



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
A DIVISION OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980-2011.

Series F: CIJE Accrual, 1981-2011, undated.
Subseries 2: Dan Pekarsky, 1981-2011, undated.

Box
78

Folder
7

Lead communities project. Milwaukee. Congregation Beth Israel.
Shabbat project, 1995 June – 1998 May.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
[American Jewish Archives](http://AmericanJewishArchives.org) website.

[MAY 18, 1998]

CBI Shabbat Project
Table of Contents

<u>Date</u>	<u>Contents</u>
<u>1996</u>	
October 7	Opening Meeting with Steering Committee Agenda and Script
November 4	Second Meeting with Steering Committee Agenda
December 2	Minutes of Third Meeting with Steering Committee Recorded by Professor Daniel Pekarsky
<u>1997</u>	
January 13	Tentative Agenda for Project Meeting
February 6	Mid-year Summary of Stage I of the Project Drafts of Vision Statement
February 10	Background and Proposal of Best Practices Component
February 24	Agenda for Project Meeting Preliminary Interview of Best Practices Rabbi Lyle Fishman
July 14	Ideas for Upcoming Meeting with Committee Representatives
November 6	Ad for Shabbat Children's Programming
November 22	Description of Shabbat Programming at CBI Proposed Script for Committee Representatives Meeting
November 23	Actual Script for Committee Reps Meeting Most Recent Draft of Vision Statement Rabbi's Evaluation of Shabbat Programming/Environment
<u>1998</u>	
March 2/ May 18	Update and Summary of Entire Project from 1996 to present

file cijcont.txt

10/7/96

CIJE-CBI Meeting October 7, 1996
Agenda

1. Orientation
2. The goals of this project
3. Suggested strategy
4. Reflection and trends
5. Where do we go from here? What's the time-framework?

file is cije.txt

Participants on the steering committee:

Bob Hirschman, Gayle Weber Rakita, Bunny Dolnick, Pamela Lager, Louise Stein, Alice Jacobson; Roberta London, Liza Weimer, Ed Rettig, Ruth Cohen, Sandy Thau.

1. Thank you for participating
2. We're honored to accept an invitation from CIJE to study the educational objectives of our synagogue. Synagogues haven't been a primary venue of examination by CIJE...so this is new and exciting for all of us. Introduce Danny Pekarsky and participants.
3. Our aim is to enhance quality of education, in broadest sense, here at CBI
 - a) examine what we want to communicate and
 - b) how well we're communicating it.
 - c) to become clear what we are about as an institution
4. Launch process by examining one dimension of Jewish living: shabbat
 - a) lots of momentum, e.g. family progs, shabbat connection for empty nesters
 - b) core value, practice in life of our people
5. Of the ways of exploring how shabbat fits into life at CBI, I'd like to start with these questions:
 - a) What do we, personally, get out of shabbat when it "clicks"?
 - b) What were the circumstances under which it "clicked"?
 - c) What might CBI do or do better to make shabbat "click" more regularly for you and other members of our congregation?
6. Take 10-15 to jot down thoughts on index cards.
7. Share responses to the three questions; write them in three columns on board

8. Any common trends? Any observations?
9. Proceeding from here; what's the role of the committee:
 - a) collect data to determine how representative the above observations are
 - b) collect data on how shabbat surfaces in different contexts in the synagogue...e.g. family ed, school, synagogue
 - c) decide whom to collect data from--teachers, those involved in fam ed, congregants.
 - d) what questions to ask
 - e) reflect upon data
 - f) answer: what are the implications of our analysis for synagogue programming, etc...
 - g) complete an implementation plan

We're looking to complete the above stages by June. Afterwards, the same or different people begin stage two:

- h) implementation
 - i.) evaluation
11. Set up time framework for subsequent meetings

CIJE-CBI Meeting November 4, 1996
Agenda

1. Review of summary: Hand out minutes for review
2. Presentation of data gathered
 - a. Presentations
 - b. How can these inquiries be deepened?
3. Focus groups:
 - a. Who are the target populations?
 - b. What questions do we want to ask?
 - c. Who will contact the participants?
 - d. When will the focus groups take place?
4. Date and agenda of next meeting

file is cije.txt

Participants on the steering committee:

Bob Hirschman, Gayle Weber Rakita, Bunny Dolnick, Pamela Lager, Louise Stein, Alice Jacobson; Roberta London, Liza Weimer, Ed Rettig, Ruth Cohen, Sandy Thau.

CBI STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING, DEC. 2, 1996
MINUTES
By Dan Pekarsky

STUDY

Rabbi Buckman led the group in studying two Biblical passages in which we are commanded to celebrate Shabbat. One of them commands us "to remember" the Sabbath, and the other "to keep" the Sabbath; one of them links Shabbat to the Creation of the World, and the other to God's taking the Jewish People out of the land of Egypt. Our discussion tried to identify significant differences between the two passages and offered participants an opportunity to explain why they felt that one of them (more commonly the historical rather than the cosmic account of the Sabbath) resonated for them more powerfully. Because of our lengthy agenda, discussion was cut off before we were able to fully explore the significance of the differences between these accounts for the way we understand Shabbat (or teach it!).

TEACHER-INTERVIEWS

Thanks to Alice's hard work in interviewing many teachers and recording for us on paper what they had to say, the committee had before it a summary of comments made by teachers concerning the place of Shabbat in their work at Beth Israel (See attachment). The interviews roughly followed a series of questions drafted by Pamela Lager against the background of our last meeting (See attachment). The group spent several minutes quietly reviewing Alice's summary of the interviews, after which there was a chance for all of us to react to what was said there.

Below can be found a range of reactions expressed at the meeting; comments are organized thematically, rather than in the order they appeared in the meeting.

Presence of Shabbat. The interview data suggest that Shabbat is represented in what teachers do in a multitude of ways not represented in the school's official curriculum.

Objectives. Scanning what teachers had to say about what they did in the area of Shabbat, one person observed that there did not appear to be any coherent set of objectives informing what people did in the area of Shabbat. Some teachers seemed to

be after facilitating "Shabbat-experiences", others seemed more interested in teaching kids about Shabbat in more traditional ways - but there wasn't a sense of what the over-riding aims of the Shabbat curriculum actually are. This prompted another person to ask, "What are the Congregation's goals in the area of Shabbat-education?" [This is clearly a matter that will bear more discussion.]

Highlights and frustrations. Scanning the data, it appeared to some that the most frustrating thing for teachers was the disengagement of the children's parents -- the lack of support for and follow-up to what the school might do in the area of Shabbat; one person expressed the view that little could be accomplished so long as there is a great gap between what the school/congregation says is important and what is conveyed to the child in the family context.

On a more positive note, teachers were particularly excited by opportunities to bring kids to their homes to celebrate Shabbat. Not only did they personally derive great satisfaction from this activity, they felt that it was very powerful for the students, offering them a kind of experiential "in their guts" knowledge of Shabbat that is invaluable. This comment led to a fascinating discussion concerning shabbat programming and the family.

Shabbat programming and CBI families. In response to the aforementioned observation concerning the power and desirability of teachers inviting children home for Shabbat, a countervailing concern was expressed: might not the effect of this be to take kids away from their own families on Shabbat, thereby eroding the Shul's commitment to make Shabbat a family-experience? In response to this concern, someone suggested that for many kids the choice was not between having Shabbat at the teacher's home or having Shabbat at home; for many it would be a choice between celebrating and not celebrating Shabbat.

In this context, one person suggested that in its efforts to both keep families together on Shabbat and encourage rich experiential Shabbat learning, perhaps it was time for the Congregation to consider returning in a serious way to Friday night programming (that would include a powerful family-oriented service and a family-friendly dinner)? Or perhaps it would be possible to nurture groups-of-families dinners (on the model of what is being done with the empty-nesters).

In the context of this discussion, questions were raised concerning why it is that families don't celebrate Shabbat. An hypothesis that was proposed is that in the case of some families it is lack of knowledge and know-how that stands in the way of their trying to celebrate Shabbat, and it was suggested in this connection that perhaps a user-friendly manual "a tool-kit" (with stories, instructions, prayers, suggestions,, ideas about what they might do, etc.) might be of value. There was a lot of enthusiasm for this suggestion; at the same time, at least one person cautioned against hastily concluding that lack of knowledge is the principal reason non-observing parents don't celebrate Shabbat. This person reminded us that the ranks of those not celebrating shabbat in an active way include families whose adult members have a lot of knowledge and know-how from out of their own childhoods. Something more or other than know-how was missing in these individuals -- a kind of personal, "in your guts" soul-knowledge of Shabbat as lived experience. In other words, along with the lack of technical or informational knowledge problem, we must recognize that there is a problem of motivation, of lack of interest. (This point was made using the Hebrew distinction between two forms of knowledge (Y'dee-ah and Hakarah.)

The family as the client. This multi-faceted discussion of the family in relation to Jewish education and Shabbat led someone to suggest that perhaps the family -- not the child! - should be thought of as the proper object of the Congregation's efforts in the area of Shabbat education. As this person put it, perhaps the goal should be to empower families to experience Shabbat and to incorporate it into their lives. If taken seriously, this overarching objective would carry implications not just for the school but for many other facets of the Congregation's programming. We were in this connection cautioned by one participant that the challenge of working with adults, with children, and with whole families is a difficult one, requiring fundamentally different approaches.

How comprehensive is the information elicited by the interviews? After reading the interview-data, one person wondered whether interviews of this kind are sufficient to elicit from teachers what it is they do and are trying to accomplish when they teach about Shabbat. This person (who happens to be a teacher in the school) suggested that much more in the way of shabbat-education might be going on than was articulated in the

interview process.

The desirability of a teacher-focus-group. The foregoing considerations led to the suggestion that it would be useful to organize a focus group for teachers that builds on the interviews that had been done. The focus group would give the teachers a chance to react to the impressions conveyed by the interview data - to affirm what was said, to correct it, to add to it or deepen it, etc. The give-and-take of the conversation might serve not only to produce more information but to deepen teachers' own awareness of what they are or should be doing in the area of Shabbat.

SHABBAT CONNECTION

In the last part of this meeting, we had a chance to hear about the relatively new "Shabbat Connection" program that is aimed at "Empty Nesters" (typically between 45 and 55 or somewhat older). We were given a description of the efforts that had been made to support the efforts of these couples and individuals to cluster in small groups for period Shabbat dinners. While the response to the new program was not initially as strong as its developers had expected, the program seems to be growing in popularity. It was speculated that one of the reasons why some people might be reluctant to join the program and especially to volunteer to host a dinner has to do with Kashrut issues, and we spoke some about whether there might be ways to lower the level of anxiety around this issue.

Someone asked whether any effort has been made to enrich what happens at a typical Friday night dinner. The answer was that at this point it's left very open-ended; essentially, whatever the host-family wants to do is what is done. It was in this connection suggested that perhaps the host-family could be provided with a "Shabbat in the home" tool-kit, rich with ideas about the kinds of things that might meaningfully be done in the context of hosting a shabbat dinner.

Excited by the account of these home-based Shabbat dinners, one person suggested that such dinners (aimed perhaps at a broader constituency than Empty Nesters) might prove an excellent Congregational out-reach tool.

THE SHABBAT BEST PRACTICES PROPOSAL

There was no time for the last item on our agenda, which was to discuss the Rabbi's proposal that CBI undertake a kind of "Best Practices" project focusing on Congregation-based Shabbat programming.

END OF MEETING

Towards the end of the meeting the group had a chance to review the list of questions prepared by Sandy Thau which are to be used to stimulate and guide the upcoming focus group discussion. Members of the group made a couple of suggestions but were generally very happy with the interview-guide.

