

Friedlander's report to membership  
on the Rabbi.

Mr. President and members of Beth Israel Center.....

tonight is the night <sup>for</sup> ~~the~~ decision so far as a Rabbi for this organization is concerned....a committee has been working toward this end for <sup>R</sup>several months and tonight is prepared to make a recommendation to you. However, before this is done, I would like to take a few moments to fill you in and bring you up to date on what has been done; to tell you what procedures have been used and what our policies and goals have been.

First of all, let's look at the committee itself....At the membership meeting held here last Fall, a resolution was adopted to the effect that we should ~~xxxxxx~~ become serious about the possibility of securing a Rabbi and that a committee of seven be formed to investigate toward such an end / and report back to you.

The committee was formed but was expanded to <sup>nine</sup> ~~seven~~ to give us a better representation. However, in line with the adopted resolution, the two additional members were non-voting members. The committee, which was selected by the Board of Directors, was chosen to offer a cross-section of thinking within the entire membership. It includes three women and six men. It represents not only the "straight" conservative thinking, but also some to the right and left of this line. It has representatives who were original charter members of Beth Israel and it has some who are comparatively ~~new~~ new. It also has representatives who have been and are involved with the religious and spiritual guidance of Beth Israel, and it has members who have been and are involved in the group's educational program, and still others who are aware of the financial position of the Center.

I would like to take a moment to name the ~~6~~ members of this committee with whom it has been my pleasure to serve and work. They include Frances Bernstein, who acted as our very able secretary, Elaine Levitan, Susie Mark, Phineas Nissenson, John Duker, Morris Mentser, Chuck Harris and Dr. Weiss. They were a hard working and diligent group. They met often and gave thorough and deliberate study to the task to which they were assigned.

There were disagreements, of course. But all of these were certainly without malice and all criticism was constructive and in the interest of what the critics thought was in the best interest of the Center. While there was often differences of opinion, these were reconciled in an amicable and parliamentary manner.

Now, to the methods employed by your committee....ads were placed in both the Criterion and Outlook, as well as the Jewish Post and Opinion, a New York paper with nationwide circulation. There was a response ~~of~~ from about 22 Rabbis who expressed an interest in coming here.

Before answering any of these letters, we ~~was~~ asked and received from the Board a grant of \$200 to cover expenses. We then asked the Finance committee to give us a preliminary estimate as to how much we would be able to spend, and we asked the Education committee to tell us what its requirements were as far as teaching was concerned.

The Finance committee advised us that approximately \$7,500 to \$8,000 was available without touching any surplus that was accrued or anticipated. The education committee told us that it would likely be necessary to expand Hebrew classes next year and that we would need two teachers instead of one. We felt that in view of the various other needs of the Center, we should attempt to confine

any financial arrangements within the range of the \$7,500 or \$8,000, and leave the surplus to other ~~things~~<sup>items</sup> which would be needed.

With these thoughts in mind, we turned our attention to the individual applications. We eliminated those who were too far away from us in distance, since the ~~T~~ expense involved in bringing them to Pittsburgh would be far in excess of the funds which were available. We also eliminated those who were too far away from us in money. If there was any degree of "closeness," so to speak, we wrote to these people and told them in what approximate salary range we were thinking, and if they still were interested to continue to be in touch with us. We also considered it a prime requisite that the Rabbi not only be a married man, but that his wife be available for teaching duty. Though I may have made it sound as if we just tagged this requirement on, actually it was a major plank in our program.

After all this had been done, we were left with three Rabbis with whom, as you know, we had actual personal interviews, and I will give you a sketch of each of these persons, along with their background, what they expect from us and what they have to offer.

First of all, as you will recall, we had Rabbi Robert Kaufman of Wheeling, West Va. here for a week end. He conducted Friday evening and Saturday morning services and met with our committee on Sunday at the Sunday school. (I might point out here that following his visit, the committee decided to limit future candidates to a single days visit because of the many problems involved with ~~housing~~ housing, entertainment, etc.)

