rossi. with an 8-member choir directed by Cantor Louise Treitman and Dr. Richard Lustig.
- 13) We are having a surprisingly hard time getting the oneg Shabbat system working smoothly. Finding volunteers for every Fri night is taking up an excessive amount of the time of volunteer coordinators. Similar problems have bedeviled the gastronomic side of the Shabbat AM project. In the current financial world, this is not a problem that will be solved with money in the general budget. The problem would be solved if a great proportion of the congregation saw running (or sharing) an oneg as part of their annual Temple responsibilities.

Respectfully submitted

Jeremy Wolfe  
MPR Chair

**Report of the  
Sabbatical Committee  
June 2009**

Rabbi Vogel is entitled by the terms of his current contract to take a six month sabbatical sometime during the fourth or fifth year of that contract. In approving this sabbatical, the Board and the Rabbi agreed that he and a Sabbatical Committee would begin planning to discuss coverage and programming before, during, and after the sabbatical well in advance of the sabbatical period, before making an announcement about it to the congregation. President Cotton appointed Harry Shulman to chair the Sabbatical Committee to identify the matters that need to be considered and addressed in order to make the sabbatical a reality and success for both the Rabbi and the congregation.

Rabbi Vogel is planning on spending six months in Israel during the period January 1, 2011-June 30, 2011. The members of the Committee represent a cross-section of members who fit the following constituents: attend services regularly; have children in the school; consider the financial implications of our activities; participate on the Caring Committee; and have thought about our congregation's connection to Israel. The Committee members are: Harvey Cotton, Susan Katz, Stuart Krantz, Janet Richmond, Rochelle Seltzer, Harry Shulman, and Karen Stoler.

The Committee identified, considered and makes recommendations to the Board relative to the following matters:

**1. Rabbinic Coverage for Shabbat Services**

Rabbi Vogel will establish the calendar for services including Friday evenings and Saturday mornings – any combination of the following options will be considered:

- Cantor Toubes can lead a number of services
- Rabbi Waldorf could lead a limited number of services accommodating his schedule
- Temple Sinai has a number of rabbis who are members who could be approached to lead some services
- Rabbi Vogel would provide training for members of the congregation to lead services
- Hebrew College students could be invited to lead selected services
- Guest rabbis are an option for some services

Rabbi Vogel will consult with the Music, Prayer and Ritual Committee relative to the planning process for Shabbat Services.

**2. Holiday Coverage**

Rabbi Vogel will develop a plan for celebration of Purim, Shavuot and Passover services. It is anticipated that there will be 4 or 5 students preparing for Confirmation on Shavuot. Rabbi Vogel will develop a plan with Heidi Smith Hyde for coverage for both Confirmation classes and the Shavuot service that includes Confirmation.

### **3. Bar/Bat Training and Services**

Rabbinic Sabbatical Preparation Committee met with 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss Rabbi Andrew Vogel's planned sabbatical before families in that grade were asked to select Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates for their children. The Committee's goal is to assure the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience will be a joyous and meaningful one for our temple families. We discussed the needs of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students and families, in every aspect, from the training process to the Shabbat morning service itself. We discussed the date selection process to allow families enough advance notice to select a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date that suits their needs. All but one family selected Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates when Rabbi Vogel would be able to conduct the services – either during the Fall of 2010 or the Fall of 2011. There is one family that is planning a Bat Mitzvah during the sabbatical period. The Sabbatical Committee and Rabbi Vogel is currently exploring a number of possibilities to provide clergy coverage for this one student's Bat Mitzvah service, as well as coverage for the training and rehearsal schedule for all our students that year.

### **4. Rabbinic Coverage for Life Cycle Events and Emergencies**

#### **Illnesses:**

The Committee has consulted with the Caring Committee relative to coverage during the sabbatical period. Zippy Ostroy discussed the role of the Caring Committee members as "first responders." With an active group of more than sixty volunteers who stand ready to help when it is needed, the Caring Committee will coordinate outreach efforts to help and comfort those with need. Their activities include providing meals of comfort, doing errands or shopping, making a friendly or shiva visit, sending/delivering a plant or flowers, writing notes of condolence, congratulations or encouragement, and providing rides to religious services.

