

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These acknowledgements are an attempt to recognize the men and women who give their time and talents for the benefit of our synagogue. On behalf of the congregation, I offer them our thanks and appreciation, because without these thoughtful, caring people, the home we call B'nai Jacob would be empty.

Janet Victorson  
President, Congregation B'nai Jacob

## KEEPERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE

This group of people I consider “Keepers of the Synagogue” because of their constant presence and unwavering commitment to our congregation. They take care of all the things behind the scenes which make it look like we have a seamless operation. Without our “Keepers of the Synagogue” this would just be an empty building. Beautiful, but empty. “Keepers of the Synagogue” have a strong commitment to our operations and to all of us: the folks who provide the life within the building.

The next time the ark is opened, look at the silver on our Torahs and see how it shines – that’s because Jean Urecki polishes it on a regular basis. Look back toward the gym at the Memorial Tablets. Not only for today, on Yom Kippur, but every day throughout the year, Elliott Urecki makes sure that the proper names are lit for their yahrzeits and special family events like Bar/Bat Mitzvahs and weddings. Stop by for one of our daily services and you will see Elliott doing his part to help ensure a minyan. Always with a smile on his face, and always behind the scenes, Elliott is here to take care of what needs to be taken care of.

Whether it’s running to Sam’s to get food, or the hardware store to get supplies, or getting on his hands and knees to cover the electrical cords behind the Memorial Boards with tape so we don’t trip on them, Steve Max is ALWAYS there to pitch in to make sure what needs to get done does get done. He also cooks breakfast for his fellow minyan-goers during the week and keeps us on track at Shabbat services. Personally, I have enjoyed getting to know Steve better this past year while working alongside him and I hope I haven’t driven him too crazy!

Ted Kanner has a quiet and easy way about him, but don’t let that fool you! He is so knowledgeable about the inner workings of this operation, I’m not sure I’ve ever asked him something that he didn’t know the answer to. As Treasurer, Ted does an excellent job of managing our bank accounts. Many times I have sought Ted’s counsel, and have been left better for it. We’ve had some tough issues this past year that we successfully navigated and I am grateful I had Ted to bounce ideas off of.

Steve Rubin is a quiet, steady presence around the synagogue. He takes care of issues related to the building, setting up the sanctuary for the Holidays, heading up the Investment Committee, and I could go on. He’s quick to jump in and take care of whatever is brought to his attention. Many times he has said to me, “just let me know what you want, or how you want it done, and I’ll take care of it.” He is willing to share his valuable insights when asked and often brings a perspective into the conversation that hasn’t been thought of before.

We had some unique maintenance issues this past year, and Cary Levenson worked diligently and tenaciously with a number of expert resources to not just get them repaired, but to address the actual causes of some of the long-term issues we’ve had, and then find the right people to fix them. He was the driver behind replacing the air conditioner units for the library and the Alex and Betty Schoenbaum Education Center, as well as addressing the cause of some of the problems we’ve had with piping downstairs.

Marc Slotnick works quietly behind the scenes; whether it’s drafting new policies for the Board or amendments to our by-laws, Marc never says no when asked. He’s been a good sounding board for me, and together, we were able to resolve some sensitive issues. As Marc

said last week, his forte is his amazing (my word, not his) ability to blow the shofar for us year after year. It defies explanation as to how his shofar blowing seems to get stronger each time we hear it. I think a great fund raiser would be to find some shofar blowing contests, enter Marc to represent B'nai Jacob, and then take all the winnings!

Marilyn Urecki is an endless source of energy. Whether it's Kiddush luncheons like the one we had last Saturday, or Tot-Shabbats, or free casual Shabbat dinners, or Sunday School brunches, Marilyn is there, working very hard in the background. She makes sure we have everything covered, and is always quietly in control of what's going on at the time. Her creativity with meals and presentation is always fun to see and very much appreciated.

You may have noticed that all these "Keepers of the Synagogue" have something in common. They all work quietly in the background, and are not looking for glory or recognition. We all tend to take the things they do for granted, things they do out of love for the synagogue and the congregation. We are so lucky they are here; they have made my job as President much easier than it could have otherwise been. A heartfelt thank you to each of you.

