

Adat Shalom

Congregation rallies with call for new members

By LORAIN McCLISH

Adat Shalom Synagogue is coming out of a financial position that once looked almost hopeless with a new found enthusiasm on the part of the congregation and a massive membership drive that got underway this week.

Speaking about the dark moments which surrounded the congregation's plight, Associate Rabbi Seymour Rosenbloom said, "It scared many people and it scared us. It was a real crisis, but our building is not closed and our door won't be shut. We've had good things happen since then."

The good things Rosenbloom mentioned were a 30-member committee headed by Gerald Cook dedicated to bring in new members to the congregation, a new expression of camaraderie on the part of the congregation born of working together trying to find a way out of financial crisis; and a protection from the court to see the congregation through until it is on better financial footing.

Legally, the position the congregation is in now is known as Chapter 11, which allows it to function without harassment and allows for the development of a financial

plan which will repay creditors over a period of time.

"WHAT WE WANT the public to know," Rosenbloom said, "is that we are not asking for a discount from anybody. We plan to pay back 100 cents on the dollar. We are not seeking to escape any of the obligations we owe."

"This is going to take a longer period than we'd like, but for now we can't go any faster."

Adat Shalom holds about \$10 million in total assets, most of it in real estate, and owes about \$4 million, most of that stemming from the building of the three year old Farmington synagogue.

"The difficulty came when we were simply not generating enough cash," Rosenbloom said.

The synagogue was built to follow the move of many of its members out to the suburbs, but at a time when a host of outside factors were moving against the decision. Membership fell, but only slowly picked up again. Inflation was running rampant, so building costs ran far ahead of the estimates. Then came the recession. And with that, the Yom Kippur War.

"So much of the money that might well have gone into our

building fund," Rosenbloom said, "was diverted to that emergency. That created problems for our members and if they've got problems, then we've got problems."

A THREE DAY carnival staged by all affiliate groups in the congregation last fall in a massive fund raising effort, was described by Rosenbloom as a "very healthy thing to happen here."

"In a synagogue of this size with so many things being done professionally, you can become pretty anonymous. What the carnival did was give us all a common ground. It was a joint activity of unity and common purpose. Because it was a total effort, it produced a great deal of intra-social activity and was good for everybody morale-wise."

Adat Shalom is a conservative synagogue which aims to fulfill the educational, cultural and religious needs of the Jewish community, "and we do that and we do it well," Rosenbloom said.

It offers full nursery, elementary and high school programs, a wide range of adult studies, youth groups for the kids and social groups for adults, "as well as a fine building for family celebrations."

Rosenbloom said, "and everything is discounted for members." Many of its programs are free of charge, such as lectures, and all study groups are free and open to the general public.

WHEN IT CAME to describing the synagogue as "conservative," Rosenbloom said "those lines have never been defined and they may be more blurred than ever now. There are certain areas we may be more liberal in than most."

The synagogue observes Bat Mitzvahs on the Sabbath, where a young woman is called to the Torah the same as a young man. And there are a good many women on the synagogue's board of trustees. Rosenbloom described the officers of the synagogue as "at least half of them under 40. And we are very open to suggestions of our young people and our new members."

A family picnic, tours of the synagogue and an introduction of synagogue officials and newcomers on Wednesday, set off a chain of activities planned by the committee to bring new members into the congregation. As more activities are planned, they will be announced in this paper.



RABBI SEYMOUR ROSENBLUM

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Edwin and Rosa seek home away from home

Youth for Understanding is dedicated to fostering greater international understanding by making it possible for young people to have an overseas family living experience. Since 1951 it has exchanged more than 50,000 U.S. and foreign students in 48 countries.



Edwin Flores of Chili likes to play volleyball and football, but his long range ambition is to be a civil engineer. The 17-year-old is one of six young people who will spend the next school year in the Farmington area. Rosa Eduarda of Brazil is also 17. Her interests run to swimming, painting, reading and television. And her English, she writes, is "good." She, too, will be coming for the 1975-76 school year.

Of the six, Edwin and Rosa are the only two who do not have firm commitments from area families. Hans Singer of Germany will be living with the Alton Bernettis, Kenji Nakayama of Japan with the Jerald McMillans, Claudia Eberhardt of Germany with the Harold Pindexter, and Frank Alfoller of the Netherlands with Mrs. Glen Mingo.

In fact, it is Mrs. Mingo who is seeking the homes for the young people who come to this country on the Youth For Understanding program.

MRS. JAMES O'DAY of Plymouth, YFU area chairman, is an enthusiastic booster of the program with good reason. In the last three years there have been four long term visitors in the O'Day home and scores there for shorter periods.

This time she is placing 16 foreign students in homes in suburban Wayne and Oakland counties. The students will arrive in late August.

Bert O'Day doesn't expect any problems because she's so sure that families who try out the Youth For Understanding program will be won over as quickly as she was.

She remembers well the time in 1971 when daughter, Betty, going into her senior year in high school, wanted to host a YFU exchange student and Peggy, now 21, Tim, now 16, and Dan, now nine, all were most enthusiastic about the idea.

"I was the only one who had reservations," Mrs. O'Day said. "I didn't think I could operate with a stranger in the house. But," she added, "they wore me down" and Gabi Rode arrived at their home from Germany late that summer. "I found out right away I didn't have a stranger in the house at all," Mrs. O'Day went on. "Gabi was like one of the family and that's been true too for the others who have been with us since then."

PEGGY O'DAY, who visited Gabi in Germany last year, explained the relationship a little more.

"Just at first, the first time you have a student, you have to remind yourself that they are family," she said. "But, very soon you are thinking that way and after that it's automatic."

Gabi found a warm niche in the O'Day home and by the time she had to leave, the clan was ready to welcome Dennis Casaje from the Philippines.

His stay was so enjoyable, Mrs. O'Day said, that last year the family had two YFU students, Marten Madson of Denmark and Rani Holter of Norway.

Their departure left a big void the O'Days agree.

"When Marten left he said now he has four parents," young Dan remembers.

WHILE THE O'DAY family was expanding to include the foreign visitors, Bert O'Day was completely won over to the international exchange program, getting more involved in YFU operations.

For a couple of years she helped Mrs. Nina Orr of Farmington who for a long time had been in charge of placements in western Wayne and Oakland counties.

"I started by helping place the kids in Plymouth," she said. "But the more I helped, the more fun it was. So, when Nina and her husband moved to Iran, I took over the job."

That was a year ago, and she found homes for 67 exchange students during the 1974-75 school year, including the contingent that arrived from South America in January.

The host family provides housing and food. The students bring their own spending money and have their own medical insurance.

YFU IS BASED in Ann Arbor and now involves more than a score of foreign lands and many of the 50 states.

"I think some people may be a little hesitant in these economic times about taking on another person to feed," Mrs. O'Day said, "but really I've found it takes very little extra food. Many families throw away as much as an extra kid would eat."

YFU has been selected by the National Bicentennial committee as their international youth project for the bi-centennial year. The committee intends to select nine young people from the state for scholarships to go abroad next summer. The number is based on population. The recipients will be chosen on the basis of an essay they submit. Announcements about the scholarships will be made through the schools this fall.

MRS. O'DAY gets letters from students who live all over the world thanking her for her part in the Youth For Understanding program. Sometimes when the students gather at her home, it looks and sounds like a miniature United Nations.

Farmington area families interested in providing homes for either Edwin or Rosa may contact Mrs. Glen Mingo of Farmington or Mrs. James O'Day, Plymouth.