Rabbi Vogel acknowledged the outstanding work of the Caring Committee in meeting the needs of members experiencing emergencies. Rabbi Vogel will continue to work with the Caring Committee around planning for coverage of life cycle events and emergencies. He will also explore the potential to access rabbis at hospitals to visit members during his sabbatical.

#### **Funerals:**

Funeral services pose a significant challenge during the sabbatical period. Rabbi Vogel will generate a list of on-call rabbis to conduct funeral services. Temple Sinai would be responsible for the fees charged by rabbis for the services; therefore, there will need to be a budget line item. We need to determine the cost of this service.

#### **Weddings:**

The Committee recommends that weddings requiring the services of Rabbi Vogel not be scheduled when he is on sabbatical. In situations where a couple who are members of the temple want the wedding scheduled during the sabbatical period, the Committee recommends that the Temple be responsible for payment of the rabbi's fee for conducting the ceremony. The Committee further recommends that to be eligible an individual would have to be a member as of July 1, 2010

#### **Conversions:**

The Committee recommends that no conversions be scheduled during the sabbatical period.

**5. Communication**

The Committee agreed that it is appropriate to communicate to the congregation the upcoming sabbatical. An article in the Newsletter regarding the sabbatical could be the vehicle to accomplish the announcement. The Committee suggested that the president of the congregation should make reference to Rabbi Vogel’s sabbatical at the High Holy Days in Fall 2010.

A meeting should be planned by Rabbi Vogel with Temple staff to discuss the sabbatical and its implications for the staff’s work during Rabbi Vogel’s time away from the temple.

The Committee and Rabbi Vogel agreed that he would communicate periodically with the congregation during his sabbatical. This could be accomplished through the Sinai News or a monthly e-mail. Rabbi Vogel also said that he would communicate from Israel with temple members who experience a death in their immediate family during the period of his sabbatical.

**6. Adult Learning**

Rabbi Vogel will work with the Adult Learning Committee to provide for coverage for classes during the time of his sabbatical. He will teach Sunday morning classes during the Fall before his sabbatical, and guest teachers will be scheduled in the Spring while he is away. The Adult Learning Committee will arrange for alternatives for some of the regular classes that Rabbi Vogel teaches on Shabbat mornings, Sunday mornings and Thursday morning Torah study; some of these might not meet during the sabbatical period, but would resume when Rabbi Vogel returns.

**7. Religious School**

Rabbi Vogel will work with Heidi Smith Hyde relative to his responsibilities at the school, including teaching the tenth grade Confirmation class and *t’filah* sessions during afternoon Hebrew school

**8. The Year Following the Sabbatical**

Rabbi Vogel will share his experiences in Israel through one or more adult learning programs for the congregation. Rabbi Vogel will share his sabbatical experiences through his High Holy Day sermons to the congregation, as well as in other ways throughout that year.



**Report of the Social Action Committee  
Annual Meeting June 7, 2009**

**Mission:** The mission of the Temple Sinai Social Action Committee is to educate and develop a community of synagogue members committed to social justice, consistent with the Jewish mandate of Tikkun Olam. We encourage the discussion of issues related to fairness and equality for all people, and take action, including advocacy and direct service.

**Major Projects and Programs**

**Family Table:** A program of Jewish Family and Children’s Services (Waltham) that delivers two weeks of food monthly to approximately 150 families. Each month, Temple Sinai has been providing 30 packages of raisins and 30 packages of crackers. Some food is collected

by Religious School Classes. Additional food is purchased as a result of donations made by the Board of Trustees. The food is then delivered each month to Family Table in the week prior to the scheduled distribution. This year our food contributions will add up to approximately \$1,500. In addition, once per year Temple Sinai is to provide some drivers. This year's driver date is July 12, 2009.