Rabbi Kaufmann is approximately 37 or 38 years of age. He is married and has two children. He has been a Rabbi for some ten

years, and this is his third in Wheeling. He is leaving that area for <sup>three</sup> what he says are ~~two~~ major reasons--one, that the congregation is no longer growing because of the ~~poor~~ economy in that area, two, because he has reached an impasse with the director of education who has been a fixture there for eleven years, and three because he would <sup>hope</sup> ~~like~~ to move into and with a growing area. ~~He recognizes this~~ ~~as a~~ ~~possibility~~ ~~in our potential~~ ~~in this suburban area.~~

He was ordained a Reformed Rabbi. However, he has served only ~~conservative~~ Conservative congregations and told the committee he feels that any Rabbi, whether Conservative, Reformed or Orthodox should be ~~able~~ flexible enough to meet the requirements and needs of the congregation which hires him and which he agrees to serve. This he points out, is neither hypocritical nor ~~compromising~~ compromising with principles, but rather is a somewhat normal practice.....he is currently being sponsored in the Conservative Rabbi Conference by Rabbis Lichter and Mosenson, both of Pittsburgh. Rabbi Kaufmann's wife is Orthodox, by the way. She is <sup>N</sup> also capable of teaching and will, if necessary, teach some Hebrew classes.

Rabbi Kaufmann is currently earning \$9,000 a year, which includes a \$500 payment to his ~~own~~ pension fund. He also receives ~~from~~ housing from his Wheeling congregation. In view of the fact that both he and his wife are from the Pittsburgh area, he is anxious to return here. He has agreed that he would work for a ~~set~~ salary of \$8,000 ~~per~~ a year, including the \$500 payment to his pension fund. He would want a minimum two year contract. In lieu of housing and/or more money, he has suggested that he be given permission to do some teaching at the University of Pittsburgh, as long as it did not in any way interfere with his duties here.

Rabbi Fried came to us from London, Ontario, Canada, where he has served since last October. Prior to that, he ~~was~~ spent seven years with the Congregation at Bay City, Michigan. As many of you know, he ~~attended~~ met with us on the day of the Purim Carnival and many of you had the ~~opportunity~~ opportunity to meet with him there. Later he met with the ~~committee~~ committee.

He is 44 years old, married and has four children, two of whom are ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> college. He is an orthodox Rabbi, but is aware of the fact that this is a conservative group. His congregation in London is conservative. His ~~strong~~ desire to leave his present ~~position~~ position, where he is currently receiving about \$9,000 plus a home, is due, he says, to an intense dislike of ~~Canada~~ Canada and a ~~desire~~ <sup>desire</sup> to return to a post in the U.S.

The Rabbi's wife is a teacher and is available. However, she is currently receiving \$1,200 a year for her ~~work~~ work in Canada and he told us very bluntly that if she did ~~not~~ not receive similar ~~compensation~~ compensation for teaching here, she would ~~not~~ stay home. The Rabbi, himself, said he would come here for \$8,000 a year plus a home.

Now, for the final ~~candidate~~ <sup>candidate</sup> ~~candidate~~, ~~the~~ Rabbi Martin Rubenstein, of Burlington, N.J., who was here a week ago Sunday. He ~~spoke~~ spoke briefly, but was given a fairly thorough ~~grilling~~ "grilling" by some of the members who were in attendance.

Rabbi Rubenstein is 33 years old, married and has ~~four~~ four children, the youngest of whom is 10 months and the oldest seven years. He has been employed by the Burlington congregation for six years and he says they have offered and are anxious to renew his contract again this year. However, he notes that the congregation has just 85 families--as we do--but that it shows no growth, nor even the

desire to grow or ~~even~~ add any members.

He is an <sup>orthodox</sup>~~orthodox~~ Rabbi, but he also is well aware that this is a conservative congregation. His current salary is in excess of what we are prepared to pay, but he indicated he would take less in view of the potential here. He indicated he would work here for \$7,500 the first year, plus a home and an insurance policy which would amount to about \$200 a year. However, he said that his wife would not be prepared to teach here, for some time, at least. He had previously indicated in phone ~~one~~ conversations that she would be available, but in view of their youngest child's age, there might be some problem. However, when he visited ~~me~~ here with us, he said the situation was such that she would not teach and that he would have to handle all the teaching chores alone.

You will note that I ~~he~~ said he wanted \$7,500 the first year. He also made it very clear that he wanted a two year contract and that he would definitely expect an increase in the second year.

There was also another "if". This had to do with his wife's approving of the area and the conditions here. This had to do, not alone with the general area, but the housing situation and the availability of day schools for their children. However, he did not anticipate that ~~there~~ there would be any major objection.

