

Presidential Matters

By Steve Aronowitz



When I campaigned for president of my college class, I had a campaign manager who advised me to go with the slogan, “The past is for wisdom, the present for action and, but for joy, the future.” I didn’t understand it fully, I used it, and it got me elected!

Today, after 10 years of service at our synagogue, I have come to appreciate its relevance and, most importantly, I can apply it to what’s happening at L’Dor V’Dor.

Review our history – whether a member of Oakland or Little Neck – and recognize how important the synagogue has been in our lives. Consider the spiritual value, the Hebrew School training, the friends we’ve made, the simchas we’ve celebrated, the times we’ve been supported through sad events and you understand the indelible mark imprinted for each of us. Reflect on how we have responded to a crisis – as a congregation – and been the better for our action. The Oakland – Little Neck consolidation is the gold standard, of course! Take a look at how we have transitioned from one religious leader to the next, taken the wisdom from one administration and moved to a new one and we can marvel at how, in fact, we’ve grown stronger through the years.

Our histories – individually and collectively – have given us great joy.

Of course, the question remains: what is our future? How can we ensure that years from now we will continue to celebrate the joy of our actions today?

Good news. It’s actually easy! Take Marjorie Goldstein. Honored for her accomplishments at a recent Shabbat service, we take time to thank her for her efforts. As vice-president of membership, Marjorie worked to bring on new members and make sure their membership was both recognized and appreciated. Marjorie Goldstein stepped up.

Take Lois and Stan Wirtheim. Recognizing the need to manage catering, both took on the challenge of arranging events – from a Shabbat Kiddush to a Friday night dinner to Shabbat Across America. Lois and Stan Wirtheim stepped up.

Take Mark Hoffer, Richie Spivack and Chuck Wayne. Each accepted their role as gabbai and the responsibility of helping to facilitate services. In each case, Mark, Richie and Chuck stepped up.

Take Irwin Wolf and Gerry Schwartz, Dan Budne and Dawn Singer. Lysa Lopater and Marc Figelman. All understood their expertise was required to move the synagogue forward. Once again, members stepped up.

Reflecting on the importance of “never forgetting,” Ellen Charlop and George Klein along with the Yom HaShoah Committee organized a heartfelt meaningful Yom HaShoah program, attended by over 200 members of local synagogues. Ellen and George stepped up.

Understanding the importance of the Sisterhood, Men’s Club and Israel Advocacy committees, Janet and Irwin Tobin provided engaging and educational programs and helped raise awareness. Janet and Irwin Tobin have stepped up.

Of course, there are others. Karen Popowsky and Stacey Gottlieb for their efforts on various initiatives, as well as members who volunteer and organize our annual Rummage Sale. And I know I will be in trouble for not mentioning others whose contributions were also significant. You see, many of your friends have provided the participation model. Each stepped up.

In the next few days, you will receive an application for board trustee and temple officer positions. Why is it important to consider giving some time to your synagogue, sharing your expertise, joining your friends? That’s simple, too. After all, if we want to share the joy of the future, “the present is for action!”