**Environment:** To enhance the recycling at Temple Sinai and to provide information that will help the greening of Temple Sinai and the community. For 2008-2009, Amy Salinger presented "Repair of the Earth" to each of the classes as the emphasis of the Religious School Life Educator's Workshops. In collaboration with Linda Katz, recycling wastebaskets were purchased for the Religious School Classrooms, Ehrenfried, Weintraub and some offices. Linda Katz (Temple Administrator) had already initiated many environmentally-friendly changes – use of only recycled paper for offices, bathrooms, etc.; where possible, change to light bulbs that were energy efficient; the purchase and placement of baskets for recycling. Work was expected to continue on effective recycling with the hope of substantially increasing the recycling of 1) paper and cardboard and 2) bottles, cans and plastic. New environmentally friendly guidelines are now provided to the Oneg sponsors.

**Muslim Initiative** (Enid Shapiro, Chair, with Rabbi Vogel). To enhance interactions and understanding. Mosque Visit on January 25, 2009. Approximately 30 Sinai members spent the afternoon at the ISBCC (Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center) hosted by about 15 members of the ISBCC. Tours, a question and answer session, watching afternoon prayers and kosher food were all part of that afternoon. Temple Sinai Visit on May 17, 2009. About 20 members of Temple Sinai hosted approximately 20 Muslims from the ISBCC. A visit to the sanctuary, a presentation of Temple Sinai and Reform Judaism by Rabbi Vogel, individual study sessions and food were part of the afternoon.

Related Speaker at Friday night services sponsored by the Social Action Committee. Dr. David Gordis, President Emeritus of Hebrew College, "Inter-religious Dialogue: Obstacles and Opportunities". (March 20).

#### **Additional Projects and Programs:**

- Sept 14, 2008. CPR training organized by Mike Klau
- October 8,9. High Holiday Food Drive for the Grow Clinic for Children at Boston Medical Center. (Ullmann/Wen Family, Chairs).
- Issue of Question One on the November 2008 ballot to eliminate the state income tax. After a vote of the Social Action Committee the issue was presented and endorsed by the Board of Trustees (October 2, 2008). Pledges to "Vote No on Question One" were then provided at services and pledges were solicited via e-mail. On request of the Board, a "Question One Information Session and Discussion" was held on October 26. The election that included this question was held on November 4, 2008, and the question was soundly defeated
- Sept to Nov, 2008: Voting Initiative: Voter Registration and Absentee Voting. Forms outside of office and at services.

- Project Ezra a Project of Synagogue Council. At the Anna Bissonette House a meal was prepared and time was spent with the residents. (December 25, 2008; Sheila Shulman, Chair)

- Martin Luther King Weekend "Community Service" Program at Friday night services sponsored by the Social Action Committee. Featured speaker was Lois Lord Waller of Match-Up Interfaith Volunteers (Boston). We learned how elderly individuals in the Boston area community had been helped with volunteer one-on-one programs. (January 16, 2009).

- Action Alert on Homeless Rules. Because of a communication from Deborah Frank (Boston Grow Clinic) an action alert was sent (under Deborah Frank and Sandy Ostroy's names) on the proposed Massachusetts rule changes that would lead to needy individuals being denied shelter at one of the facilities for the homeless. Requests to call the Governor's office were sent via e-mail to the Social Action Committee; via Sinai Update and in the relevant Temple Web pages. Although the original hearing date was delayed for input and some changes were made in the original proposed rules, the final rules still included many provisions that might be considered problematical.

- March 8, showing of James Carroll's "Constantine's Sword" followed by a discussion with interfaith clergy (including Rabbi Vogel). All Saints Parish (1773 Beacon Street). Sponsored by the Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries and RUAH Spirituality Institute.

- March 20, Daffodil Shabbat. The membership was solicited to purchase daffodils. Daffodils were displayed at services and then either taken home by the contributors or delivered to Coolidge House by the students of the Sinai religious school. Over \$1200 was raised for the American Cancer Society. (Ellen Blinder, Chair).

- March 20. Speaker sponsored by the Social Action Committee: Dr. David Gordis, President Emeritus of Hebrew College, "Inter-religious Dialogue: Obstacles and Opportunities".

- March 29. Mitzvah Day. Organized by the Mitzvah Day Committee. Approximately 120 congregants worked on a variety of projects.

- Sunday April 5. Pre-Passover Learning. Sponsored by the Adult Learning Committee. "Are We Slaves? or Are We Masters? Pesach and Social Justice". Marya Axner, Regional Director of the Jewish Labor Committee's New England Office and Rabbi Vogel.

