Brotherhood Purim/Pesach Luach Article

Michael Getz, 1/29/2022

As president of Temple Israel Brotherhood, it was my honor to say a few words to the congregation prior to Brotherhood’s “Famous Gala Kiddush” on Brotherhood Shabbat, January 7th. That week had started off fairly calmly, but had gotten progressively crazier when our planning committee learned that our Robert Zeitsiff Scholar in Residence, Rabbi Menachem Creditor, had tested positive for COVID. Together with Temple leadership and the Medical Advisory Committee, we decided to reschedule the weekend for February 18th and 19th. A lot of people were involved in scrambling to change the dates. That weekend is still a few weeks away – I hope by the time this Luach article comes out everything will have gone well! And I hope you were there to enjoy the weekend with us!

In my message to the congregation that day, I noted that at our annual Paid-Up Supper back in October, I mentioned the many awards and accolades our Brotherhood has received, including our 12 “Quality Club Awards” from the Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs, as well as the many Torch Awards we’ve received for our programs.

I also mentioned that over the past year I’ve participated in a number of Zoom meetings with other synagogue men's club presidents across New England and the East Coast. And I noted that in those meetings Temple Israel Brotherhood is widely recognized as a model club not only in New England but around the country. In those meetings I keep getting asked how we do it. We have well over 100 members, a strong leadership team and Board, over 15 active, past presidents, and we regularly get over 25 guys to attend our *Board* meetings! How do we have so many guys willing to step up and help run our programs and events?

It had gotten me wondering about something a bit *elusive*: What’s our Brotherhood's "*secret sauce*"?

I remarked that some would be looking for it next to the baked salami, chopped liver, meat knishes, egg rolls and teensy hot dogs at our gala Kiddush coming up once I finished speaking.

I noted that still others have tried to explain it through *brain science* – neurotransmitter chemicals like dopamine in the central *amygdala* and pleasure centers of the brain. This Brotherhood offers countless opportunities for reward and instant gratification – unique ways we can subconsciously feel good about ourselves – while doing good for others. Of course, this is a reason why anyone volunteers or belongs to a group or community, but our Brotherhood is built on this foundation, and it’s at the core of who we are – from the original vision of Bob Zeitsiff and our other founding members.

Whether it's by performing mitzvot together, by valuing and furthering our Jewish traditions and rituals, by supporting our members and their families in times of need, by supporting our temple and greater community, or by making group donations to charities or scholarships. One such Brotherhood scholarship I mentioned is the support we’re giving to send one of Temple Israel’s young members, Aaron Samuels, on this year’s international March of the Living trip to Poland and Israel.

It's also just by having a great time with each other at many of the social, educational and even outdoor activities we do… or by making close friendships with each other.

Besides the rescheduled Scholar in Residence Weekend and Neshama Carlebach concert in February, I mentioned the many activities planned for this year and ways to be involved, like:

* our annual “Lift Your Spirits” Scotch & steak event on February 4th, run by Gary Keimach;
* the FJMC’s nation-wide World-Wide Wrap program on February 12th where we lay tefillin & munch on breakfast wraps, organized by Noah Horowitz, followed by a Super Bowl watching party run by Larry Lencz;
* a fun excursion for all ages on February 26th to the Electromagnetic Pinball Museum & Arcade in Pawtucket, RI led by Alan Kritz;
* our upcoming Online Auction kicking off on March 12th, being organized by Jimmy Slovin and Stephen Shrago;
* our Yom HaShoah Yellow Candle drive in April, being spearheaded again by Stuart Gold, Motti Pupkin and Alan Kritz;
* our Man of the Year dinner & comedy roast this May (we still have to name the poor honoree);
* or Regional FJMC events like The Retreat at Camp Ramah, the Tour de Shuls charity bike ride to benefit Ramah’s Tikvah Program for campers with disabilities, or the FJMC International Convention in Philadelphia this year all in June;
* or our Combined Charities Golf Tournament at the end of the summer.

And that’s not to mention our rejuvenated Jewish Routes program with Rabbi Fineberg, Hearing Men’s Voices, organized by Norm Tabroff and Matt Zinno, or other speaker breakfast programs coordinated by Alan Kritz and Jimmy Slovin.

If you’re a Brotherhood member – you may be feeling a rush of dopamine and positive neurons right now, and feeling proud of what we have and will accomplish this year. And if you’re not yet a member, you definitely want this feeling, so please join us – there’s always room!

Michael Getz, President