At the end of our meeting we agreed that the next steps would be to organize a focus group for teachers and to hold the first focus group (for Empty Nesters). The results of this first focus group would be considered at our next meeting on Dec. 16.

Addendum from the Rabbi:

Some ideas that emerged from discussion that should be addressed at some future date:

Bob Hirschman suggested a round-robin shabbat experience for students in each class of the religious school where student families host shabbat on a rotation basis.

Roberta London wondered whether or not implementing a late Friday night service would attract families and suggested that class services be implemented with children taking part in the service. Dinner should also be served.

Ruth Cohen cited the study by Jack Wertheimer on membership observance patterns in Conservative synagogues. Perhaps that study should be brought into the discussion in a more deliberate manner.

Ruth Cohen also noted that it may be worthwhile to train parents to be "coaches" in leading family discussions on the parasha.

I noted that we might consider a curriculum in the school that introduces different aspects of shabbat in a progressive manner (e.g. Kabbalat Shabbat/Maariv, Dinner practice, Shabbat morning service, etc....). In a private communication, Dan P suggested other possible sequences, e.g. creation, revelation, redemption. This should be explored further.

I would also like to highlight one possible formulation of our goal, stated well by Judy Werlin, namely, "to empower families as families to observe and experience shabbat, i.e. to empower families to incorporate shabbat into their lifestyles.

file is cije.min

CIJE Meeting January 13, 1997 4 PM
(Tentative) Agenda

1. Study
2. Report on focus group interview conducted by Sandy Thau
3. Report on re-interview of CBI Religious School Teachers.
4. Update on "Best Practices" Approach to Shabbat Commitment
5. Long range (i.e. to June) plan

2/6/97 created

1

9/22/97 revised
Summary of Stage I of the Shabbat Project:

What Objectives have we accomplished?
What is our Vision for Shabbat at CBI (Draft #1)?

Background to Stage I of the Shabbat Project

In the fall of 1996, we accepted an invitation by the Milwaukee Lead Community Initiatives Project to embark on what was called the Goals Project. The purpose of the Goals Project was to enhance the quality of Beth Israel's religious and educational program by:

- 1) clarifying the synagogue's fundamental goals;
- 2) assessing how these goals are embedded in overall synagogue program;
- 3) evaluating the extent to which these goals are achieved.

Although the synagogue has many goals (e.g. to promote an ongoing desire for Jewish learning, to inspire congregants to pray regularly, to foster a greater understanding of the ideals and expectations of Conservative Judaism), and all are worthy of examination, we as a Committee decided that, for several reasons, the focus should be on shabbat celebration and observance.

The Objectives of the Project

With this focus, the challenge would be to enable the membership of CBI to grow in their appreciation and enjoyment of shabbat. The strategy for meeting this challenge would include the following objectives:

- 1) clarifying how shabbat currently fits into the practices of CBI;
- 2) clarifying how shabbat fits into the outlook and lives of key constituencies (e.g. professional and lay leaders, teachers, parents and children);
- 3) clarifying the types and qualities of shabbat experiences that CBI would like to nurture (i.e. THE VISION);
- 4) identifying the implications of the VISION for the celebration of shabbat within the congregation.

While Stage I of the Shabbat Project would focus on the first three objectives, Stage II would deal primarily with the fourth objective.

Objective #1:

To clarify how shabbat currently fits into the practices of CBI

CBI provides rich opportunities in the synagogue to celebrate shabbat. On a weekly basis, minyanim are held Friday evening, shabbat morning, shabbat mincha and motzei shabbat. While fifteen years ago the main service was the Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat and

Maariv, the main service today is shabbat morning. Between one and four hundred individuals attend that service.

Connected with each of the shabbat services is some educational or learning component. On Friday evenings, for example, the Rabbi teaches one mitzvah (one entry) from Maimonides's Sefer Hamitzvot between Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv. Six times a year, a guest speaker presents a lecture as part of the CBI Scholars in Residence Series. On Shabbat morning, an extensive supplement is distributed to each worshipper upon entry to the sanctuary. That supplement contains an aliyah-by-aliyah summary or analysis of the weekly parasha, an introduction to the Haftorah, a mini-quiz on the parasha for children, a d'var tefilla, a meditation on tefilla, transliterations of the parts of the Musaf Amidah that are sung during the Hazzan's repetition of the Amidah, and synagogue announcements. An invitation is included in every supplement for new worshippers to introduce themselves to the Rabbi, Hazzan, President, and Gabbaim. For those who like to deepen their study of the parasha beyond the material included in the supplement, there is the "shabbat book-rack," which contains commentaries, essays, modern translations, and other study aids to parashat hashavuah. The "shabbat book-rack" is placed in the back of the sanctuary and is updated according to the weekly parasha. On shabbatot where there is no Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrated, the Rabbi will often lead a discussion prior to the Torah reading on the parasha. Otherwise, a sermon is given. As mentioned previously, on Scholar-in-Residence weekends, a guest lecturer makes a presentation. Another aspect of study that is worth mentioning in the context of shabbat morning service is lay participation in the weekly Torah reading. The synagogue is blessed with 55 lay Torah readers--male and female teens and adults--who share the responsibility of reading Torah, many of whom were trained by our Hazzan. The number of lay Torah readers continues to increase and is a high profile feature of the synagogue. One other feature of the shabbat morning experience that serves an educational function is the "shabbat table." This "shabbat table" holds copies of newspaper clippings, editorials, brochures, information packets on Jewish subjects that may be of interest to shabbat worshippers. This material is available upon entering the sanctuary. A third opportunity for study takes place on shabbat afternoon when two classes are offered between Mincha and Seudah Shelishit, one in Midrash Rabbah with Rabbi Rettig, the Judaica coordinator at the JCC, and one in Talmud with the Rabbi. The latter study group has completed four masechtot of gemara and is currently working towards completion of Masechet Sota.

Shabbat at CBI is not only associated with study. Food, or more specifically, shabbat meals, are an integral component to "oneg" shabbat. Approximately every other month, the synagogue or one of its constituent organizations sponsors a Friday evening shabbat dinner. Attendance ranges between 100 and 170 people. On a more infrequent basis shabbat luncheons are sponsored usually in conjunction with some study component. One other "meal-oriented" effort is important to mention. It is called the "Shabbat Connection" which is program that is targeted towards empty-nesters. Clusters of interested empty-nesters are formed by a lay committee for the purpose of joining together to share shabbat dinner. This program enters its second year and is projected to expand beyond the twenty couples it serviced in 1996-1997.

Shabbat programming is geared to adults as well as children at CBI. Every other month (if not slightly more frequently than that), the Family Programming Committee organizes a Friday evening shabbat family service which may feature the children's choir or a storyteller, for example, and which includes the participation of children in the service. Consistently, over one hundred people attend these Friday evening family services. Even on a Friday evening where there is no special family service, young children feel welcome to attend the regular "adult" service on Friday evenings. On the first shabbat morning of every month, a shabbat shacharit family service is offered parallel to the main sanctuary service. The family service is run by a lay person and is open to the participation of adults and children. Each month the leader of the family service highlights one specific Jewish value, prayer and song. On the second and third shabbat of every month, Junior Congregation (soon to be called "Minyan Me'at") is held for students in grades 3rd-5th. Attendance is not spectacular but the handful of children that attend do so faithfully. Junior Congregation is directed by an adult member of the synagogue. On the fourth shabbat of every month a more informal shabbat morning experience which is supervised by another member of the synagogue. Every shabbat morning baby-sitting is provided for toddlers, and "Tot Shabbat" is available for children below 3rd grade. A third service that is popular among children--besides Kabbalat Shabbat and Shacharit--is the Mincha service shabbat afternoons. An equal number of children and adults attend Mincha, stay for seudah shelishit, maariv and havdalah.

The Family Programming Committee has been a contributor to the menu of shabbat-related experiences not only through the family services that meet on Friday evenings or shabbat mornings, but also through its havdalah programs, shabbat workshops, and lunch-and-learn sessions. Each year the Family Programming Committee organizes the majority of its programs around a central theme. In the 1996-1997 academic year, the theme was Shabbat. The Family Programming Committee has been very successful in attracting young families to these programs and in trying to equip families with the tools to celebrate shabbat. Another powerful family activity that happens annually and sometimes semi-annually is a shabbaton. The shabbaton is a retreat weekend either at Camp Chi or Camp Ramah which is promoted as an opportunity to leave behind one's busy schedule and pressure of city to experience the warmth and joy of spending shabbat with other families. A total shabbat environment is created, and participants have the opportunity to study, learn, pray, eat, sing, and build community. The theme of the 1997 family shabbaton was Shabbat and focused on Heschel's and Buber's conceptions of shabbat. The effect of a shabbaton on a family is unpredictable but consistently positive. After the 1997 family shabbaton, one individual purchased a set of tefillin and attends shacharit weekday minyan once a week; another made a commitment not to go to work on shabbat; several families now celebrate shabbat dinners more regularly; others now invite guests; two families decided to kasher their homes; several families attend shabbat services more regularly. The shabbaton concept was extended three years ago to the empty-nester population as well. Since that time, two empty-nester shabbatonim took place at Camp Chi and one extended shabbaton (25-hour total classroom study experience over a period of a week) took place in Jerusalem.

Shabbat is also part of the curriculum in the CBI Religious School. At the present time, the formal curriculum of the school emphasizes the cognitive and behavioral, but not the affective/personal, dimensions of shabbat. In practice, teachers are relatively free to do what they want in the area of shabbat, and it is not uncommon for teachers to invite students to their homes for a shabbat meal or even overnight stay. For the most update description of how shabbat fits into the school, Pamela Lager will have to be consulted again.

Objective #2:

To clarify how shabbat fits into the outlook and lives of key constituencies

Since the Goals Project began, a number of focus groups and interviews have been conducted to explore how shabbat fits into the life of CBI constituents. In a discussion with the "Shabbat Project Committee," participants were asked what they get out of shabbat when it "clicks," what were the circumstances under which it "clicked," and what might the synagogue do better to make shabbat "click" more regularly for them and other congregants.

The members of the committee spoke of shabbat providing the opportunity to share valuable family time in a way that is rarely possible during the rest of the week, to rest, to experience the joy of coming together as a community and the joy of singing together, to enter a different zone and experience the world in a way different from way we experience it the rest of the week, to experience the freedom from the demands of work, to commune with nature. Some of the conditions that facilitate these feelings included being in nature, enveloping environments that are completely suffused with shabbat (e.g. shabbatonim, shabbat in Jerusalem), the presence of others engaged in the celebration; singing; pre-shabbat preparation that makes it possible to spend the whole of shabbat in enjoyment rather than in preparation; rituals that welcome and usher out shabbat; refusal to do workday things at all. The group suggested that CBI needed to overcome a sense of "coldness," needed to create a sense of community, needed to reach out to empty-nesters and single parents and sponsor more shabbatonim. Some suggested that the late Friday evening service be re-instituted. Finally, various obstacles that stand in the way of shabbat enjoyment were cited: ignorance concerning what shabbat is about and why certain things are done; and a wish not to look stupid by "doing things wrong" or not knowing how to do certain things.

