



Congregation Beth Torah

President's Column

January 2011

Security

A few weeks ago, while in Chicago at the Kellogg program with Rabbi Raskin, we were on a break between sessions and had a chance to walk outside for a few minutes. Since we had traveled by air, one of the topics we talked about was the security measures that had just been put in place, the now infamous 'full body scanners,' and the recent remarks by former NPR correspondent Juan Williams (that he gets "nervous" if he's at an airport and sees "people who are in Muslim garb"). What I was trying to answer for myself was, "Are those new scanners an unreasonable violation of my privacy?", and what I wanted to be able ask Mr. Williams were his thoughts on the fact that those who perpetrated the attacks on September 11 did not wear "Muslim Garb."

Just before Thanksgiving, at Beth Torah, we hosted a "Town Hall" session about the subject of relocation. I am very grateful to the 120 or so people who attended to let me know their thoughts and ask questions. Believe it or not, I am most appreciative of those who came with questions for which I did not have an answers. I am working to get answers for those questions and, fortunately, have had a few people offer to help do a lot of the work involved. Since we know that our Rakefet membership database for long-time members has a few errors, some of the work to get answers will also require your involvement, mostly by answering a few survey questions. Please keep an eye open for an email or letter to help us fix those errors. There may also be a few smaller targeted surveys to dig down into specific areas or populations, so you may be asked to respond to more than one survey.

What did come across clearly, regardless of people being "for," "convince me," or "against" the concept of relocation was that they cared and wanted to protect the Beth Torah that we cherish. We will look at everything that we reasonably can and question every assumption that we reasonably can. I hope that as I try to provide answers and share my thoughts and reasons for thinking that what is clothed in the familiar may not be what is in our best long-term interest and that my definition of *reasonable* matches yours.

Tony