

Our Story Continues

by Walter Kramer

From 1964-1968, the congregation once more turned to Henry Zeisel to serve for another two terms as president. Notable were Henry's announcements in his characteristic King's English at the end of davening. More members arrived on the scene, each in his own way contributing to the color and character of our Shul. Included among them were the Princes, Blumenfelds, Cobrins, Wolinetzes, Steve & Ralph Rothschild and their parents, the Meiselmans, Meyerowitz's, Ratzkers, Tulkoffs, Koplons, Paul Schwartz, the Berssons, Colmans, and our current President Dr. Gewirtz.

Henry's administration was followed by Morris Newman's plain but effective style. Dr. Jack Prince assumed the presidential mantle in the first of several non-consecutive terms. Israel Stern became president for two terms in 1970. He and Morris Newman established a congregational Hebrew school for children not enrolled in any yeshiva. Phil Ten served as the distinguished principal, and successfully persuaded a number of parents to switch their children to one of the local yeshivos to continue their education in Limudei Kodesh.

Harvey Wolinetz, 73-74, was instrumental in procuring our old upholstered chairs from a shul in Ohio. He was followed by Dr. Mandel I. Ganchrow, later to become the president of the Orthodox Union-and subsequently remaining an active voice for Orthodox Judaism. Dr. Barry Hochdorf, our shul's catering mavin, served from 76-78. He was followed by Avi Blumenfeld. Avi's father, Reb Avrohom Yisroel, A"H taught Willie Quinn, A"H the art of rebinding worn siddurim and chumoshim, which "Uncle" Willie started here, and continued in Israel until his recent petirah.

Sam Silverstein, opened the 80's with his term as president, followed by Harvey Wolinetz, 82-85. He was succeeded by Menno Ratzker. "Running my business is fun," Menno was heard saying during his presidency, "this is no fun, too many complainers!"

We would be remiss if we failed to mention the role of Zachary Greenfield, who has served as Gabbai Rishon and Gabbai extra-ordinaire throughout most of the shul's existence. Zach may occasionally get complaints, but not too many. His memory and record keeping system are truly extraordinary.

Mendy Ganchrow claims in his autobiography that he began having annual dinners in 1976 during his administration as president. The dinners continued until we started having annual Weekend Retreats ten years ago.

Mendy also spearheaded the renovation of the Bais Medrash with the help of Shimon Sontag and Jerry Cobrin, A”H, which was dedicated by Phyllis and Jerry Wind.

We have enjoyed many moments of comedy including Purim plays written and directed by Menno Ratzker, and Weekend Roasts by Pumpy Merkin, Alan Ritter and Paul Schwartz. Phil Ten auctioned our kibudim on the High Holy Days. Lois and Avi Blumenfeld renovated and dedicated The Blumenfeld Family Social Hall.

The sisterhood began in 1968 and with the guidance of our beloved rebetzin, Sifra Tendler, has become an important and integral part of the Shul. The sisterhood has helped decorate the shul, reaches out to our members in need, and has contributed to other worthy causes such as their \$36,000 donation to Shaarei Zedek Hospital in Israel this year. The Shalach Monos program, founded and chaired for so many years by Rosalind Meyerowitz, the M'lava Malka on Silichos night, and the Kallah Tea have become major events on our annual calendar. No one will ever forget the professionalism of Pumpy Merkin who wrote and directed so many of the Kallah Tea presentations, and all her outstanding players. The sisterhood also sponsors a Shabbos Mvorchim lecture every month.

A variety of classes in Torah learning have offered something for everyone. Rabbi Moshe D. Tendler gives a Friday night Chumash class during the winter, a Mishna Brura class Shabbos morning, a Gemara Shiur every Shabbos afternoon, his 5-hour presentation on Layl Shavuos, and many drashas during the year. Many of Rav Tendler's special lectures have covered topics rarely covered elsewhere, such as "brain death", "transplants and organ donations", and the "genetic heritage of Cohanim". Other Magidei Shiur includes Dr. Murray Kuhr, Rabbi Mendy Schwartz, Rabbi Morty Summer, Rabbi David Waxman, and Rabbi Dr. Yacov Tendler. In 1997, Rabbi Morty Summer began the Daf Yomi, which was later dedicated and named The Alter Yehuda and Molly Minchenberg Daf Yomi Shiur. Rabbi Summer is also the coordinator of The Aaronson-Meiselman Chevra Mishnayos, the annual Siyum of which is held at our Weekend Retreats. For many years, our sons layned every Shabbos morning. Rabbi Waxman oversaw this program and has maintained a list of all the participants. Two of these young men, Dr. David Maslansky and Rabbi Jonathan Reiss have been officially recognized as laying every parsha in the Torah at CSM.

In terms of community service, CSM has been the initiator and coordinator of three annual commemorative events, held in conjunction with sister synagogues in the area: Yom HaShoa, Yom Yerushalaim, and Yom HaAtzmaut.

The past decade heralded the newest era. Jack Prince inaugurated the concept of a Weekend Retreat and began editing the Kehilla News (not to be read during tefilla, of course). David Koplon spearheaded a major renovation project with our beautiful stained glass windows created by Sara Shapiro as its crown jewel. Marilyn Koplon joined David in editing "Windows of Torah in Glass and Light"(1997), a publication explaining the Biblical and Midrashic references and technical aspects of the windows. Shushie Fein began replacing sidurim, chumashim, and sforim as fast as the new bookcases were built.

We learned to understand a unique dialect during the years of the southern presidencies, i.e. of Koplon and Tulkoff. Members and friends of Rav Moshe D. Tendler marked his half century of outstanding Rabbinic leadership, intense passion for teaching, and uncompromising commitment to the application of Torah principles by writing a Sefer Torah in his honor. The Siyum HaSefer and presentation to Rav Tendler was held on 3/19/2000. Danny Sklar introduced group singing and upgraded the davening as part of his administration. Jack Prince assumed the presidency for the third time and broke Henry Zeisel's record of years in office. Our shul secretarial office in recent history has been under the able stewardship of Lillian Levy, A"H, Naftali Levy, and Esther Hans.

On 2/2/04, David Koplon asked for and received unanimous endorsement for the creation of a Kollel, from the Board of Directors. The Kollel will invite and incorporate all existing shiurim, as well as offer additional courses. Thirty-five individuals met March 17, 2004 for the first evening of learning B'Chavrusa.

We are now gathered together at our tenth annual retreat to celebrate our 50 years of service to our membership, community, and Klal Yisroel. We look forward to reading the next chapter of our history, yet to be written, with the hope that our sincere dedication and contributions over the past 50 years will continue into the next half century. May our CSM family always enjoy good health and warm friendship.