The discussion with the Shabbat Project Committee yielded valuable information. Subsequently, the Committee decided to raise the same questions with a subset of the empty-nester population. This focus group consisted of members that were considered moderately involved in the life of the synagogue. As it turned out, all the women in the focus group came from families where shabbat was a very special and important time of the week. For all of them this special feeling has carried into their adulthood although

they may be unable to celebrate in the same way. Most said that their way of celebrating shabbat was to make a special meal and invite family and friends. The group agreed that one of the main impediments to shabbat celebration is the fact that the community is so spread out. No longer is there the feeling that everyone on your block is doing the same thing as you are doing. Again, comparing a shabbat experience on a shabbaton, at a summer camp, or in Israel, participants expressed that it is very difficult to create the same sense of community in a large city where not everyone "buys into" shabbat. Many of the participants justified a lack of commitment to a traditional shabbat experience by saying that they feel it is important to be charitable and do for others, and that these activities make them feel like good Jews more so than strictly observing shabbat. The main message was: "do what you are comfortable with and what feels right for you." The two participants that attend shabbat morning services regularly felt a sense of being at home in the synagogue, a feeling of belonging, and comfort. Shabbat morning services provide something to "hold onto during the week." A few of the women justified their lack of attendance on a feeling of being "diminished" given that the synagogue does not count women in a minyan. It was also noted that the ideal shabbat for this group wasn't necessarily a traditional shabbat; rather it was described by certain qualities of experiences: freedom from stress, being with the Jewish community, being with family, a feeling of closeness, warmth, quiet and peacefulness. At least one of the participants stated that he/she doesn't go to the office on shabbat and this provides free time to do whatever he/she wants on that day. Although the majority of the participants were satisfied with their level of shabbat celebration and the way in which the synagogue provides opportunities to celebrate shabbat, they did say that their own experience of shabbat would be enhanced if they did not have to work on Friday afternoons and if they were to celebrate shabbat on a more frequent basis.

A third conversation that took place was one with the teachers in our Religious School. The teachers shared their ideas about shabbat and shabbat education. There was agreement among the teachers that there is a vast difference between "learning about" and "personally experiencing" shabbat, and they felt that the most powerful shabbat learning experiences fall into the "personally experiencing" category. This means creating opportunities for the children to actively and meaningfully celebrate shabbat outside of class as well as re-creating or re-enacting shabbat experiences in class. As an example of the latter, one teacher described a class in which she had the students running madly around doing shabbat preparations, and then, with the coming of shabbat, allowed them the enjoyment of rest from this feverish activity. Through such experiences, young children who don't celebrate shabbat might acquire a visceral sense for the relationship between weekday and shabbat. Asked about the significance of shabbat and about why it is important, the teachers spoke about "being together as a family" in a world in which this is decreasingly common; about an opportunity to again become centered, to get perspective on one's life; and about resting.

Objective #3: (THE VISION)

To clarify the types and qualities of shabbat experiences that CBI would like to nurture

The assumption behind objective #3 is that in order to go beyond a conception of the synagogue as simply a supermarket of programs, the synagogue must articulate a vision concerning the type of experiences that we hope to create and the type of community that we hope to nurture. Programming will then become the embodiment of a vision. Vision-driven, the synagogue will more effectively be able to transform the culture of shabbat celebration at CBI.

One of the first statements in the Torah about shabbat is “vayichal elokim bayom hashevii m'lachto asher asah” that God completed all God’s work on the seventh day. On shabbat, therefore, a sense of completeness or wholeness permeated the world. Shabbat at Congregation Beth Israel is the opportunity to feel a sense of completeness, to renew our sense of self not just as a producer or consumer in this world but as someone who stands in relationship with God and with a family--both one’s immediate family and the larger family of the Jewish community.

At CBI we hope to create an environment that would deepen the celebration of shabbat by:

- 1) conveying that shabbat celebration is a priority in our synagogue;
- 2) associating a sense of warmth and community with shabbat;
- 3) promoting shabbat as a day of joy and celebration as opposed to a day of restriction and constraint;
- 4) creating anticipation for shabbat in the days prior to shabbat;
- 5) providing experiences and learning that will empower families to help enrich, understand, and internalize the celebration of shabbat in the home;
- 6) cultivating and cherishing congregational singing and viewing it as a significant point of entry into shabbat spirituality;
- 7) associating shabbat with some form of Jewish learning that will edify, challenge, or foster spiritual growth and closeness to God.

Objective #4:

To identify the implications of the VISION for the celebration of shabbat within the congregation.

While it is the focus of Stage II of the Shabbat Project to identify the implications of these goals for the celebration of shabbat within the congregation at large (e.g. to look at home the VISION may guide the Religious School shabbat curriculum), a number of preliminary suggestions have been made. These include: developing a short brochure entitled "Shabbat at CBI" which articulates the VISION and highlights the activities and opportunities available for shabbat celebration within the CBI community/synagogue; assigning "gatekeepers" or "welcomers" that can welcome and direct worshippers as they enter as well as provide information about the synagogue and the shabbat service; devoting more time to the teaching of shabbat; including inspirational readings about shabbat in the shabbat supplement; expanding the Shabbat Connection concept to include other sub-populations within the synagogue; offering a late Friday evening service periodically; making shabbat congregational dinners inviting not only to families with young children but empty-nesters and retirees as well; training congregants to lead the shabbat morning service; teaching the meaning of a specific prayer each week during the shabbat service; collecting better information from CBI congregants not only about their talents but the ways in which they would like to grow spiritually and the areas in which they would like to be embark on study; providing a permanent guide to the shabbat morning service for worshippers in which they can learn about the structure of the service, taking an aliyah, synagogue etiquette.

Vision of Shabbat for CBI Draft #2

James Truslow Adams, an early 20th century American historian, once wrote: "Perhaps it would be a good idea, fantastic as it sounds, to muffle every telephone, halt every motor, and stop all activity some day, to give people a chance to ponder for a few minutes on what it is all about, why they are living and what they really want."

For Jewish tradition, Adams' "good idea" is not "fantastic" at all. Long ago this idea was incorporated in a day that comes every week: the Shabbat. It is a day of tranquillity, serenity, peace, and quiet that allows us to renew our dreams and rekindle our hopes. It is a day when we stop running on our own individual schedules and invest our time in those things that connect us to other people rather than put us in conflict or competition with them.

To paraphrase Abraham Joshua Heschel, shabbat helps us to liberate ourselves from the tyranny of the clock and the calendar. It is an island of stillness in the tempestuous ocean of time and toil where we may enter a harbor and reclaim our dignity.

Shabbat is a day on which we rest, not out of exhaustion, and not because we have accomplished everything we wanted to, but because we want to remind ourselves what it feels like to be at peace with the world. It is a day to "turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world."

At Congregation Beth Israel we strive to provide opportunities to experience shabbat in the synagogue as a day of joy, renewal, and spiritual growth. It is also our goal to empower congregants to create such opportunities for themselves at home. It is hoped that the qualities of experiences that we create and educate towards will be so inspiring that the "island of stillness" called shabbat will be a welcome relief to the chronically overscheduled individual who desires to spend more time with those whom he/she loves and with his/her extended family of Jews.

In the context of a Conservative synagogue such as ours, the sacred time of shabbat begins with candle-lighting on Friday evenings and ends with Havdalah on Saturday night. In between these endpoints, sacred time is created by refraining from certain activities and engaging in others. If, for example, we make an effort to prevent the obligations of work from intruding into our celebration of shabbat, we thereby make room for prayer, song, celebratory meals, study, family, and community to uplift our souls in the way that only shabbat can.

Our synagogue views traditional Jewish practices, enshrined in custom and halachah (Jewish law), as powerful vehicles for spiritual growth. We recognize, however, that some congregants will incorporate more of the traditional halachah into their lives and others less. It is important that all of them, regardless of their level of observance, feel safe and respected as they pursue their spiritual journeys in our synagogue. What is more important than our place on the continuum of Jewish observance is that we are all trying to deepen our relationship with God and all that God has created.

MORNING SERVICE:

מוֹדֶה / לַנְּקִבָּה : מוֹדֶה / אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם
שֶׁהַחַיּוֹת בֵּי נַשְׁמָתֵי בְּחִמְלָה, רַבָּה אֲמוּנָתְךָ.

Mo-deh A-ni L'fa-ne-cha

Me-lech Chai V'ka-yam

She-he-che-zar-ta Bi Nish-ma-ti

B'chem-lah, B'chem-lah

Ra-bah E-mu-na-te-cha

Thank you God, for giving me life today, and every day.

You are very, very kind.

Today I would like to thank God for:

When we pray we think about
our lives.

People can make a difference.

One me, one you
caring for each other.

One God!

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל: יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
יְיָ אֶחָד

She-ma Yis-ra-eil: A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, A-do-nai E-chadl

Hear, O Israel: the Eternal is our God,
the Eternal God is One!

When we pray we think about
our lives.

People can make a difference.

One me, one you
caring for each other.

One God!

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל: יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
יְיָ אֶחָד

She-ma Yis-ra-eil: A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, A-do-nai E-chadl

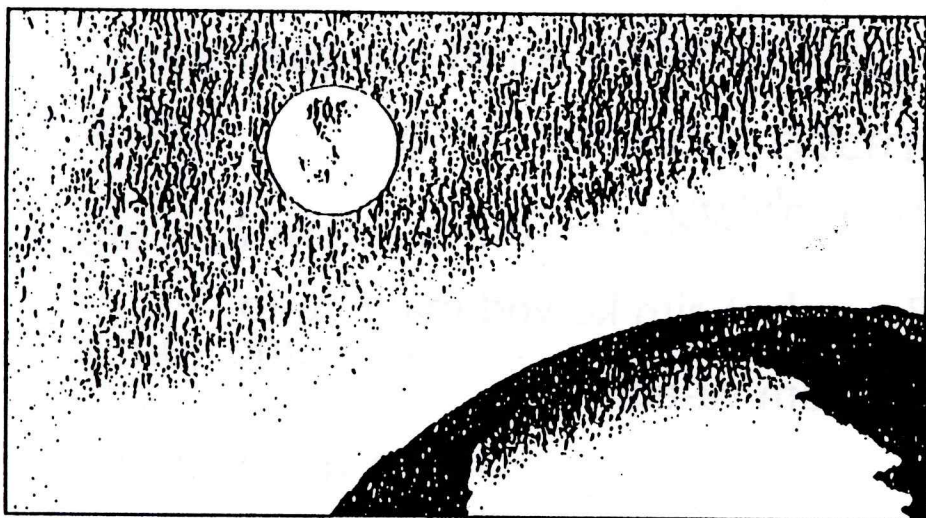
Hear, O Israel: the Eternal is our God,
the Eternal God is One!

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד!

Ba-ruch sheim ke-vod mal-chu-to
le-o-lam va-ed!

Blessed is God's glorious rule for ever and ever!

God Thoughts



Silent Prayer

עֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמַרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ
וְעַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

O-seh sha-lom bim-ro-mav, hu ya-a-seh
sha-lom a-lei-nu v'al kol Yis-ra-el, v'im-ru:
A-meim.

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high
heavens, let peace descend on us, on all Israel, and all
the world, and let us say: Amen

Created 2/10/97

Best Practices Project

Background

In the fall of 1996, Congregation Beth Israel accepted an invitation by the Milwaukee Lead Community Initiatives Project to embark on what was called the Goals Project. The purpose of the Goals Project was to enhance the quality of Beth Israel's religious and educational program by:

- 1) clarifying the synagogue's most fundamental goals;
- 2) assessing how these goals are embedded in overall synagogue program;
- 3) evaluating the extent to which these goals are achieved.

A committee was constituted to address the three aforementioned objectives. This committee includes the Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel, Lee Buckman; the CIJE Consultant, Professor Daniel Pekarsky from the University of Wisconsin, Madison; the Educational Director at CBI, Pamela Lager; and ten members of CBI of which one is the outgoing director of Milwaukee's Lead Community Project, Ruth Cohen and another is one of the lay co-chairs of the Lead Community Project, Louise Stein. Other congregants on this Committee include the Judaica Director at the local JCC, Rabbi Ed Rettig; one of CBI's afternoon religious school teachers, Liza Wiemer; the synagogue President, Gayle Rakita; the acting director of Milwaukee's Agency for Jewish Education; a professional market researcher; and three other active members of the synagogue representing three distinct age categories.

