

**Outgoing President's Remarks**  
**Congregation Kol Shofar Annual Meeting**  
**June 1, 2016**

I'd like to add my personal congratulations to Ron and Rhea. Ever since I first stepped foot into Kol Shofar ten years ago, I was aware of them as leaders of this community. As I came to know them personally, I appreciated their contributions even more, and saw how much everything they did had a positive impact on my personal shul experience. Yasher ko'ach to both of you, this is truly a very well-deserved honored.

Rabbi Chai spoke to us about change and uncertainty. And as we know, there are all kinds of change. If we wanted to lump it broadly into two groups, there's Big Change and Little Change. Big Change is the one I encountered when I first stepped back into a Conservative shul after having been away for thirty years since my childhood. Women on the bimah, women in tallitot, women leyning Torah and receiving aliyot—now that was Big Change! New facilities, new faces, people's careers leading them in and out of professional environments, now that's Little Change. Or at least, not such Big Change.

What's also Little Change is \$18. You might recognize that number. For me, that is the size of a gift that I give when the remembrance is more important than the charity. It is what I send to Kol Shofar to honor the yahrzeit of one of my parents. And while I recognize that for some people living near us that amount is the difference between eating and not eating for two days, our reality here running our shul is that that amount

represents one one hundred thousandth of our annual budget. And yet many congregants join me in sending in our \$18 gifts several times each year, and it is important to us that our gifts matter and that the shul keeps track of the fact that we gave them—for IRS purposes, if nothing else.

I mention this because I wanted to share an appreciation for something that I've learned over my tenure as your President—which is that the successful operation of our community is the result of managing many different small acts, each tended meticulously, so that our experience together is comfortably the sum of these parts. Making this all work requires the constant diligence of our wonderful and hard-working staff, under the prescient leadership of a great Executive Director. Such people are not easy to come by—after all, who would want a job in which it feels like you are answering to over 800 bosses?

For me, this past year has been mainly about managing transitions. We knew that we would be overseeing a change in our executive leadership, but we didn't know exactly when. Fortunately, in the course of my work in the nonprofit consultants community I meet many professionals whose chosen work is to serve as interim Executive Directors. Curiously, among them I happened to have met several who had served as interims at local synagogues. I therefore had some resources in my Rolodex when we learned when our need was going to commence. After a few phone calls and some interviews with me, Rabbi Leider and Joan Levison, we engaged Kaia Burkett to tend our shop while we organized our

search for a permanent ED. After serving two stints totaling almost a year and a half as the interim ED at Kehilla Community Synagogue in Piedmont, Kaia had a great understanding of the business and the gestalt of a Jewish house of worship. She was therefore able to step into the position at Kol Shofar with less of a learning curve than most.

In the meanwhile, we appointed a blue-ribbon search committee to find our permanent Executive Director. This committee was led by past Kol Shofar President Chuck Wisch, and included Ed Cushman, Cathy Goldstein, Elliot Levin, Cynthia Ulman, and Joan Levison, all of who had served as or served over nonprofit executive directors during the course of their careers. This committee set about their work methodically, interviewing constituents, defining job requirements, posting the position, and screening applicants.

Somewhere in the course of their work they circled back to let me know that they were hearing wonderful things about the job that Kaia was doing at Kol Shofar, and to ask whether they couldn't consider her for our permanent position as well. As it happens, in the world of professional interim executive directors, there is an unspoken agreement between the parties that the interim will not put themselves into contention for the permanent position, so as not to compromise either the search process or the interim engagement. Professional interims enjoy the temporary nature of their work, and look forward to moving on to the next assignment. However, there is no unspoken rule that says that a satisfied client can't invite their interim to consider being a candidate.

Based on how well Kaia was doing with us, with the support and consent of our rabbis and core lay leaders, we decided to invoke this prerogative. And when we approached her, we were thrilled to find out that Kaia too had felt a connection to who we are and what we are doing, and was willing to be considered in our search.

The search committee pushed their work to completion, identifying the best candidates they could find and interviewing the strongest, while reserving their last interview for Kaia. When their work was all done, they found that their most suitable candidate was the one already within our walls. They therefore recommended her hire to the Board, who enthusiastically accepted this recommendation at their last meeting. I therefore now have the privilege of thanking our Search Committee for their great work, and introducing you to our new permanent Executive Director, Kaia Burkett.