

## Janis Fine TBI Centennial Talk

April 13, 2018

Shabbat Shalom. My name is Janis Fine. I've been a member of TBI for 26 years.

Temple has always been family—home-- to me. I grew up Janis Bellows in Jeffrey Manor on the Southside. I was the youngest of four —Elyse, Cary, Michael, and me. My parents, Jay and Addy Bellows were active members of our community, and founding members of CKI— Congregation Kehelith Israel. For as long as I can remember, my dad was President of the Temple. He was also the attorney for the temple, and in my valued papers of my dad's, I have the original mortgage and blueprints of CKI. My mom was active in sisterhood, and the first violinist in the CKI Symphony Orchestra.

Congregation Kehillith Israel was indeed my second home. I was there every Friday night and Saturday morning for services, during the week for religious school, and just about every time my dad or mom had business to do, I would happily tag along—sometimes just ending up hanging out in Rabbi Einhorn's study with stale kichel and grape juice. Small wonder that it always brings a knowing glow to my heart when I see Rabbi Weinberg welcome the little ones up to the Bima. To see them easily and proudly, running up to take their place with joy and confidence—singing, speaking, looking out to find their own families—and then basking in the kvelling of their temple family--feeling this is their home -- always brings a big smile to my face. That was ME— running up to join my dad on the Bima for Kiddush, first hiding behind

his legs, then peaking out between his legs, then finally taking my rightful place along side him and soon thereafter holding the Kiddish Cup chanting the Kiddush, and then when old enough--singing in the junior and adult choirs .

I know, as I see these little ones here, running up to the Bima, that the lifelong foundation of Temple as home and family, and a love of Judaism, grows joyously within them.

Now, I'd be remiss were I not to say that directly across from CKI lived another amazing family with four kids—Judy, Ellen, Michael, and Rob. And that third kid Michael, was really smart, and talented, and in my classroom every year from kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. So, if you were one of the over 400 who attended our TBI 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party, and enjoyed Michael Lorge's game of: "Where in the photo is Rabbi Weinberg?" you'll want to attend our next TBI Congregational Retreat (February 8-10 2019) when one of our special games will be: "Where in THESE Kd-6<sup>th</sup> grade photos is Rabbi Weinberg?" Special Clue for those of you here tonight—he was always tall, and no beard. Mark your calendars—Did I say Feb. 8-10 2019???

Back to CKI—one December day when I was 12 years old, Mr. Lipshitz, our educational director, called me and some cute boy with a stocking cap on his head, into his office. He said "Janis-you have the best girl's voice, and young man,—you have the best boy's voice. I'd like you two to sing Exodus as a duet at our Chanukah party." That cute boy pulled his stocking cap down over his eyes and said, "I don't want to sing with her." Well, nine years later, with Rabbi Einhorn under the chuppa- I married that cute guy—Mark Fine.

Years later, settled in Skokie, and with our wonderful son Josh about 8 years old, it was time to join a temple that would feel like home.

Where else, but TBI with that smart talented warm hearted Rabbi I grew up with? The first time Josh attended an event at TBI, he said, “Mom!! It feels like family! It feels like home!” And to this day--after almost every Shabbat service, high holiday service, celebration, retreat, special event—TBI trip to Israel, or just flipping brotherhood burgers or latkes, Josh will say, “Mom, it really feels like family. “

From day one, For Josh, Mark, and me, TBI was a joyful, friendly, happy, meaningful spiritual, place to pray, learn, and celebrate. Josh’s Bar Mitzvah was filled with family, friends, and many of my non Jewish and Jesuit Priest faculty colleagues from Loyola University. Many of them, with tears in their eyes, and never having attended a Bar Mitzvah, came up to me at the end saying how much they enjoyed the warm and meaningful service, the singing by the full congregation, and mostly they could feel the joy and pride of this Temple Beth Israel family that surrounded and supported Josh on this important day in his Jewish development. And for the 9 years that Josh attended OSRUI —he would always come home saying,, “Mom—it’s so cool—the whole place is filled with TBI family!”

During Josh’s second year at The Pace Program at National Louis University, I got an excited call from my late sister Elyse. She was the manager of Mudpie’s Children’s store on Central in Evanston, and she said, “Janis--I just met your future daughter in law! Josh just stopped by with a girl. Her name is Liz, he helped her move into the dorm, she’s adorable, and they’re definitely in love.” Turns out Liz Litvak, who grew up in Denver, attended Temple Emmanuel, where Joe Black is currently Rabbi, and also for 9 years attended Temple Emmanuel’s Schwayder

Camp in Idaho Springs Colorado .Clearly, It was bashert. Starting that year, and every year thereafter, , Liz’s parents have attended our high holiday services with us—loving every moment—the beautiful service, , Rabbi’s inspirational sermons , Marla, and the amazing choir, and the personal talks by TBI members. And every single year, after our machetunum go through the receiving line at the end of the service, they turn to me and say, “We love being with you at TBI. It feels like family.”

Then, this past new year’s eve, Mark and I were in California. Josh and Liz called us to say, Happy New Year, and Josh said, “Mom—you will LOVE Liz’s New Year’s Resolution. “ Liz took the phone and said, “ Janis—my resolution is to attend more Kabbalat Shabbat Services. I LOVE OUR Temple. It feels like family.”

So, to all of our TBI family here tonight, know that for the past 26 years you have filled our hearts with friendship, joy, and laughter during our happy times, sharing deeply in our nachas --- and you have been with us in our difficult times of loss— sharing in, and helping to lift our sadness. Mark, Josh, Liz and I are thankful for TBI in our lives. You Are Our Family. Shabbat Shalom.