

The meeting was preceded by a talk by Rabbi Ari Rockoff, Executive Vice President of Religious Zionists of America - Mizrachi. He presented an overview of Mizrachi activities on the Israel/World and USA stages, reviewed the strong relationship between RZC and RZA, and focused on Mizrachi activities and the role of RZC as an excellent example of what a city-based chapter can do, such as the Mizrachi Chicago Pina Chama. He also provided some details on the new Maslul Mizrachi – Pathway to Future Mizrachi Leadership initiative.

Dr. Oren Lakser opened the meeting by noting the passing in the last year of Mizrachi - Religious Zionists of Chicago members: Gale Rothner, Rochelle Frank, and Marilyn Wolff, Aleihen HaShalom. They are sorely missed.

Dr. Lakser welcomed the new Executive Director of Bnei Akiva Midwest, Yonatan Edrei, who is headquartered in our RZC Building.

Dr. Lakser reported: Mizrachi - Religious Zionists of Chicago has have reason to be proud! In the past year, RZC persevered successfully maintaining many programs and projects despite the challenges. We took advantage of the virtual world and expanded our programs and the audience we reached.

1. In the Chicago area, over 1400 **HaMizrachi** magazines are distributed 10 times a year to nearly 40 different shuls, schools, and stores.
2. **Our RZC Kol Shabbat** eNewsletter is being sent to more than 900 subscribers weekly. Plans are underway to incorporate a new HaMizrachi Parasha Divrei Torah Weekly.
3. Our Rosh HaShana **Sefer Berachot**, which featured a section of new Divrei Torah, was mailed to 741 members and friends, and reached many others electronically.
4. We created a truly unique **Tales of Jerusalem video**, featuring **six world class story tellers** which received over two thousand views (2163) and globally expanded our audience for our **Yom Yerushalayim** celebration and **Youth Art Contest which was** sponsored in memory of Sheldon Robinson and Howard D. Geller, and had 22 judged entries from six different schools this year.
5. Due to the pandemic, we were not able to conduct our in-person Bet Café, Yimei Iyun or Shabbatonim. Yet, Baruch HaShem, we are pleased that after a long hiatus we restarted in October our **Foundations of Religious Zionism** monthly lecture series, in partnership with the YU Torah MiTzion Kollel and sponsored by the Bellows family with two virtual lectures so far, Rabbi Zev Shandalov on Garinim Torani'im and Rabbi Yogi Rimel on Israeli Volunteerism.
6. Over 100 people Zoomed in for a unique live over zoom lecture **Chanuka in the Beit HaMikdash** from Machon HaMikdash – The Temple Institute in Yerushalayim.
7. We presented special Mizrachi virtual programs of shiurim, virtual tours, and ruach for Yom Yerushalayim, The Three Weeks, Yamim Noraim, and Chanuka. We look forward to reinstating our in-person programs as soon as it is safe to do so.
8. **Mizrachi Chicago Pina Chama in Itamar**, endowed by us in honor of the Chayalim Bodedim from our community. Since it became operational in Summer 2020, our Pina Chama has become a focal point for the IDF soldiers and the community of Itamar. Over the past year, the Chicago Mizrachi Pina Chama in Itamar has been very busy. The IDF uses the Pina as one of the main locations in the region for gatherings and meetings for the soldiers and officers serving in the area.

As of this past October, over **15,000** soldiers who were on patrol stopped by the Pina to have coffee and refresh before continuing their patrols. Due to corona, the IDF decided to host many events at the Pina. It has a comfortable outdoor space which allows the IDF to host large events. An additional **5,000** soldiers

attended conferences and educational days at the Pina in Itamar. The Pina Chama is also located in a very strategic location. On any given night, **hundreds** of Special Forces came to the Pina to prepare for their missions in the neighboring villages.

**Units that served** in the area: Golani Brigade; Kfir Brigade- Nachshon Battalion; Kfir Brigade- Duchifat Battalion; 5 different Reserve Battalions; Border Police. Food distributed: **500** bags of **coffee**; **200** boxes of **tea**; **600** bottles of **cold drinks**; **500** packs of **cakes** and **cookies**. In addition to the food we distributed, **volunteers** from the Itamar community **brought food** for the soldiers throughout the week especially on **Friday** for **Shabbat**.

Our partners, **Yashar LaChayal** say **thank you** for all your support. The Chicago Mizrachi Pina Chama in Itamar has become a model for all their other pinot.

9. We have **completed all the projects** related to the 2 **Homeland Security Grants** we received. Thus, we have replaced a total of 11 doors and 31 windows, installed access controls - both mechanical combination locks and electronic access, an extensive security video camera system and a security wall in the front of the building. At the same time, we made much needed repairs to our back parking lot, back steps, roof, chimneys and tuckpointing, and created our beautiful new front plaza, which is now quite an attractive first impression and future focal point of activities.
10. We plan to move forward soon with remodeling the building, including offices, kitchens, bathrooms, and all interior spaces.
11. Our future includes: Continuing our support of Bnei Akiva and Camp Moshava; Expanding programming to college-age students and young adults; Finding innovative ways to advance Aliya, Israel advocacy and Religious Zionist ideals.
12. Thank you to our professional staff, Rabbi Jerry Isenberg, and Sara Stopek for their efforts throughout the year.

Dr. Lakser then called upon Alan Gershman, chair of the Mizrachi - Religious Zionists of Chicago nominating committee, for his report.

Alan Gershman reported: We thank all those who have served on the Mizrachi - Religious Zionists of Chicago Council in the past and present the following slate of Officers and Members for election to the Mizrachi - Religious Zionists of Chicago Council with the hope that they will continue in the energetic revitalization activity on behalf of our beloved organization.

### **5782 (2021-2022) Nominations for Religious Zionists of Chicago Council**

#### **Officers**

Dr. Oren Lakser, President  
Rabbi Hillel Meyers, Vice President  
Howard Karesh, Vice President  
Michelle Trubnick, Vice President  
Avi Zisook, Vice President  
Mimi Seleski, Secretary  
Dan Maeir, Treasurer  
Alan Gershman, Immediate Past President

#### **Council Members**

Rabbi Daniel Azulay	Rabbi Leonard Matanky
Myrna Buckman	Rabbi Bernard Neuman
Tami Drapkin	Ari Nussbaum
Lauri Engel	Jennie Rothner
Stan Gertz	Eric Rothner
Pearl Hirsch	Noemi Skidelsky
Joel Jacobson	Rabbi Mordechai Turoff

#### **Ex Officio**

Rabbi Jerold Isenberg, Mizrachi RZC; Dikla Weitzner, Camp Moshava; Yonatan Edrei, Bnei Akiva

Dr. Lakser called for the election of the slate as indicated, which was approved by Unanimous Consent.

The Annual Meeting was then adjourned.