Although the synagogue has many goals (e.g. to promote an ongoing desire for Jewish learning, to inspire congregants to pray regularly, to foster a greater understanding of the ideals and expectations of Conservative Judaism), and all are worthy of examination, the Committee decided that, for several reasons, the focus should be on shabbat celebration and observance.

With this focus, the challenge would be to enable the membership of CBI to grow in their appreciation and enjoyment of shabbat. The strategy for meeting this challenge would include:

- 1) clarifying how shabbat currently fits into the practices of CBI;
- 2) clarifying how shabbat fits into the outlook and lives of key constituencies (e.g. professional and lay leaders, teachers, parents and children);
- 3) having opportunities to explore different understandings of what shabbat is and how it fits into Jewish life and to use these opportunities to deepen the views of the participants and the rest of the congregation;
- 4) clarifying the types and qualities of shabbat experiences that CBI would like to nurture and identifying the implications of these goals for the congregation at prayer and study.

Some Preliminary Findings

Since the Goals Project began, a number of focus groups and interviews have been conducted to explore how shabbat fits into the life of CBI constituents. Participants were asked what they get out of shabbat when it “clicks,” what were the circumstances under which it “clicked,” and what might the synagogue do better to make shabbat “click” more regularly for them and other congregants.

Respondents spoke of shabbat providing the opportunity for valuable family time and a time to experience the world in a very different way than on other days, the joy of coming together as a community, of being free of the demands of work, of communing with nature. Some of the conditions that facilitate these feelings are environments that are completely suffused from shabbat.

The Best Practices Project

Several Conservative synagogues in the United States are reputed to be ones that have succeeded in creating a vibrant shabbat community, where a “shabbaton-like” experience is the norm for many congregants. The purpose of the “Best Practices Project” is to understand what goes into fashioning and nurturing a community that finds shabbat celebration personally enriching and religiously uplifting. Ultimately, it would be worthwhile to determine the extent to which Congregation Beth Israel can learn from the successes in these other synagogues and replicate them among the CBI membership. The challenge is to determine:

- 1) how these synagogues succeed in creating the “shabbaton-like” experience and commitment among its membership;
- 2) what types of shabbat opportunities and qualities of experience these synagogues provide that help enhance and empower shabbat celebration and observance;
- 3) how these synagogues attract and retain members for whom shabbat is an integral part of their identity as a practicing Jew.

file is bestly.txt

Agenda CIJE Meeting
Feb. 24, 1997

1. Review minutes from last meeting
2. Study and article by Art Green
3. Best Practices Project
4. Strengths and weaknesses of CBI shabbat experience
5. Best Practices Project Report by Judy and Bud Margolis
6. Itinerary:
 - a. Next Focus Group: Identify population and recruit
 - b. Teacher in-service
 - c. Mission Statement (Shabbat at CBI is....)
 - d. Suggestions for shabbat enhancement

file is bestint2.txt

Created 2/24/97

Best Practices Project

Preliminary Interview conducted by Rabbi B of Rabbi Lyle Fishman

Judy and Bud Margolis were sent to Congregation Ohr Kodesh (OK) in Chevy Chase Maryland on the weekend of February 14-16, 1997. OK was identified by Rabbi David Golinkin, a leading Israeli halachic authority of the Conservative Movement, and Rabbi Jerry Epstein, Executive Director of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, as synagogue with a vibrant shabbat community and a large core of committed "shomer shabbat" families.

Chevy Chase is located outside Washington, DC. In the area of the synagogue, there are four or five other Conservative synagogues. The rabbi distinguished his synagogue as being "traditional in many characteristics." The synagogue abides by the annual cycle Torah reading, offers a shabbat mincha minyan, and is serious about its commitment to egalitarianism. The other synagogues in the area are not only less traditional, by his definition, but also appeal to Jews in distinct geographical regions in Chevy Chase.

In terms of baseline date, the rabbi has been at the synagogue for 13 years (the Rabbi Emeritus retired after 32 years and lives in the area). The congregation has 725 family units. It is the second largest of the midsize synagogues in the area. Half the students in the synagogue attend and afternoon religious school (there is some kind of joint afternoon religious school) and half day school. Of those at day school, most attend the Charles E. Smith Community Day School which is not officially affiliated with Solomon Schechter although the majority of the students come from Conservative synagogues. Fifteen to 20 students attend a modern Orthodox day school. The latter school has 600 students total and the former 1000. Both schools continue through high school. USY is not so strong in the synagogue; some attend NCSY; few attend BBYO. Involvement in the synagogue is generally a function of whether a child attends a day school but observance is not.

The Chazzan is observant, is a great Bar/Bat mitzvah teacher, likes to teach "nusach" and "trope," always defers to the rabbi on religious issues, gets along well with the rabbi, and is an exemplar for living Jewishly. In addition to the rabbi and cantor, there is an executive director, a youth and programming director, a nursery school director, and the principal of the religious school.

The rabbi teaches upon request in the school, offers a monthly parent seminar for the religious school, teaches a Sunday morning Talmud class, a Tuesday lunchtime downtown class, a Basic Judaism course on Tuesday evenings, High School children on Wednesday evenings. On the second day of Yom Tov he doesn't give a sermon but teaches. The shabbat morning crowd is loyal and Jewishly knowledgeable, and the rabbi feels that he can build from week to week on what he has taught previously.

file is bestint.txt

Created 7/14/97
Last Saved 9/22/97

CIJE Meeting with Committees

3-Lee intros project

20-Danny on visioning

2-Lee on our project

20-texts on shabbat

5-hand out vision and read aloud

5-look at vision and think with guide questions:

what resonates

what's unclear

what are uncomf with

what's missing

30-go to chevuta

one member of CIJE shabbat committee sits with each group

*eval vision-react to vision

*report card

give ourselves a report card---

are there aspects of cong life where this vision is fulfilled

where is/isn't the vision fulfilled

for what populations is this vision fulfilled/unfulfilled

how do services stack up in relation to the vision

Post up your reactions in two sheets: 1) evaluating vision 2) eval congregation

20-One insight in each of these domains

10-Implications: to take one domain and think about it together

my own din v'cheshbon, how we might do things differently--I pick the domain

5-Written Assignment: implications for your particular committee

How is the vision reflected by committee work?

How can this vision be used as a guide?

file is cijents.txt

Lee intros/updates

School has many themes, one of which is shabbat. We'll start there and evaluate how we're doing.

Danny talks about vision

We report on the interviews/solicit comments

Two visions:

one is circulating around the congregation

can you get behind it

what implications do these visions have.

react to my vision, chevruta, go back

then I encountered a very different perspective

let them grapple with the tension

Educational outcomes.

Read vision aloud, personal reflection then chevruta, share

What educational outcomes would emerge from the vision/striving for if we take this vision seriously?

What attitudes, skills, dispositions

How do these outcomes square with what was reported in the interviews?

Which of these outcomes are we good at getting at?

Which of these things are we meaningfully addressing in our school and which are being addressed less adequately?

What stands between us and achieving this vision?

What conditions should be changed in order to have a chance at achieving these outcomes.

file is cijents.txt

11/6/97

SHABBAT AT CBI

Every Shabbat

Babysitting **infant and up** with Irina and staff
Room 205 9:30 am to noon

Pray and Play (Tot Shabbat) for **K4 to 2nd graders**
with Tamar and Lisa Room 203 10:30-11:30 am

The 1st Shabbat of the month

Alternate Family Service for families of all ages
organized by Pamela Lager, Nikki Levine, and Eileen Graves
Jacobson Chapel 10:30-11:30 am

The 2nd and 3rd Shabbatot of the month

Minyan M'at (Junior congregation) for **3rd-6th graders**
with Dan Weber in the Jacobson Chapel 10:30 am to noon

The 4th (and 5th) Shabbatot of the month

Informal activities for **2nd graders and up**
with Josh Minkin in the Youth Lounge 10:00 am to noon

Walk-ins are welcome at all these programs.
Ask an usher to direct you.

*

Children are welcome in the main sanctuary
and are invited to the bima at the conclusion
of the shabbat morning service.

*

Congregation Beth Israel, 6880 N. Green Bay Avenue, Milwaukee. 53209
352-7310

file is shbtkids.txt

Created 9/22/97

Shabbat at CBI

Schedule of services

Erev Shabbat Services Fridays 6 pm /7:30 pm in June, July, August

Shabbat Morning Services 9 am

Shabbat Mincha, Maariv, Havdalah Services

Especially for families and young children

Baby-sitting every shabbat morning

Minyan M'at-junior congregation for grades 3-5--twice a month

Shabbat morning family service--once a month

4th shabbat a month--programming*

tot shabbat*

Unit on shabbat in Bar/Bat Mitzvah Training Program

Friday night family services

November 14-7 pm

December 19-6 pm

January 9-7 pm

Family Havdallah and Tu B'shvat Program-February 14

Shabbatonim

Teen Jewish Heritage Trip to NY and Washington, DC in November

Empty nester shabbaton in December

Bar/Bat Mitzvah family shabbat in December

Family Trip to Israel July 1998

Friday Evening Shabbat Dinners

Shabbat Connection--for empty nesters in-home

MJDS shabbat experience*

Congregational or family dinners

September-with scholar in residence

October-Sukkot

December-pre-Chanukah

March 20-Shabbat Across America

May-with scholar in residence

June-with scholar in residence

Opportunities for formal/informal learning on shabbat

Shabbat morning supplement--parasha study and d'var tefilla

Sermon

Mincha study sessions in Midrash and Talmud

Torah readers group

Scholars in residence program

Septemner-Steven Bayme

October/November-Reuven Hammer

February-JTS Shabbat

February-Mordechai Gafni **

February-Moshe Edelman

April-Gillman and Fagen JTS Study Day **

May-Harold Shapiro

May/June-Ben Hollander

June-Herbert Panitch

Parashat Hashavua with Ateret Cohn-Tuesdays**

Shabbat Lunch N' Learns

November-with scholar in residence

February-with scholar in residence

May-with scholar in residence

Miscellaneous Shabbat Programs

January-Sisterhood/Men's Club Volunteer Shabbat

Weekly-past Bar/Bat Mitzvahs to take an honor on anniversary shabbat*

Monthly-wedding anniversary shabbat*

Shabbat Initiatives in the CBI Religious School

Ongoing shabbat curriculum

Ongoing invitations from teachers for shabbat dinners

Shabbat curriculum Review*

Shabbat dinner round robin*

Family education program about shabbat*

Work with teachers to discuss how shabbat vision might guide teaching*

*Not yet finalized although planning has begun.

**These scholars are not speaking on shabbat.

Suggestions:

Shabbat welcome booklet/brochure explaining our shabbat morning service, our vision of shabbat, and what CBI has to offer vis-à-vis shabbat.

A later Friday night late service

Shabbat kits

Shabbat-how to and why seminars

Re-energize shabbat

Here's a list, request committees to bring a list of recommendations

What in their domain could be done differently to enhance the experience of shabbat.

Let's have a follow up meeting.

5-Lee intros

10-Dan visioning

5-Distribute vision, we may not collect feedback but think about these issues: what resonates, what doesn't, what's unclear. Read aloud

5-Think about shabbat morning service wrt vision; to what extent does it cohere or not with service; how might it be changed to be more coherent.

I talk then they do.

Prepared to act upon recommendations...not just talking...affect the way I approach things.

