

PRESIDENTIAL MATTERS

By Steve Aronowitz

L'Dor Vador



At its March 12th General Membership meeting, the congregation voted nearly unanimously (there was one abstention) to ratify the new contractual agreement with Rabbi Yaffe. The significant turnout and overwhelming support reflects on our satisfaction with the Rabbi. It also points to the confidence we have with Rabbi Yaffe leading us forward for the foreseeable future.

Committee members Dawn Singer, Neil Garfinkel, Perry Heidecker, Jeffrey Bass, Lois Wirtheim and myself reached an agreement together with Rabbi Yaffe that spans 10 years with a negotiating opening by either party at the five year point. My thanks to the members of this committee and Rabbi Yaffe for the professional manner in which business was conducted.

So, how did I get to L'dor Vador. It was simple. I was sitting at the shul on a recent Shabbat listening to member Sharon Glick (Elyse and Josh's daughter) recite the morning's haftarah (her bat mitzvah portion a few years ago), and observing aliyahs for Josh and Alyssa Garfinkel (Shari and Neil's children) who became b'nai mitzvah a few years ago as well. Looking around the sanctuary with nearly 60 members in attendance, I saw the beauty of bringing different generations together: grandparents, their children, their grandchildren! In the short time that Rabbi Yaffe has been with us, he has engaged children and adults to become participants, not simply observers. In fact, it was most evident at Purim services during which there were two Megillah readings and nearly 200 members in attendance.

Much is happening at LNJ. The calendar is full of activities. The website is exploding with things to do! The Rabbi's energy and desire to encourage each member to come and enjoy what is happening has been positively received by the membership. Attendance tells the story. With a potential consolidation on the horizon, Rabbi Yaffe's concern for our well-being, both individually and collectively, has been well-documented, whether by a visit to the home of an ailing member, a stop at a hospital or nursing home, some time at a Tot Shabbat service, or simply by being the last one out of the building following a Kiddush. Be assured the members of Oakland Jewish Center are well-aware of what is happening on Little Neck Parkway.

In short, there is no question Rabbi Yaffe loves being a congregational Rabbi as he has enthusiastically accepted his role. I am certain that the next 10 years and beyond will be wonderful as we grow together. On behalf of the entire congregation, I wish the Rabbi, his wife, Carrie, sons Robert and Neal, good health and mazel tov!