

**Kathy Goldenkranz, Temple President
5768**

Once again I stand before you as president of the board.... I am into my third and final year as president. For those who don't know me, my name is Kathy Goldenkranz. The past two years have been both wonderful and challenging for me and for this congregation.

In the past I resisted making the contents of my High Holiday remarks a "State of the Temple" address, customarily given by Temple presidents. Instead, I spoke about what this temple means to me and to my family. Even though it's not Passover, tonight I am going to tell you why this night is different.

We all heard the official money request from co-board member Scott Roseman on Erev Rosh Hashanah. If you were here, you have to admit his style and humor made it quite palatable. But I do hope you will remember his appeal as we conclude this holiday season.

While you might interpret my remarks in the same vein, tonight I am addressing something different. This is about how our Temple membership is changing. Change in any organization is difficult. Whether it is a life altering change, a death, a birth, the loss of a job, children moving from one grade to the next then, graduations, divorce, marriage.....change is both positive and negative and people have an adaptation period. Many hesitate, the classic answer of "but I always did it that way" can be both infuriating and reassuring.

Today, I'd like for each of us to look around this room at our neighbor and truly appreciate what this place means to each of us. With 800 individuals there must be at least 800 different reasons. I want you now to ask yourself this question: What do I give to TBE to enhance my community? The answer can be varied and does not necessarily refer to monetary giving.

We should be very proud of our programs and services. We really have a unique membership. We have nurtured and grown a productive committee structure that oversees and adds to our operations. We have learned to allow the committees authority

to operate. Our many committees include education, youth, fundraising, caring and hospital comm., membership, cemetery, ritual practices and the finance committee. We now have a newly reorganized Brotherhood along with the complimentary Sisterhood and very popular Senior Connections to enhance our social, adult programming and community service programs. And we have a growing and changing religious school and summer camp of which we are very proud. Our youth group SRFY has one of the most involved and largest contingents of teens represented at the regional level.

We do great work in the community. We just celebrated 20 years of Mazon, we collect canned goods for the Second Harvest Food Bank, we promote full inclusion for the GLBT community in area houses of faith, we advocate for affordable housing, health care and immigration rights with our work in COPA.

Yes, we do a lot of great work. But we all also had a very difficult year financially.

This is our collective extended home. Together we are responsible for the infrastructure of this building and for providing our employees decent salaries with benefits. It is all of our responsibility to ensure we adhere to a balanced budget and to live within our means. This is the hard part where it gets uncomfortable. This is the difficult and risky part for me. This is the change.

I want everyone here to understand and appreciate when I say this; everyone is welcome and encouraged to be a member regardless of what you can pay. When we joined this Temple 21 years ago, my family dues were 5 dollars a month, yes 5 dollars a month. Over time, as our income grew we added to that commitment.

Recently, we board members had to analyze our membership. We had to understand why the size of our congregation the past few years held at over 500 families, yet we were not able to meet our budget obligations. And what we found is that 55% of our members or more than half indicate they are unable to afford the suggested dues commitment of \$1900 and 35% pledge under \$1000.

What does this mean? It means it costs a great deal to live here. It means people may be hurting financially in the Santa Cruz community, even the Jewish community. It means like me, many of us have sizeable out-of-pocket medical expenses. It means the Temple, too, is financially hurting as the natural extension.

Again this is not a plea for money. This is a statement of fact, the true face of Temple Beth El. It isn't easy to stand here and say this aloud. I'd prefer to have stopped with the Temple highlights, but honestly this is critical. In real dollars it costs us over \$2000 per family to operate.

This season commands us to be truthful with ourselves and to be sincere in our self-evaluation. We look at ourselves. I apologize if what I have shared with you tonight has been detrimental to your spiritual experience. I know this community will survive and thrive. We will need to change and adapt. We don't know yet what our future will be but I want to assure you your temple board will continue to do its best, to be fiscally responsible with your money and make sure that next year we can gather here again.

In turn you can help by doing what you can for each other, If you know someone who left the Temple, encourage them to return. If you have an idea, express it. Most of all appreciate what we share. This is our community. Together we support it, together we operate it, together we pray for it and together we need to pay for it.

Shabbat Shalom and L'Shanah Tova

I hope for each of you an easy fast.