10-Collect their reactions in writing. Do want your feedback. Get feedback later, but I'd like to try an experiment to evaluate what we're doing at CBI, given its strengths and weaknesses, What does it mean to use a vision as an evaluative tool. Are we doing what we think is important.

Is this vision achieved for those who come?
What about those who don't come

Just as I have evaluated one domain central to me, how would you evaluate what's going on in your domain. Strengths and weaknesses in your domain vis-a-vis this vision; what suggestions for improvement.

What recommendations that we can take action on---

Critical questions....

with understanding that I'll work with those committees.
Want to avoid all talk and no action; and taking on too much that we can't make a meaningful difference.

file is cijeshab.txt

9/23/97

file is cije shabbat.txt

Outline for CIJE 9/23 Meeting

LEE INTRODUCES THE PROJECT (10)

Thank you for coming. Tonight I'd like to tell you about a project that a group of CBI members and I began a year ago. I want to do this in order to get your feedback and formulate an agenda for the new year which is fast approaching.

In the fall of 1996, we accepted an invitation by the Milwaukee Lead Community Initiatives Project to embark on what was called the Goals Project. The purpose of the Goals Project was to enhance the quality of Beth Israel's religious and educational program by:

- 1) clarifying the synagogue's fundamental goals;
- 2) assessing how these goals are embedded in overall synagogue program;
- 3) evaluating the extent to which these goals are achieved.

The synagogue has many goals (e.g. to promote an ongoing desire for Jewish learning, to inspire congregants to pray regularly, to foster a greater understanding of the ideals and expectations of Conservative Judaism). And all are worthy of examination.

However, we as a Committee decided that, for several reasons, the focus should be on shabbat celebration.

We wanted to

- 1) clarify what kinds of opportunities the synagogue provides for shabbat celebration;
- 2) clarify the types and qualities of shabbat experiences that CBI would like to nurture (i.e. THE VISION);
- 3) clarify how shabbat fits into the outlook and lives of key constituencies (e.g. professional and lay leaders, teachers, parents and children);
- 4) evaluate the kinds of opportunities and qualities of experiences our synagogue provides in light of that vision.

We wanted to do this and to enlist your participation in an attempt to energize shabbat to the greatest extent possible.

In the year that the Goals Project met, we succeeded in several of these objectives.

We wrote a three page summary of the gamut of opportunities to celebrate shabbat or to enhance one's celebration of shabbat. A little later I will give you a schematic outline of many of these opportunities.

We wrote a working draft of a vision statement which clarifies the qualities of shabbat experiences that we would like to nurture at CBI. Shortly, we will look at that vision statement.

As for the third objective, to clarify how shabbat fits into the lives of our members, we have collected some data from a few subpopulations in the synagogue. We interviewed empty-nesters. We interviewed congregants whose celebration of shabbat takes place primarily in their homes and rarely in our synagogue. We wanted to find out what shabbat is like for these people. What do they get out of shabbat when it clicks and what circumstances heighten the celebration of shabbat. We also asked what CBI could do better to make shabbat "click" more regularly? These are valuable questions and we would learn a great deal to the extent that we interviewed more congregants. We interviewed the teachers in our CBI Religious School and have begun working with them to refine our shabbat curriculum and to implement some of the suggestions that the faculty recommended.

In one year we accomplished the first three of the four objectives. This year, we want to focus on the fourth objective: to use the vision statement as a working document to evaluate and guide shabbat programming at CBI.

I'm not sure all of us have a sense of the depth and breadth of shabbat programming at CBI. But even if we do, I know that I am more likely to look upon them as a supermarket of programs as opposed to programs that embody a particular vision.

This shift in thinking--from programming to being a vision-driven institution where the vision is articulated and members of the institution can identify it and identify with it---has been one of the main contributions that our Lead Community Project Consultant, Professor Daniel Pekarsky, has made during the year we've been working on this project.

I'd like to introduce Dan to elaborate on how this approach will help all of us in the various committees that we work.

DAN TALKS ABOUT VISIONING (10)

I'd like to hand out a copy of the working draft of the committee's shabbat vision. I'll read it aloud so that we keep apace with each other. You'll have it in your hands.

As we read it, you might want to think about what in the vision resonates with you, what are you uncomfortable with, what's unclear, is it too judgmental or too ambivalent. And you can jot some notes down as we go along. If your comments don't surface during the course of the meeting, I would still appreciate, at the very least, reading your critique if you'd hand me your comments.

However, what I would like you to mostly focus on is the following: With whatever strengths and weaknesses this draft of the vision statement has--and it is just that--a draft--I'd like you to think about our Shabbat morning services in light of this vision.

The vision spells out the kind of experiences that we'd like to create at CBI. I'd like you to use it to write a report card for the shabbat morning services.

What aspects of the shabbat morning experience cohere with the vision? What doesn't match the vision?

How might services be changed to cohere more with the vision or to engage people that do not attend our services?

My goal would be to distill these recommendations into proposals that we could take action on.

LEE HANDS OUT VISION, READS IT, PEOPLE PAIR UP AND EVALUATE THE SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE USING THE VISION STATEMENT. (15) Please write your comments on paper.

I'd like to get your feedback in a moment. I'd like to begin with this domain--the shabbat morning service--although we could've begun in many other places.

But before you do, let me share with you some of my thoughts.

Preface

James Truslow Adams, an early 20th century American historian, once wrote: "Perhaps it would be a good idea, fantastic as it sounds, to muffle every telephone, halt every motor, and stop all activity some day, to give people a chance to ponder for a few minutes on what it is all about, why they are living and what they really want."

For Jewish tradition, Adams' "good idea" is not "fantastic" at all. Long ago this idea was incorporated in a day that comes every week: the Shabbat. It is a day of tranquillity, serenity, peace and quiet. It is the day to stop running on our own individual schedules and invest our time in those things that connect us to other people rather than put us in conflict or competition with them.

To paraphrase Abraham Joshua Heschel, shabbat helps us to liberate ourselves from the tyranny of the clock and the calendar. It is an island of stillness in the tempestuous ocean of time and toil where we may enter a harbor and reclaim our dignity.

Shabbat is a day on which we rest, not out of exhaustion, and not because we have accomplished everything we wanted to, but because we want to remind ourselves what it feels like to be at peace with the world. It is a day to "turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world."

Shabbat at Congregation Beth Israel

At Congregation Beth Israel we strive to provide opportunities to experience shabbat **in the synagogue** as a day of joy, renewal, and spiritual growth. It is also our goal to empower congregants to create such opportunities for themselves **at home**. It is hoped that the qualities of experiences that we create and educate towards will be so inspiring that the "island of stillness" called shabbat will be a welcome relief to the chronically overscheduled individual who desires to spend more time with those whom he/she loves and with his/her extended family of Jews.

In the context of a Conservative synagogue such as ours, the sacred time of shabbat begins with candle-lighting on Friday evenings and ends with Havdalah on Saturday night. In between these endpoints, sacred time is created by refraining from certain activities and engaging in others. If we make a conscious effort to let the obligations of work recede on shabbat, then we can make room for prayer, song, celebratory meals, study, family, and community to uplift our souls in the way that only shabbat can.

Our synagogue views traditional Jewish practices, enshrined in custom and halachah (Jewish law), as powerful vehicles for spiritual growth. We recognize, however, that some of us will incorporate more of the traditional halachah into our lives and others less. It is important that all of us, regardless of our level of observance, feel safe and respected as we pursue our spiritual journeys in our synagogue. What is more important than our place on the continuum of Jewish observance is that we are all trying to deepen our relationship with God and all that God has created.

LEE OFFERS HIS EVALUATION (15)

To help evaluate our services, I thought about putting this document into the hands of a man named George Ecco and inviting him to drop in-unscheduled-on any shabbat of his choosing. George Ecco is a nationally-known church critic. He came to Milwaukee, in fact, about three years ago to rate the churches and synagogues in our community. He didn't come to CBI.

But what if he did? How would he rate it? Would he view us as a friendly congregation? Do we go out of our way to greet newcomers? Do congregants introduce themselves to visitors and take them to meet the Cantor, Ben, Pamela, Gayle or me?

Do strangers feel welcome? Do they feel that they could become part of the community of worshippers that are present?

And beyond that, if the visitor wasn't just looking for friendship, but spirituality or holiness, if the visitor was looking for God, would he or she find what they were looking for here?

Would they describe our services as joyful or renewing? Would they feel like this is a place where they can grow spiritually?

I think about the story of Franz Rosenzweig, who became one of the greatest Jewish philosophers of the 20th century, who was on the verge of converting to Christianity and decided that he should enter the church the way its founders did--via Judaism, and went to shul to say good-bye to Judaism and went to a small shteibel on Kol Nidre, and something happened to him.

He got so caught up with the passion of services that he decided to fast that Yom Kippur and come back the next day. He did and became committed to studying and embracing Judaism.

So my question is: what if Rosenzweig had come to CBI? Would there have been a similar transformation? If it were shabbat and not Kol Nidre that he came to schul, would he want to come back the next week? Would he see in our services that shabbat is a day of joy, renewal, and spiritual growth? Would he be moved to continue the shabbat experience at home after services? Would he feel that our services were "an island of stillness" on which he would build new relationships with the people around him? Would he fall in love with shabbat so much that he would want to celebrate those relationships and his new-found love of God through a shabbat lunch after schul or Friday night dinner the next week?

I'm not sure. The Rosenzweig story may be exceptional. Usually, what we get out of an experience is proportional to what we put into it. Many of us would like to believe that spirituality can be just handed to us. But, the truth is that if we want a spiritual leader, then we need to be prepared to let that individual guide us. If we want a teacher, then we have to be prepared to study. If we want someone to stimulate our children, then we have to bring them to schul. If we want someone to inspire us in prayer, then we have to be prepared to pray. Our spiritual growth depends not only on what our spiritual leaders will give but what we are prepared to give too.

Having said that, CBI has much to inspire. And this includes not just the formal service but what happens afterwards. Someone once said that the kiddush after services is no less important than the Kedusha in services. That's the time when there's a lot of mingling at CBI. There's a lot of community building. There's a hunger to catch up with friends on what's happened during the week. All that is good for community building.

But it's not just the cake and cookies that are good. More CBI members read Torah regularly than congregants in most other Conservative synagogues. That's inspiring. The quality of Torah reading is generally excellent. That's impressive.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah students are well-prepared for what they have to do. That's quite an accomplishment. There is no equal, in all modesty, to our shabbat supplement with its guide to the Torah reading and Haftorah reading, questions for children, d'var tefilla, meditation on prayer, announcements, and invitation to newcomers to introduce themselves. There is ample opportunity to learn.

The book rack of "s'forim" is set up in the back for people to follow the commentary of their choice when the Torah is read and to encourage people to wander off the page and study and reflect on their own. There is probably no other synagogue in Milwaukee that gets as large a shabbat morning crowd as we do--consistently. We have conscientious ushers--gatekeepers--and gabbaim.

And with all this, I have to say that the shteibel that engaged Rosenzweig did something that we don't YET do. If it had been shabbat in Germany when he went to schul, he probably would have received an invitation for lunch after services. I'm not sure he would have at CBI.

At that shteibel, it's likely one where everyone was davening--and that's not the case by us. We need to devote more time to training lay people how to daven because doing so will contribute tremendously to the ruach in schul.

In the shteibel that Rosenzweig entered, I imagine there was a certain energy that he could feel. The energy level is not just a function of how knowledgeable the congregation is. It has to do also with the size of the Beit Keneset. A smaller shtiebel concentrates the kavannah and enthusiasm more than a large sanctuary does. It would be worthwhile for

someone to think about how that could be addressed given that between 150 and 300 people show up on an average shabbat at CBI.

