

The Future of the New Orleans
Jewish Community Post-Katrina

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Temple Sinai

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I.

Sandy – What do you hear regarding the number of Jews returning versus not returning to New Orleans?

Ann – Could you describe the scene and the sentiment on the Wednesday eve at the URJ Biennial when our local disaster was acknowledged by the presidents and clergy of our four congregations?

Joel – What have the Detroit Jews asked you about our experience and the current mood and future of the New Orleans Jewish Community?

Cathy – What lessons are there for us today from past challenges faced by generations prior of the New Orleans Jewish Community?
How does our recovery compare following 19th century epidemics and 20th century Hurricanes Betsy and Camille?

II.

Realizations

1. The importance of community in its totality. Jews sought out one another. Where are they? Who is here? Our differences are nowhere as important to us as they were pre-Katrina.
2. The economics of “shul business” convinces us that there are many duplications of costly expenses and services, such as schools, insurance, building maintenance, and salaries.
3. The Federation came to mean a whole lot more to us than a perpetual fundraising nudge – Atlanta, Houston, Baton Rouge, and Dallas meetings.
4. We took comfort in one another’s presence in whatever cities to which we evacuated – Hal’s in Atlanta, Lenny and Ziggy’s in Houston, and once in a while, too, in a synagogue – i.e. the Baton Rouge High Holy Days, and the Dallas and Houston High Holy Days.

III.

In thinking about –
What post-Katrina realities do you sense in looking toward the future of our Jewish Community?
Open to all present

1. Day school implications?
2. Population diminished?
3. Fundraising potential?

4. What geographic realities present themselves?
5. What is left of the Orthodox Jewish Community?
6. Where ought we begin in coalescing and cooperating with previously separate aspects of our communities?