- January to June, 2009. "An Act Relative to Gender Based Discrimination and Hate Crimes". Some members attended the program at Hebrew College entitled "An Act of Faith" whose goal was "in support of a civil rights bill for transgender equality (January 21, 2009). The Rainbow committee met on March 2, 2009 and voted to support the legislation. In the following weeks the Social Action committee voted to also support the legislation. A suggestion to have Temple Sinai support the legislation (along with relevant documents) was provided to Harvey Cotton to communicate to the Board of Trustees. The legislation was discussed at the March 26 meeting of the Executive Board. To avoid interference with the budget discussion at the April meeting of the Board of Trustees, the discussion of the legislation was moved to the May 7 meeting of the Board of Trustees. Orly Jacobovits, Keshet Senior Organizer and Community educator was invited to the May 7 meeting. At the May 7 meeting, following an extensive discussion, it was determined that the congregation and Board had not been sufficiently informed and that no vote would be taken until further informational meetings were held and the congregation was better

informed about the upcoming issue. The informational meeting will be held prior to the Board meeting on June 4.

## **AREAS**

**Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO).** To evaluate whether we will eventually join, contacts were made with Larry Gordon and plans were made to attend their meetings. At the time GBIO was a principal advocate for the “Vote No On Question One” campaign, Temple Sinai was still deliberating its position. Therefore it was determined that attendance at those GBIO council meetings would not be productive. The other issues that are presently the campaigns of GBIO are Health Care; Youth and Safety, Aging with Dignity, Moving from Debt to Assets and the Financial Crisis. Only Aging with Dignity and the Financial Crisis were viewed as potentially of interest to Temple Sinai. The view of the sub-committee considering the various issues was that the cost of joining GBIO of approximately \$5,000 per year (Yearly Dues of 1% of operating budget, with some exclusions) would exceed the value we would receive. Specifically, that our relatively small size would limit our possible influence, that we might not wish to be associated with some of their issues, and that some of issues were not of great concern to our congregation.

**Handicap Elevator.** To improve access to the handicap elevator. New signs have been added to each of the elevator locations. The next steps of refitting the doors for improved operation were considered too expensive to consider at this time. (Sandy Ostroy, Chair)

**Publicity .** To keep the congregation informed of all activities related to Social Action, information had been provided to Sinai News and posted on the Web-Site. When close to particular events, the information was also provided to Sinai Update. A more holistic approach to Social Action was adopted to include all Social Action related activities, not just those for which the Social Action Committee had direct responsibility. (Sandy Ostroy, Chair)

Other areas of concern but without major activities. **Darfur** To keep the congregation informed of the situation and to advocate. **Healthcare** Continued following of implementation of the Massachusetts Healthcare Program. **Iraq War** To keep the congregation informed about on-going activities. Information was provided on the Iraq War Rally and March sponsored by “United for Peace and Justice” on October 27.

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## **Temple Sinai Youth Committee Annual summary, 2009**

The 2008-2009 Youth Committee membership included Tracey Hyams, Janet Seckel-Cerrotti, Ralph Scully, Michael Klau, Michelle Klau, Hildy Neumann, Jesse Seckel-Cerrotti, Wendy Weiser, Pauline Gerson (co-chair), Elaine Ober (co-chair), Heidi Smith Hyde, and Benn Waters. The committee met three times and otherwise communicated via email.

Two key goals for the 2008-2009 year were to support our new Youth Educator, Benn Waters, to grow interest in NFTY, SCOOPY, and Jr. SCOOPY activities among our students, and to increase the overall visibility of the Youth Committee within the broader Sinai community.

Our Scooby Board was made up of two seniors, Noah Stern and Jacob Selzer, and two Juniors, Jeremy Pearlman and Jesse Seckel-Cerrotti. Although I do not have the exact number of NFTY events they attended (at this time), I am aware that attendance increased 100% from last year. There were fewer Scooby events, however the attendance of these events was also increased 100%. There were three very successful Jr. Scooby events this year. One of the major changes from last year was the kids involvement in “leadership training events” which took place on the regional level. Subsequently, Jesse Seckel-Cerrotti was nominated and elected V.P of Social Action on NFTY’s regional Board. This is a very important and impressive position. Jesse’s experience this coming year on the regional board will be without any doubt a significant learning experience.

