

Presidential Matters by Steve Aronowitz



Some say the holidays are extremely early this year. The truth is, based on the Jewish calendar, the holidays are never early nor late. They are always right on time. On the other hand, what has certainly been frustratingly late has been court approval of the consolidation of our two congregations. While we continue to wait, and there is no reason to expect that the consolidation will not be confirmed (it appears to simply be due to the overburdened Queens County court), each day our congregations continue to be strengthened by each other and continue to come together as one.

It really does take a small village to run a synagogue. Along with the clergy, respective boards, and the professional and support staff, your Consolidation Committee has been working diligently to insure a smooth transition, always seeking new and different options that will help us to build on our strengths. Our co-treasurers, Jerry Schwartz and Jeff Bass have formed a committee of astute temple member financial leaders to ensure the good health of our synagogue's finances.

Due to the work of the House Committee and particularly the efforts of Joel Friedman and Deanne Raffel, new windows have been installed throughout the building. This significant project, requiring a competitive bidding process as well as adhering to the regulations established by our major tenant, the NYC Board of Education, will help to insulate our building from the heat and the cold and save us thousands of dollars in energy costs.

Last month, the Oakland Jewish Center was officially closed and all remaining items were removed. The ark was dismantled, the Torahs, memorial plaques, remaining books and other items were transported to Little Neck and a large number of sacred books were taken to the cemetery for burial. According to Jewish tradition, anything with God's name written in Hebrew cannot simply be discarded. Many of the sacred books were donated, but those that had served their purpose and were no longer needed were properly buried at the New Montifiore Cemetery under the supervision of Rabbi Yaffe and Bob Stern.

Closing a building that has meant so much to so many required great care, hard work and sensitivity. We are indebted to Juan Carlos for all that he has done to help with this process. The transport and relocation of the Torahs went flawlessly due, in large measure, to the work of Ritual Committee co-chair, Chuck Wayne together with Bob Stern and Marty Ackerman.

Other news about our synagogue includes the expansion of our air-conditioning system to include the synagogue lobby. Our co-treasurer, Jeff Bass, was instrumental in securing a contract to have the installation completed before Rosh Hashanah.

No doubt, we have much to be proud of, celebrate and enjoy, from inspiring services and weekly programs to special events and learning opportunities. If you've not come around for awhile, you are missing so much. Yes, the work described above is noteworthy, but do not think our work is complete. We need your participation to remain strong, and we welcome your participation in ways new and old. Let us know how we can help you connect to your community.

From our families to yours...L'shanah tova

**Steve and Julie Aronowitz
Bob and Lesley Stern**