


came that we had a match! We quickly made plans to meet in the birth mother's home state, and all decided to go forward with the placement. Returning to California we thought we would have until at least the end of March to before returning for the baby's birth. But as we were soon to discover, these little ones are full of surprises! Mere days later, we found ourselves hurrying back to Texas. On March 21, the day after he was born, we met our baby boy. He is alert, peaceful (much of the time!) and a source of joy and fulfillment beyond words. Jonah has made us a family.

Looking back on the past few years, I always hoped that we would have our child by Passover... or in time for the next Passover. The transmission of our central narrative, the very human themes of enslavement, freedom, dignity and empathy, is made all the more powerful through the commandment that we tell all this to our children. And they are all our children, whether our actual members of our family or not. We help them find their place in the story. And they help us find ours.

Then too, there is what happens immediately after that momentous crossing of the Red Sea. The Israelites take one look around, realize their lives are no longer bound to servitude and routine, and wail aloud their discontent and fear. I never



in 2013 and our low is, well, now at 309 member units. Recall that a member unit is essentially a household with any members in that household comprising the member unit. So there's the frank talk on membership. Later on I'll share with you what your Board of Directors is doing to turn the tide.

As you might imagine, our membership decline translates to an income decline since the vast majority of our income comes from our membership commitments. Are they directly proportional? Of course not. B'nai Tikvah will never turn away members who cannot afford to pay our full membership commitment; however, we're hearing from more and more of you that the membership commitment is too much. Touchy (and a little scary) subject for me to write about? You bet. But you deserve to understand our situation so that you can help us create a vibrant and sustained community.

In the coming months, we will host a series of meetings open to the entire membership. These meetings will start with our annual congregational meeting on Sunday May 22 at 9:45 am and continue roughly each quarter for you to come and talk with us about our community challenges and opportunities. Driving toward a sustainable synagogue is something we all want; we