When it became apparent that housing might be a major item in securing a Rabbi--even before Rabbi Rubenstein's coming to visit with us--the committee made some preliminary investigation and determined that the purchase of a home was virtually impossible and certainly, at the moment, not feasible. However, it was ~~also~~ also learned that a home could be rented from somewhere in the neighborhood of \$150 to \$200 per month. <sup>N.</sup> (It should be noted that

nothing along this line was followed through, except to, ~~attempt~~  
 attempt to make some ~~determinato~~ determination <sup>of availability</sup> ~~if something would~~  
~~be available~~ within fair walking distance of the Center. Without  
 actually measuring, it seems there might be some homes within a mile  
 or a ~~1~~ mile and a half---a distance suggested, ~~1~~ incidentally,  
 by Rabbi Rubenstein.

To sum things up, here's how the three stand:

Rabbi Kaufmann--a two year contract for \$8,000 dollars a year,  
 to include his wife doing some teaching and  
 granting him the right to teach at the University.  
 No housing problem since he would secure his own.

Rabbi Fried----a one year contract with a five year option at a  
 starting salary of \$8,000 the first year, plus a  
 home and plus \$1,200 for his wife's employment as  
 a teacher.

Rabbi Rubenstein--a two year contract starting at \$7,500 plus a  
 home and no teaching from his wife. Also a  
 tentative agreement subject to his wife's  
 approval of the area. He would anticipate an  
 increase in salary in the second year of his  
 contract.

Of these three men, Rabbis Kaufmann and Rubenstein ~~appear~~ apparently  
 made the deepest impression on ~~the committee and~~ the membership.  
 Many of you took enough time to either tell some of us in person  
 or by telephone that you were favorably impressed with one ~~of~~  
 or the other, or in some cases by both.

In the final analysis, the committee recognizing the ability of  
 both men in the realm of spiritual leadership and recognizing that  
 both are aware of the problems facing us in our growth did what it  
 though best in fitting them into the pattern we had adopted. This  
 meant that aside from their overall ability, where did they fit  
 as far as (1) salary <sup>was concerned</sup> range, (2) ~~the~~ <sup>U</sup> need for a home, <sup>and</sup> (3) ~~the~~ <sup>n</sup> what was  
 availability of ~~the~~ <sup>their</sup> wife as a teacher? <sup>was concerned</sup>  
<sup>seems</sup> The man who ~~seemed~~ to fit best into these requirements, in our  
 collective minds, ~~was~~ <sup>he</sup> is Rabbi Kaufmann ~~and~~ <sup>he</sup> is our

recommendation to you.

Before there is any discussion, please allow me to tell you that the committee's action was by a good majority. We were fully aware of the abilities and capabilities of Rabbi Rubenstein, and were just as aware that he had made a very favorable impression upon many of you. It was with keen regret that we could not fit him into our overall picture at the present time. Then,

too, some of the committee felt that there were too many "ifs", i.e. the if ~~we can secure a proper~~ <sup>" " of securing a proper</sup> a home, ~~if~~ <sup>the if of</sup> his wife's approved, etc. The question was asked, suppose she did not approve?

We had promised all of these candidates a decision by April 1. Suppose we were to ~~we~~ have agreed that Rabbi Rubenstein fit our pattern, only to find out after notifying the other candidates that they had not been selected, <sup>that he would not come here ~~was~~ be?</sup> ...where would we ~~have been~~. We would ~~have been~~ <sup>actually be</sup> worse off than ~~we~~ <sup>what</sup> we ~~actually~~ started because we would have eliminated some potential candidates and ~~four~~ at least four months of hard work would have been "down the drain."

Just a couple of more <sup>of</sup> comments, before I quit .....The committee recognizes that it is, in the final analysis, the duty of the entire membership to tell us what to do. We are willing to do what you direct. However, <sup>please</sup> bear in mind that no matter what choice is made, there will be some disappointment and some disagreement. This is only natural when you have a group of people of any <sup>size</sup> ~~size~~. Be ~~assured~~ assured that ~~we~~ what the committee has done has been done after a lot of work, with no personal feeling or committment other than what it thought it was doing for the best interests of the entire congregation. Thank you for ~~to~~ listening and ~~to~~ now we will be glad to hear your comments ~~and~~ in an orderly manner.