In November, the Youth Committee sponsored a potluck supper/informational meeting for families of children in grades 6-12 at the Hyams’ home on the topic of informal Jewish education. Rabbi Vogel, Benn Waters, and Margie Bogdanow of the Bureau of Jewish Education presented. Approximately 8 families attended.

On April 3 the Youth Committee sponsored Shabbat L’Noar – a pre-Shabbat service potluck for families of children in grades 6-12 and the oneg following the service. Benn and the high-school students led the Shabbat prayers and Ralph Scully spoke briefly, at services, about the temple youth group activities and about the benefits of informal Jewish education in general. Approximately 40 people attended, including several 6<sup>th</sup>-grade families. This bodes well for youth event participation in the coming year. Coincidentally, the Junior Choir performed during the service, which allowed this younger cohort and their families to learn a bit about the temple’s youth activities.

At the end of April, we learned that Benn Waters would be leaving, moving to Israel to make Aliyah. A search committee was formed to review/revise the youth educator job description and to interview candidates. The search committee members were: Rabbi Vogel, Heidi Smith Hyde, Pauline Gerson, Michelle Klau, Elaine Ober, Damon Weiser, Gabriel Seltzer, Jesse Seckel-Cerrotti, and Susan Klau. The search committee met once to discuss the process and to develop questions for the candidates, and interviewed two excellent candidates on May 21, 2009. Elyssa Cohen accepted our offer and begins on August 15.

Elyssa brings significant excitement and enthusiasm to the position and should be a splendid fit with the students and the community. The Youth Committee is thrilled to welcome Elyssa to Temple Sinai and looks forward to working with her in the years to come.

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### **Temple Sinai Website / Internet Committee Annual Report 2009**

**Members:** Alex Cooper, Josh Ginsberg, Jon Katz(chair), Rose Mandelbaum, Danny Ruberman

**Date:** June, 2009

The Website/Internet committee was busy this past year, continuing to support Temple Sinai’s website (<http://www.sinaibrookline.com>) as well as begin discussing future enhancements that will support the Temple and the community.

Before discussing highlights, the team must be acknowledged for the work they do on a day-to-day basis:

- Our newest member Josh (JAG) Ginsberg, who has brought key technical and website best practices to the team. Josh continues to work in the lab on functionality for future releases.
- Rose Mandelbaum, another new member bringing much needed energy and responsiveness to ongoing requests from the congregation and incorporating them into the website.
- Danny Ruberman, the king of all calendaring and ad-hoc requests to the website—also a frequent host of the best committee meeting in town.
- Alex Cooper, the ultimate utility player---bringing technical expertise to both the website as well as Temple infrastructure. The website does not exist without his help.
- Linda Katz, for being Linda Katz.
- Finally, a thank you to Tracey Hyams who has left our committee to go save the world. Tracey was a key contributor to the launch of sinaibrookline 2.0 and her contributions will be missed.

On to the highlights:

- Held two meetings this past school year focusing on future functionality of the site as well as a process for updating sinaibrookline.com. Meetings were held at Danny's home and at the "Smokehouse" in Washington Square (thumbs up to both).
- Launched [sinai-brookline@googlegroups.com](mailto:sinai-brookline@googlegroups.com), a mailing list where all website requests are submitted. If you have any feedback or suggestions for the website, please send them to this email address. The mailing list provides a place where all members of the team get an email as the request is submitted—speeding up responsiveness to the requestor. You will get a timely response from the team!
- Gave congregation members the ability to register online for certain Temple events, as an alternative to paper. Included school registration, oneg sponsorship, Mitzvah day and adult education classes.
- Coming Soon: access to Cantor Toubes' music CD on the Temple website!
- Began visioning on the next version of the website (sinaibrookline 3.0). Potential functionality being looked at include: members-only section, blogging, and content redesign. We received good feedback on bringing more news to the home page for less navigating. Stay tuned!