

Presidential Matters

by Bob Stern



We are now in the month of October. How profound a statement. Summer has gone. The High Holidays are a memory. Other holidays have come and gone. There were any number of topics I could have chosen for this article. I've decided on one aspect of the High Holidays.

The High Holidays took place with the usual precision that we've come to expect. There are so many moving parts behind the High Holidays, and the bat mitzvah that preceded them and the pledge breakfast during them, that it's hard to enumerate them all. There are so many people to thank that a separate column will deal with that.

On a general level, on behalf of the entire congregation, let me offer thanks and appreciation to all who took a part in making the High Holidays a success.

On a specific level, I'd like to single out six individuals. They all played a role in the success of the High Holidays in general, but a much bigger role in something else - our new Yahrzeit memorial system. After almost 4 years, all of Congregation L'Dor V'Dor's memorial plaques are finally on display.

I hope everyone had an opportunity to see the new Yahrzeit display that was recently installed in the lobby. Faced with the daunting task of incorporating the 1,500 Oakland memorial plaques with the 750 Little Neck memorial plaques, numerous options were considered. More time was spent on that one task than all others related to the consolidation. Options were selected then dismissed for one reason or another. New options were considered. And dismissed.

As you know, in the end we elected, with congregational approval, to move to a virtual display that shows the Yahrzeit plaques on a large monitor during the Yahrzeit week. On Yizkor dates, all of the plaques are displayed on a rotating basis.

While I was ushering, I was positioned right near the display. I'm delighted to say that over an hour, I heard nothing but complements and positive comments on the new Yahrzeit display.

A great many hoops had to be jumped through to get the new system in place in time for Yizkor on Yom Kippur. We were able to accomplish our goal due to the herculean efforts of David Penner who provided all of the data that represents the content of the individual plaques. He developed a data file with all of the data on the plaques, except for the Hebrew names on the Oakland plaques. But, he took a photograph of each and every one of the Oakland plaques so the Hebrew names could be entered. That act saved us a few thousand dollars.

Fernando Ramos and Juan Carlos Agudelo, our custodians, work hard to keep our place in order. In the midst of school summer cleaning, they were asked to bring down the plaques. In addition to painting the school, cleaning and buffing the floors, without hesitation, they worked quickly to bring down the plaques with the help of Ethan and Danielle Blatt and Brett Figelman. They worked hard to keep them organized to be distributed to those who requested them. How many times did Audi have to send them searching for yet another plaque that was requested past the deadline? I would like to extend a personal Yasher Koach to them for their hard work and dedication.

Audi Acevedo, our managing director, was instrumental in making sure the information was correctly displayed and new plaques were entered into the system in time for Yom Kippur. When the system went live, she dealt with the vendor to iron out some startup problems.

Marc Figelman made sure the rescued Torah, that was in the lobby, was safely relocated to the sanctuary. He was also responsible for making sure the necessary electrical and internet connections were in place.

Last, but not least, Steve Aronowitz took the lead in dealing with W&E Baum. He spent countless hours on the phone and in person to make sure our display was ready for Yom Kippur. The night the display was installed, he was at the temple until the wee hours of the morning.

To David, Fernando, Juan Carlos, Audi, Marc and Steve, Yasher Koach. Thank you for a job well done.