### **KEEPERS OF OUR TRADITIONS**

This group of people I consider "Keepers of our Traditions" because of their constant presence and unwavering commitment to maintaining our religious practices.

We have a core group of Minyanaires, people who make it a priority to come to minyan as often as they possibly can. Their commitment and thoughtfulness are often taken for granted, but without them, we wouldn't be able to say Kaddish when we need to. On behalf of our congregation I sincerely thank you for keeping our traditions.

Another group I include in this category are the people who have helped lead our services throughout the year. As with the Minyanaires, you know who you are. We are grateful for your belief in maintaining our traditions at B'nai Jacob and thank you.

Our Chevra Kadisha is a group of men and women dedicated to maintaining a special and meaningful tradition. Under the leadership of Gary Sheff, it quickly and quietly springs to action when needed. Thank you! Chevra Kadisha will be sponsoring a brunch, organized by Kristen Clendinning on November 19, for members and anyone else who wants to find out more about the beautiful mitzvot the Chevra Kadisha performs. Rabbi will be there to explain what Chevra Kadisha is, why it exists, and how it goes about its work. More information will be available as we get closer to the date. If you can't wait until November and would like more information about the Chevra Kadisha, please reach out to Gary, Kristen, or Rabbi.

The Sheff family started a wonderful tradition at B'nai Jacob many years ago by providing us with delicious and plentiful break-the-fasts each year. Many thanks to the Sheff's for continuing to keep the tradition going.

### **SYNAGOGUE SUPPORTERS**

Auxiliary, under the leadership of Gail Carter, and now, Blaire Malkin, has done a wonderful job with creative programming, upgrading the kitchen with a new oven, organizing various meals for us throughout the year, and fundraising for our shul.

Men's Club, under its president, Stewart Bloom, has provided us with some wonderful programs and meals –The Annual Man of the Year event is always enjoyable and this past year was no exception. What fun it was to see Jack Goldfarb's reaction! And although surprised, he didn't miss a beat and was as witty as ever when asked to speak.

Stewart and Bobby Bloom are always quick to offer their culinary skills when we need a dinner for an event. One time this past year, when I asked for a little bit of help with a dinner that I was willing to prepare, they didn't even let me finish asking; they quickly said yes and immediately took over. Maybe they've tasted my cooking before?

Lynn Meyer offers to jump in and help any time we want to have an event and puts her heart and soul into everything she does for us, whether it's pulling people of all ages together to participate in Friday night services, or working in the kitchen. Lynn, along with Roberta Levine and Betty Stern, produced beautiful Oneg Shabbats this past year that went way beyond sweets; they were like tapas, or small plate dinners, and were delicious. With all the other things she does, I don't know where Lynn gets the energy that she devotes to our shul, but I think it stems from the heartfelt love she feels for B'nai Jacob and all of us.

Avrah Leven has become an integral part of our education program. She is here every Sunday helping to teach our children, and is often seen helping prepare meals in the kitchen, including Shabbat kiddushes.

Over the years, Linda Toborowski has been the main driver behind gathering as many pictures, stories, artifacts, and histories of the people of our congregation as possible for the B'nai Jacob Archives. Thanks to Linda, we now have so much information that we are ready to go to the next step and have it catalogued.

Some of you may remember Marcia Jo Zerivitz. She grew up in Charleston and is an expert in Jewish communities with a specific focus on museums and Florida Jewish history. Phil Goldstein was her childhood dentist, and Marcia guided Phil as he created the B'nai Jacob archives. Marcia has generously offered to give us, at no cost, her database program. When complete, the database will have all the information organized and recorded, and will tell us where each document and piece of our collection is located.

### **STAFF**

We are so lucky to have not one, but two Nancy's to keep our office running. Nancy Boulianne is about to celebrate her 1-year anniversary with us, and it has been a productive year! She has been a real force as she came in with fresh eyes and abounding energy to help us get more organized in the office and the entire building. Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave Nancy when she arrived last year; she has quickly become a real asset to us.

We are thankful to still have Nancy Morton in the office on Mondays and Fridays. She is also here on Saturday mornings to help out with Kiddush and luncheons. And even though she is part-time now, she is always available by phone or email if Nancy B. or I have a question. Nancy's dedication and commitment to this synagogue is outstanding.