Our Jacobson Chapel benefits from being smaller. The distance between the shaliach tsibbur (prayer leader) and the congregation is shorter in the Chapel. There's more of a feeling of one-ness in there than in the sanctuary.

I often wonder what the effect would be if the hazzan's table were moved back 20-30 feet into the sanctuary so that it was placed more in the center of the congregation. I, as Rabbi, would also move closer to lend my voice to the congregation. Then we could hear each other sing better.

As for singing, which is one of the primary ways in which we are uplifted, I wish we were known for being a singing congregation in the same way that we are known for having 60 congregants that read Torah regularly. I don't get a sense that singing is joyous at Beth Israel. Improving the music component of services is a high priority for me---we've established a music committee under the leadership of Steve Ovitsky to work with the Hazzan on this in the same way that there's a rabbinic transition committee to give me feedback and point out areas in my work that need improvement.

Let me speak about one of those areas that needs improvement on my part: the sermon. One way that people can be inspired is through a sermon. My theory on sermons---besides the shorter, the better--is that the best sermons are ones that provide insights, more than rules, that can enrich people's lives. My greatest personal challenge is not only to live up to that approach but to develop greater comfort delivering sermons.

Shabbat will not be an island of stillness for the congregation if it's an island of nervousness for me. This is something that I have to work on.

Ideally, the music and speaking components of the synagogue as well as the feeling of community should be so powerful that people would feel like they are missing something if they can't make it to schul on shabbat. I'm not sure how many people feel that now. And, yet, to restate what probably seems trite, whenever I return from vacation, I enjoy returning to daven at CBI.

I WONDER IF YOU'D SHARE YOUR EVALUATIONS AS WELL (30).

COULD WE GENERATE A LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND THEN ASK EACH COMMITTEE TO TAKE THE APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATION AND WORK ON IT WITH ME? (20). Hand out shabbat menu so that people see the range of possibilities.

THIS WILL BE OUR AGENDA FOR THE YEAR AHEAD. LET'S MEET AFTER THE HIGH HOLIDAYS IN SMALLER GROUPS TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTING THESE RECOMMENDATIONS.

Update on CIJE-CBI Shabbat Celebration Project
March 2, 1998
Revised May 18, 1998

The shabbat project began in the fall of 1996. By spring 1997 after a series of regular meetings, the steering committee had accomplished several of its goals: 1) it identified the various opportunities that the synagogue provides for shabbat celebration; 2) it created a vision statement; 3) it began to explore how shabbat fits into the lives of CBI constituents.

The second stage of the project was launched in September 1997. At that time, the steering committee invited lay leaders from different constituent organizations in the synagogue with one purpose in mind: to introduce the vision statement as a means to evaluate the gamut and quality of shabbat experiences that CBI provides its members. After the CIJE consultant, Professor Daniel Pekarsky, gave a brief introduction on the value of being a vision-driven institution, the participants were asked to use the vision statement developed by the steering committee to evaluate the shabbat morning service. They were asked to identify aspects of the shabbat morning service that cohered with the vision and elements that did not cohere with the vision and to reflect upon ways in which the shabbat morning service might be changed in order that it reflect the vision statement.

To set the tone for discussion, the Rabbi began with his own evaluation of the shabbat morning service. Would a visitor or congregant at a shabbat morning service "see that shabbat is a day of joy, renewal, and spiritual growth? Would he/she be moved to continue the shabbat experience at home after services? Would he/she feel that our services were 'an island of stillness' on which he would build new relationships with the people around him? Would he fall in love with shabbat so much that he would want to celebrate those relationships and his new-found love of God through a shabbat lunch after schul or Friday night dinner the next week?"

The answer the Rabbi gave to these questions was a definite maybe! He noted that to a great extent congregants will get out of the shabbat experience as much as they put into it. He noted some positive aspects of the shabbat morning service: the kiddush was said to be a good opportunity for community building, congregants take responsibility for the weekly reading of the Torah, there are opportunities for study (through the supplement, sermons, occasional torah discussions, and bookshelf of torah commentaries), ushers direct people as they enter the sanctuary. Yet, he observed that there was a lack of "ruach." CBI was not known as a singing synagogue. Perhaps this was, in part, due to the large size of the sanctuary which makes the singing diffuse, the location of the reader's table, or to factors related to the Cantor's role. The Rabbi also mentioned in terms of his own work on the bima that one of his personal goals was to work on his sermon delivery. Finally, he regretted that people probably do not feel that they are missing out on something when they cannot make it to services on shabbat morning, that the synagogue is still perceived as being a "cold" place, and that, relatedly, there is not a widespread norm among congregants of inviting each other home for a shabbat meal after services.

including hosts, received a tab card with a menu of shabbat follow-up workshops. The participants were asked to sign up for as many one-time workshops as they desired--these included workshops on practice, e.g. reciting kiddush or singing zemirot, on concepts, e.g. understanding the ideas expressed in kiddush or the zemirot, and on basic skills, e.g. Hebrew literacy. These follow up courses were taught by the CBI professional staff. A complete evaluation of SAA is not yet available. Over 430 people participated in the SAA service and dinner. Close to 100 people signed up for follow-up workshops but only 20 people actually attended the courses. A questionnaire was sent out to all the SAA participants with a self-addressed stamped envelope to be returned to the SAA chairperson. Results are presently being tabulated. The SAA model will be replicated in the fall with modifications that reflect the extensive feedback based on this first SAA program.

The second committee that has worked on the home-based objectives is a committee of teachers, Liza Weimer and Vicky Ganeles, under the direction of Pamela Lager to implement a program in the Religious School dealing with home-based shabbat celebration. Families were invited to a two-hour "how-to" seminar on Friday night rituals, e.g. kiddush, washing, etc... Towards the end of the seminar, families were randomly paired up to get together to share shabbat together. The program was well-constructed but, in retrospect, had some flaws. After an extensive review of the program with the Rabbi, the committee formulated a plan to run the program in the fall with appropriate modifications.

file is cijshab2.txt

From: RABLEEBUC
To: pekarsky@mail.soemadison.wisc.edu
Date: Monday, September 30, 1996 5:28 pm
Subject: outline

Danny,
Briefly, I see the outline looking like this:

*Thank you for participating

*CIJE

CIJE-Lead community examines a synagogue setting; we're honored to accept an invitation to embark on this endeavor

*Aim

aim is to enhance quality of ed, in broadest sense, here at CBI, to examine

what we want to communicate and how well we're communicating it.

(Not

interested in "framing people up")

*Want to pick one dimension of Jewish living to examine: shabbat why? lots of momentum, e.g. family progs, shabbat connection for empty

nesters

*Of the ways of exploring how shabbat fits into life at CBI, I'd like to

start with these questions:

- 1) What do we get out of shabbat when it "clicks"?
- 2) What were the circumstances under which it "clicked"?
- 3) In what areas could CBI become stronger in making shabbat "click"?

Take 10-15 to jot down thoughts on index cards.

*Share responses to the three questions; write them in three columns on board

*Any common trends? Any observations?

*Proceeding from here; what's the role of the committee:

1) collect data to determine how representative the above observations are

a) whom to collect data from--teachers, those involved in fam ed, congregants.

b) what questions to ask

2) reflect upon data

3) answer: what are the implications of our analysis for synagogue programming, etc...

4) begin implementation of policy implications

We're looking to complete the above stages by June. Afterwards, the same or

different people begin stage two:

5) further implementation

6) evaluation

*Set up time framework for subsequent meetings

Begin work as outlined above, do the work, analyze findings,

draw
implications, implement suggestions

Let me know what you think.

Lee (Ming) - BI

Bob - Congress
Exec. Committee
T. H. Keen Olan
Israel Passport
3 sons

Alice - Interim Exec
Director, MAIE

Gail - President

Bunnie Grandmother

Aim ↑ Educ in its
broadest sense

Via

- 1) What we want to communicate
- 2) How well we communicate
- 3) What we're about

- Complexity

- Build on strengths

Lee - limited goal!!

① One domain

② Limited time!!

Lee's idea built on:

1) ongoing practice

2) Core-Value

and celebration

1) What do we get out of PDL when it really clicks for us?

2) What are the conditions? What's going on?

3) What can CBT do better to make us click?

Alice

Food/Family Time/
Shammy w/ others
is central.

No housework
Kiddush

Empty Nest Shabbat Adres

1) Intimate setting

⇒ wrapped in cocoon.

Togetherness

Participatory - contribute

Learning

Each felt important

CBI needs to do more:

→ DDE dinners in Cong

→ give families the tools to do same

→ Family Service (once monthly)

→ Special Classes

[Q: Do these things depend on families?]

Goal

1) Specialness of Friday night

-- dinner

-- warmth

-- wholeness

who kids, need friends

|| DDE -- totally encompassing

* [Nature - hitting]

Great Family - has
Warmth

Goal: CBI

→ Reach more people - diff
ways ⇒ Diversity

→ People don't know why
they're doing what
they do!!

→ Critic for
dealing on practices!!

1992 - - reveals new
potentialities.

Bunnie

First Rabbi: lack of joy!!

Second Rabbi: } joy of
 } love

→ Viv * Music of the
 Synagogue.

Choir can be
dis-empowering!!

Whopi - Sister's
 Act

When a Cliché

- Nancy K.'s diary

pen 011 S/C

- Special Comments by
Rabbi

Bob

Sense of difference,
separation from
rest of week.

w/ two working adults,
no time for sense of
family during the
week

⇒ feeling of family plus

Something spiritual:

V16 { Read stories
{ Walks
{ Prayer

Continuity -- Part of
a N/A past/present

Sense of Community

Shmoosy

Sense of appreciation

Also -- Parental pride
~ penny for child's
spir

A) Shabbaton

1) study computer

B) help - managing
the kids

C) Active programming
-- esp 25320.

What to do better?

A) Tape — . Remini

B) Weekly Packet
w/ Possibilities
Instructions

C) Make every week
a puzzle.

D) Remove the
complexion!!

E) Sunday morning
activity.

↳ 6 Uses

- 1) Connected to something
— uch laugh
- 2) Encountering God — our
live,
- 3) Sense of rest

What circumstances?

Children have created
an environment of JOSE.

Skokie — — — a full JOSE
environment

[Egipzo / Israel]

↳ Part of larger
environment!!

- - Strong Jewish Content
- Being w/ other People.
- Need to work w/ it!!

How much & click better
for others?

a) Engage folks ~
Conversation Re!
what are the
inhibitors!

e.g. feeling Jewishly
"Stupid"!

