

Chaverim September/October 2022

From the President

As we look back on the year we have completed and ahead to the year we are beginning with the onset of the High Holy Days, it is an opportune time to take stock. For those of you who missed the Annual Meeting, here is a summary of our year.

We expected the pandemic to be distant history but here we are, still dealing with it. However, with expert guidance from our COVID Task Force, we navigated a full reopening of our synagogue and religious school, taking precautions and reassessing our decisions as needed. I want to commend the Rabbi, Cory, Monica and Johnny for their flexibility as we periodically closed the building and retreated to Zoom, and then returned to in-person. We have had lovely outdoor Onegs after our Shabbat services, a wonderful 36th Anniversary Barbecue, and more committees returning to the synagogue for meetings. I look forward to welcoming all of you who choose to return in-person for the High Holy Days.

This has also been a productive and exciting year. We have celebrated, and will continue to celebrate, our Double Chai Anniversary through special events. We celebrated this past year through the publication of a Bolton Street Cookbook (please buy a copy or lots of copies), through Michael Green's wonderful remarks about the founding of the religious school during the final day of school, through a special service featuring Ken Karpay and Joy Mandel that truly emphasized L'Dor v'Dor, the link from generation to generation, and through activities and events yet to come.

Our synagogue-wide Equity, Inclusion and Community Initiative continues. This is such an important part of who we are and who we want to be. I encourage each of you to chat with Alaine or me about how you can be involved in the work of the Initiative.

Our religious school had a successful year, adding a number of students and continuing robust Jewish learning. Our population of future religious school students also grew; so many new Bolton Street babies were born that we now have the Baby Brood group for parents and babies meeting once a month at the synagogue. And our Tot Shabbat services have been drawing lots of enthusiastic families.

Students, Board members and all synagogue members had the opportunity to study with Uri Feinberg this past year, our Israeli tour guide and Scholar in Residence. We will have the opportunity to continue to study with him during this upcoming year, and plans are underway for a Bolton Street Synagogue trip to Israel in December, 2023. Speaking personally, I must say that my participation in the last Bolton Street Synagogue trip to Israel was life-changing; it led me to become an adult Bat Mitzvah, to deeper involvement in BSS, and to understand the complexities of Israel in a much deeper and more nuanced way. I hope that each of you will find a way to participate when Uri returns in the upcoming year.

We have accomplished a number of "infrastructure" activities this year. The Board has just adopted bylaw revisions to include new language about our commitment to equity, inclusion and community. We adopted a pension policy for employees. We are in the process of adopting a child protection policy, something we have needed to do for quite some time. We will turn our attention over the coming year to addressing gaps in policies such as ethics, use of volunteers and other policies that may need to be

developed or revised. Additionally, our retaining wall will be coming down as soon as the contractor can begin work.

The wonderful but ad hoc gardening work that had been done at BSS was coordinated and consolidated this past year into the Green Team, all of whose members deserve much credit for beautifying our grounds. I particularly want to thank Elaine Richman, who is chairing the committee, as well as Robin and David Kantor, Roberta Strickler, and Abe Wasserberger, who have done extraordinary work to landscape, weed, plant and otherwise maintain our gardens, and who are doing so with an eye towards land stewardship and environmental justice.

The Social Action Committee has, among other activities, done vital voting rights work and has helped to support an Afghan family. BSS was well represented at the National Council for Jewish Women abortion access rally, and we have been featured multiple times in the Jewish Times for our work.

The Pride Seder was an unqualified success, we had a lovely Second Night Seder at BSS, and our Casino Night annual event was THE event of the year—lots of fun, great food, great company, and financially helpful as we move forward towards our next 36 years.

We did something important this year that needed to be done, much as many of us wish it wasn't necessary: we hired security. We have been fortunate to have the consistent services of Colton from Defender One. We appreciate the opportunity to build a relationship with Colton and embed him in our community; if you have not yet introduced yourself to him, please do.

Also this year, the Board and committee chairs participated in security training. This basic training will be provided again for Board members, committee chairs, staff and anyone else who is interested, and additional trainings will be provided over the coming year.

As we look ahead, Rabbi Gordon's Geshar Bridges program has just begun, and we are excited about building and strengthening relationships among our members. We will move forward with the Initiative's activities, with particular attention to anti-racism and to disability rights. Additionally, we are beginning to plan for Legacy Giving; you will hear more about that in coming months.

I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to Rabbi Gordon, every member of the Board of the Directors and particularly the members of the Executive Committee, each of whom makes it possible for me to serve as president of this congregation. You are extraordinarily intelligent, generous, kind, and supportive. I could not ask for a better group of people with whom to share the sacred responsibility of synagogue leadership.

At over 200 member units, as they say, we are thriving. I plan to use the coming year to continue to strengthen our infrastructure so that we can build on what we have accomplished and take the steps necessary to secure our future.