Pamela

↳ "Family" -- Friends -- only night
↳ We all eat together

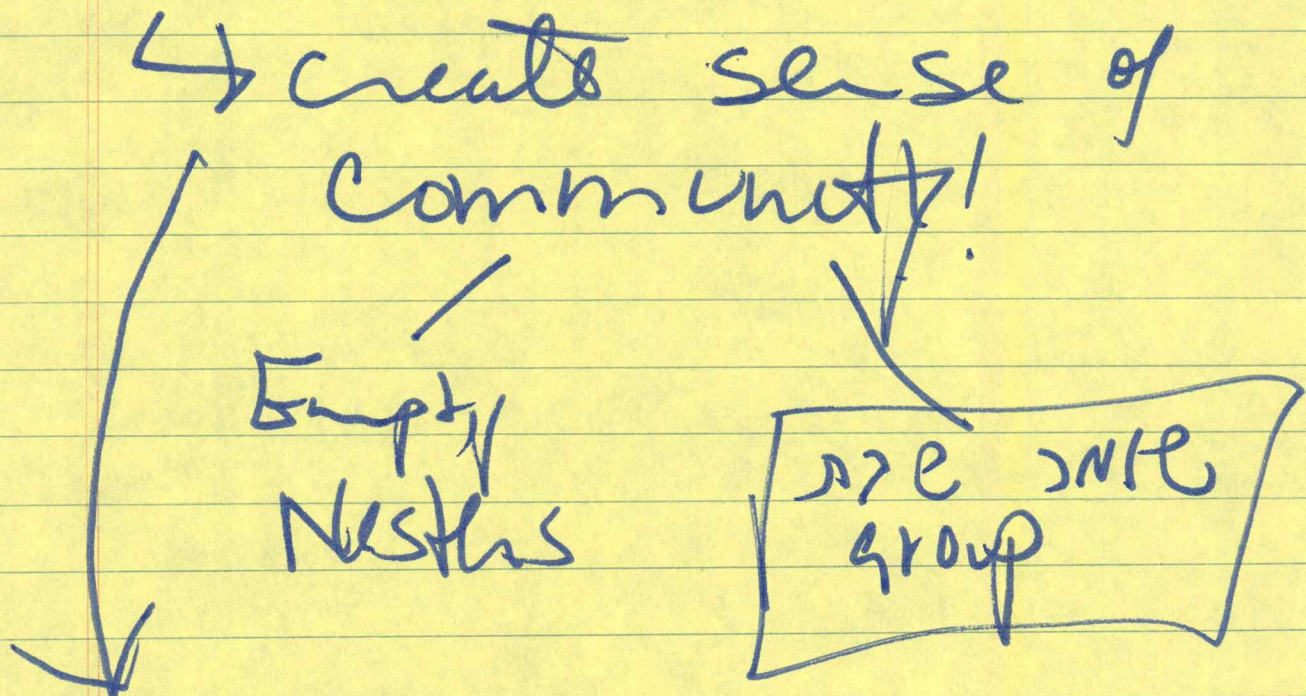
↳ Kids don't tease each other
as much

MUSIC -- Singing ~ Spirituality

Lee

- Closeness w/ family!!
- Blessing kids as special; find something in grad of
- Communal dinner → Neglect family components

Don't do well!



Loneliness!

Overcome coldness!

Single Parent
families

↳ a problem
given what
we've said.

Louise:

~~Inviting~~ People
for DDE: amazed
floored

"A Taste of J2E"

1) J2E

2) A Friday night meal.

God -- J2E can

be experienced
social/hot Rel. films!

Danger of standing
in judgment!!

How can we serve
you better?

- 1) How can ^{you} we make
the quality of exp
possible
- 2) A taste!!

Lee
What are the things
that got people
on-board?

Inkeshy Q!

= Critical
moments

Head-hand-heart

Alternatives

- 1) what is a Conservation Jew?
- 2) "Prayer" as focus:

Study the Day
Schools popular
-- a focus grp.

Focus Groups :

1) Seniors

2) Empty-nesters

3) Day School

4) Retirees

5) Non-child families

6) Observant

7) Non-observant

② Board

① CURRICULUM

Next Mtns

① what's going on?

Evaluation ~~AS!!~~

Longitudinal

Beth Israel 8/8 Mtng (Planning)

Today's Agenda

- 1) Basic Aims revisited
- 2) Entertain strategies
- 3) Revisit Role of this group

plus

Role/Composition of Steering Committee

- 4) Next Steps

Basic Aims: Education

Basic Assumptions:

↳ Incoherence/Parvo vs Powerful Content
Leadership a must why/when for a
"Ed. Jew"

BI As Pilot - Serious/Congregation

So far: Conversations/DP → ^{Indiv.} Teachers → Joint Committee Mtng

⇒ Interest Plus Readiness for more
Systematic Approach
First Challenge: ↑ Conversation.

Some Possible Routes

A) Talking stock

1) Say - Are - outcomes - Should

Re 2) Subject-areas

Via: Interviews/Focus groups

By: Core-group of parents/teachers

Followed by: Bring findings/Qs to
different forums.

B) Identify 1 or 2 themes & do A.

C) Introduce "Great Conversation"

Via "Class"/"Retreat"

Steering Committee

Role: Direction -- Momentum/Credibility

Criteria:

- Thoughtful
- Representative
- Interest
- Time/energy

Beth Israel Planning Meeting 7/2/96

Participants Invited: Lee, Gail, Pamela,
Ruth DP

Large Aim :

Develop a plan of action
for the BI Goals
Project

Desired Outcomes

1. Pam/Lee/Gail -- on board/ownership
2. Shared sense of nature/scope of project, as well as its N to other BI efforts
3. Steering Committee Decisions
w/lt Role and Criteria for membership.
4. Awareness/appreciation of some possible routes
5. Next Steps

DP-Introduction

① Goals Project's Guiding Assumptions

a) Reality -- Incoherence
Parve

b) Pressing need to organize
educ. around powerful Jewish
ideas -- ideas that
speak to and communicate
the whys/wherefores of
Jewish life

⇒ The "Big questions":
Why be Jewish?
What is the content of Jewish Life

(2) BI as Pilot Project

a) "Seriousness"

b) Congregation as Critical Site.

(3) So far

1) Preliminary conversations
Pam/Lee/DP/Ruth

2) DP observes/interviews

3) Teacher Meeting

4) Met w/ a group of
interested
stakeholders

⇒ (4) Interest in Project

Ready for Systematic Effort

Need More Studied Approach to Steering

5) Today's Agenda

a) Re-visit basic aims

b) Entertain strategies,
possibly making preliminary
decisions

c) Re-visit Steering Committee
Question:

1) Role

2) Composition

Basic Aims

1) Strengthen education at RIC

Via a) Clarifying educational priorities -- the organizing Jewish beliefs

b) Looking for stronger fit between aspiration, practice, & outcome.

2) Learn more about the process of deepening educational content

Some Possible Routes: Take stock

- ① Taking-stock. Take a look at:
- What we say we're teaching
 - What we are teaching
 - Outcomes
 - Should be teaching

2) Re: Shabbat
Israel
Hebrew
Study
Prayer
Relig. Observance
God
Jewish People
Meaning of Jewish history

- 3) Via:
- DP investigations
 - Interviews
 - Focus groups

4) By: A steering Committee that will meet to process findings

⇒ 5) Bring findings/ questions to various Forums:

a) Teachers

b) Board

c) Parents

Option 2: Pick a theme:

Text-study / D2E / Israel

Explore it systematically

Via ① a) Curriculum Analysis

b) Interviews

c) Focus-groups

d) Study

e) Outcomes

② Work towards clarifying
BI's view

③ Practice

3) Introduce "the Great Conversation" into B.I.

a) Competing Visions of the Nature of Jewish life

- Greenberg

- Buber

b) Their reactions

c) Implications for Educ.

Steering Committee

Role

- 1) Give direction
- 2) Give project momentum
-- "Thrust" that's needed.
- 3) Participate in Work

- Criteria :
- 1) Thoughtful
 - 2) Representative
 - 3) Interest
 - 4) Time/Energy

① Challenge / Invasive
vs Reflective

② End-Point. — Clarify
it

③ Tube 1 issue

Lee

A) (2) (inclusive of 1) &
3).

B) NPL

C) End-State

Steering Committee
- Outline.

① Roberta London

② Family Program
Committee

(Debbi Mazius
Susan Glick)

③ Adult Ed - Judy Werth
Mik Cotton

④ Gail

⑥

⑤ Leela or
another teacher! or Carol
Stein

Target-Pops

Bunny/Cy Delnick - Former
President
→ Community of
older adults

Lee; Chair < []
Ruth/

① What to convey to
people relating to
role/outcome serve people.

See longer ~~to~~

Bob Hirschman

Robert London

Debbie Mazils

Wentlin, Judy

Michael 'Coltin

Gaul Rakits

Liza Wiener

Ateret Cohen ???

EJ Pettis

Bunnie Dolnick

Pamela

Ruth

Lee, Char

Louise

Ed Pettig

B.I. Introductory Program

Excitement: Beginnings Not really

Mandel Commission: Composition

Occasion -- Recommendations -- Avoidance

Too Controversial -- Critical: Common Sense
Research

Reality: None -- Vague -- Disconnected

⇒ Origins of GP

⇒ ↑ Awareness + Encouragi: Clarify } Evaluate
Embed }

The Journey to Beth Israel

Jerusalem - Milwaukee Seminar

Lee/Pam/DP Re: Next Steps

Identity of Interests → BI

CIJE -- Pilot-Projects: "Serious"

"SERIOUS" → Rabbi/Educator - Not Quick Fix.

Rather: Gradual: Goals/Outcomes/Practices

DP's } ① Difficulty
 } ② Honesty

Pam's } Provisor: Teacher-Involvement

A) Today B) Working Committee

FIRST STAGE

"Reality" - Statements/Curricula/what happens
 Plus Impact

Plan - Development

First: your thoughts/share

A) Interviews

B) Today's Activities: Honesty

Post-Exercise

Bibliot - Most important

Comments A) Reality B) which → All Diff!!

⇒ Stage 2: "Serious" vs. Lip Service

On #1:

Importance of "Big Q's"
→ Good Education

Our Predicament

Can't afford not to offer
~~the~~ young powerful
images of a meaningful
Jewish Existence.

Rob - Models

Parents

Bar Mitzvah

אב אם

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL
INTRODUCTORY GOALS WORKSHOP
January 1996

EXERCISE

1. Suppose that your educational efforts are successful beyond your wildest dreams:

a. What would the graduates be like? What beliefs, attitudes, commitments, and behaviors would characterize these individuals?

b. How would a typical graduate finish the sentence "Being a member of the Jewish People is important to me because....."?

2. A school's Bible curriculum could be used as a vehicle of accomplishing an array of possible educational purposes. On the back of this page:

a. List as many of these purposes as you can.

b. Identify the two purposes you regard as most important.

This Work-Hard: Pluralism - Gaps { Move
Parents
Teachers

No Guarantees

Pam's Proviso → A) Today B) Committee

Stage I:

'Reality': Statements/Curricula/What happens/Outcomes

Plan for Deliberation

Preliminary: your views/thoughts — Interview Today.

Exercise -- Candor

Post-Exercise Analysis + Comments

① Bible-Comments: Reality - None + Which → } Big
Differences

Clarity as Preliminary to strategy

SERIOUS VS "Lip-Service"

② Big Questions -- Not a LUXURY

BI Planning Mtng Precis 6/96

3rd/4th Step

Larger background: Alarm-CIJE-LC

3 Emphases

Emphasis on V/GN Conviction/Diagnosis

Conviction: ↑ Effectiveness (w/ Decisions/Evaluate)

↳ Evidence -- Smith & O'Day

Diagnosis w/ Jewish Ed -- This/that

CIJE's challenge → Mtu. Goals Seminars

Initial discussions w/ Lee/Pamela

Appeal Towards Shidduch

Stay.
Termines
teachers

Serious
Cong.
support

Aim: Improve via ... Aims/Reality

↳ ↑ Knowledge

↳ close gap

First steps: Visit, Interview, meet

Impressions: Serious, diverse, unclarity

Beth Israel Planning Committee, 6/96

3rd/4th Step: Exciting Process \Rightarrow \uparrow Ed + \uparrow Know.

Background: Alarm \rightarrow CIJE \rightarrow LC

3 emphases: Mobilization - Personnel - Goals

Emphasis on Vision/Goals \wedge Conviction - Diagnosis

Conviction: Effectiveness \wedge Clarity of Purpose

\rightarrow Motivation - Basis for decisions - Evaluation

Diagnosis \wedge General Ed - Smith/O'Day

Diagnosis: Absence of clear & compelling goals which guide

CIJE's Challenge: \uparrow Awareness / \uparrow Efforts

Milwaukee Goals Seminars: Lee/Pamela - Pilot.?"

Twofold appeal of BI: Leadership / Congreg.

Towards a Shidduch: a) Teachers b) Terminus c) Stay

\rightarrow "Sensousness" on Congregation's part $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{See} \\ \text{Pamela} \\ \text{\& others} \end{array} \right.$
 \rightarrow whole Cong. as focus

Agreed to proceed, subject to.....

- Aim: (1) Education via a process that focuses on: → { Aims -- where we are
→ How close gap
- (2) Contribute knowledge to field

First Steps - Spring: Get to know - Fall - Focused work

- 1) Get to know institution via: Pam
- Visit classes - Interview - Teacher meeting
Teacher Mtng: hard questions ~ you

Impressions:

Serious / Diverse / Unclear re goals
→ Opp. for serious work.

Two challenges

- ① Plan of action/strategy — how cut in?
- ② Core-group — wrestle — advise — Recommend

This group — "a start"

Promising — "Leadership" + Educators + Parents

"A start" — Two ways it could change

My belief — — an exciting opportunity
My hope

Please let Pamela & Lea know...

Plan of Action

① Visions

② Domain-specific: Hebrew/Bible/Israel
PRAYER

Lee's Suggestion: \rightarrow DAE

-- A systematic inquiry

① Curriculum

② What's being done

③ "Aims" — what are we after,
and why?

What attitudes, skills, understandings,
convictions?

④ What would need to be in
place?

Parents — Leaders — Educators — kids

Concrete Proposal

① A retreat for this group,
focused on "the big questions".
→ Not decide, but get conversation
going

② Inquiry into use

- (a) Curriculum + Reality
 - (b) Interviews & focus groups
 - (c) Study
 - (d) Outcomes
- ↓

③ General picture of B.I. w/a/t
implicit goals

⇒ Report

Ruth Cohen ✓
Rabbi Ed Rettig ✓
Rabbi Buckman
Liza Wiemer ✓
Ateret Cohn ✓
Dr. Danny Pekarsky
Gayle Weber Rakita
Mike Colton (unable to attend)
George Strick ✓
Anita ~~Jaqueline~~ Bensman
Susan Glickstein (unable to attend)
Pamela Lager ✓
Aura Mollick Hirschman

1/19/96 - In Prep. for Conversations w/ Lee and/or Pamela

Proposed Beth Israel Pilot-Project

Goals: a) Clarify b) Beth embed c) Evaluate

C.I.T.E.-Resources: DP time. Will work with Lay & Prof. staff in consultation w/ Pamela & Lee

Beth Israel Expectations

Active support:

- A) Leadership ① ② ③
- B) Time of teachers
- C) \$ (?)

First Steps

A) Get to know ~~the~~ ^{Shul} school, ~~the~~ teachers

B) Plan w/ Lee & Pamela

1) Steering Committee — Lay/Prof.

2) Focus on a particular problem/domain.

Beth Israel Pilot-Project

CITE --- 1) DP time, work w/ staff & congrats
--- active collaboration w/ Lee/Pamela

~~2)~~

2) BTC:

↳ Active support

Lee/Pamela, Plus:

↳ Lay Professional -

time of teachers

3) First steps

a) Get to know/inquire

b) Plan w/ Lee, Pamela

e.g. "Goals Seminars"
"Hebrew"/"Israel"/"Text Study"
etc.

Put together a committee

4) Ruth Cohen

Introduction to B.I. Program, 1/96

Excitement - A beginning - - Not really Beginning

Commission: Composition/Occasion

FAITH → RECOMMENDATIONS: Personnel/Lead
BP

ABSENT: Content/Goals: ↓ Consensus

But Critical: ① Planning ② Evidence/Smith

Reality: Mission-statements: Vague/All

In Drawer: Tradition - Control - "Fun"

Disconnected - Practice - - Participants

→ GP ⇒ ↑ Awareness and Encourage Institutions

⇒ Clarify - - Embed - - Evaluate

JERUSALEM → Milwaukee Spring → Lee/Pam.

Conversation: Identity of Interests

BI. - ↑ Q CIJE: Selected Pilots ~ Deepen Knowledge

This - Serious: A) On board Lee/Pam B) Not Quick Fix C) Goals Practice Out

LISTEN

By: Douglas Cotler and Jeff Marx

1. If you're lost, you feel afraid,
2. you don't know what to say.
3. Then, listen, listen to our G-d.
4. Is there a question on your mind?
5. Is the answer hard to find?
6. Then listen listen to our G-d.
7. Listen with all your heart and soul
8. And with all your might
9. Write them and learn them and teach them well
10. Every morning and night
11. Close your eyes and listen
12. Quiet yourself there's nothing to say
11. Stop all the chatter that gets in the way
13. And listen listen to our G-d
14. When the wind and the thunder finally disappear
15. There's still a voice that you will hear
16. If you listen listen to our G-d
17. You can hear it from the top of the highest hill
18. Or from the valley below
19. It can come from the edge of the universe
20. It can come from within your soul
21. Close your eyes and listen

Shema Yisraeil Adonai eloheinu adonai echad. Baruch sheim k'vod sheim k'vod
malchuto l'olam vaed. Listen, listen to our G-d.

Introduction to Beth Israel Program

My Excitement: The Beginnings of a fruitful collaboration

But not really a beginning ... The real beginning:

Mandel Commission: Religious/Lay/Prof. Leadership

Occasion: Anxiety/Panic re: future of N.A. Jewry

Their Faith: Education, if dramatically improved

A number of recommendations:

E.g. ↑ Personnel Lead Communities

Noticeably Absent: Recs. re: Content/goals

← Too Controversial ~ Fragile Consensus

But viewed a Critical !!

A) Educational Planning B) Evidence from
general ED

Reality in Jewish Education

— None Vague Disconnected

⇒ Origins of Goals Project

A) ↑ Awareness

B) Encourage institutions to do 3 things:

Clarify -- Embed -- Evaluate

Beginnings of Project in Jerusalem

Milwaukee Seminar (Ruffgane/Larsi) → Lee/Pam

Conversations w/ Lee/Pam re: Next steps

As we talked, discovered ID of interests:

B.I -- Looking For ways to ↑ Q

CIJE -- Selected Pilot-projects,

designed to deepen our knowledge

re: helping institutions

Great Excitement on both sides

Bu Pam's Wise Proviso

My Excitement: Serious

A) Rabbi and Ed. Director on Board

B) Not looking For a "Quick-Fix"

= "A visioning Session"

Rather:

a gradual process that
looks at 3 matters in
their inter-relationship:

Goals: Practices Outcomes

Pam's Proviso: Teacher-involvement

→ A) Today's Session

B) A working Committee
to guide the process

Parents / Teachers / Movement

Warning/Difficult: Gap -- Pluralism

First Stage of Process

A) Look at reality -- at what is

① "Goals-Statements"

② "Curricula"

③ "What actually happens"

④ Impact

B) Develop a plan for deliberation.

Culture of Inquiry

But first:

Your thoughts
+ Share them

A) Interviews

B) Today's activities

⇒ Begin w/ Some Simple Exercises

Be honest, thoughtful

Exercise : 1) Individ. 2) Groups of 4

Post-Exercise

#2 - A) Make the Bible list

B) Most important Purposes

Comments

a) Reality: w/o Goals

b) Which goals -- All the difference for practice.

⇒ Next Stage :

How structure Practice
if serious about goals

VS Lip-Service

On #1:

Importance of Wrestling w/
the "Big questions"

A) "Good Education"

B) Our Circumstances!!

⇒ Cannot afford not to
offer the young powerful
images of a meaningful
Jewish Existence.

End of Session

① Next Steps:

observa

Interview

② Interested in being part
of a Committee. . . .

Also what are you really about?

Cantor --

Not Consensus

(1) Part of the Congregation
- Extension of the home.

- Too many ~~don't~~
are happy to finish;
don't want to come
back!

(2) ~~Set~~ set goals for kids that
we don't show for parents.

(3) Proud of Judaism

Do
Put on children.

Take it home

Knowledge / Desire
to use it

Ed. Issues that need
to be addressed.

Peils

① Goal is Bar Mitzvah
— oriented!!

As a consequence:

② Poorly informed
— — after 7/ year

③ Parental disengagement
— — — — —

As goal:

(1) Seriously Embury
in the learning
process

— — —
Are there opps.
beyond Bar Mitzah?

Need Role models
of what's involved

Personal / self-respect

The "Why"?

Pursuit of Study

Authenticity

Emotional / intellectual
buy-in:

→ Belief that Judaism
is best religion or
thing;

→ { Commitment to
pass on Jewish messages.

"Learning" - Process!!

How shake up
for you

Common history

↳ destiny

"Light unto the
nations"

9/11/10 7/10

Common Vocabulary

Need to learn
common vocabulary
of clientele

→ Listen to their
environment →

Their and of les

The Christmas Revolution

— — — — —

Apply to secular
life outside

Learn to pray Jewishly

"to act Jewishly —

Disciplines

Desire to be

Relevance as big

ISSUE !!

Modern Israel

✓ Inter-marriage!

Study of the Rabbi

Congregation Beth Israel

6880 North Green Bay Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53209. Tel (414) 352-7310

8/14/95

Dear Danny,

Here's a copy of ^{the} letter
I sent to our
president. I let you
know his response.

Thanks again for all
your time,

Lee

August 14, 1995

Dear Aaron,

One of my goals as rabbi of our congregation is to see to it that we are a vision-driven institution. This means that there is a clear, shared and compelling vision of the type of individual and community that we want to nurture at Congregation Beth Israel.

It is vital that our synagogue board be involved in the process of articulating this vision. Or, to phrase it more crudely, it is essential that our board knows what product it is trying to sell.

To this end, I will be present at every synagogue board meeting this year to engage you and our board in a 1/2 hour seminar on Conservative Judaism (in place of a d'var torah). I hope that after we complete one year of study together we will be able to answer these questions:

- 1) What is the guiding vision and what are the goals that CBI is committed to?
- 2) Are these goals and this vision clear enough to guide our leadership, our programming, our educational practices?
- 3) To what extent are the goals and vision reflected in the activities that take place at CBI?
- 4) How can we engage more people to make a serious commitment to our vision and goals?

As I see it, the dates for this year's board meetings are:

Monday, September 11
Monday, November 6
Monday, December 4
Monday, January 8
Monday, February 5
Monday, March 11
Monday, April 1
Monday, May 6
Monday, June 3

I would also recommend that on Monday evening November 27, we call either an executive committee meeting or hold the December 4 full board meeting one week earlier. I say this because Rabbi Moshe Tutnauer, who will be scholar-in-residence for one week at CBI (thanks to Rhoda Wertheimer's generosity), is someone whom I think our lay leadership should meet and study with. As a Conservative rabbi living in Israel, he is well-versed on a variety of topics (see attached bio and topic list). He would provide the half-hour study session for that month's meeting. If you were to endorse his attendance, you would lend a second voice in addition to mine that our leadership should be in the forefront of creating a learning community at Congregation Beth Israel.

I look forward to discussing this further with you.

Sincerely,

Lee Buckman, Rabbi

Rabbi Lee Buckman
Congregation Beth Israel



August 2, 1995

Dr. Daniel Pekarsky
University of Wisconsin - Madison
1000 Bascom Hall
Education Building, Room 203
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Dear Danny,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Monday to help develop a vision strategy with me. It was, from my perspective, a productive beginning. I look forward to working with you over the coming year(s).

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Lee Buckman, Rabbi

LB/ed