



From Your Vice President

By Mitchell Stein

Which Road To Choose?

There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that Oakland Jewish Center, Little Neck Jewish Center and Congregation L'Dor V'Dor have enjoyed a beautiful and successful history. With a 70 year history, these institutions have become religious and community leaders. Much joy, learning, celebrating and some sorrow has been shared by members of these congregations and by the greater community.

Like all journeys, there are times when a difficult decision must be made and we must decide which road do we take to continue our journey. Maybe not today, but we are very rapidly approaching a three-pronged fork in our road.

One path is led by Mother Nature. Today, life is fine. After the recent and successful consolidation we have a solid number of congregants and we have some money in the bank to sustain us for a short while. We are led by an extremely energetic clergy who provide us ample opportunities for learning and praying. We have members running social events to keep us entertained. We can simply be led by Mother Nature and have her blow our ship this way and at other times blow our ship the other way – without intervening to determine a specific direction. Keep in mind that despite all her wonder Mother Nature may at times throw us a Tsunami, Hurricane or Superstorm. At that time we would have to respond accordingly.

Path two is steered by a naval officer with nearly four decades of experience. He knows these seas very well and has logged thousands of miles as both an underling and as a captain. He is very knowledgeable but is also very stubborn, believing that his experience and knowledge is greater than all others combined. He does not believe the sonar blips and refuses to change course. This leader is Edward J. Smith, Captain of the Titanic. His belief is that we do not change our course of action despite the warnings and the advice of many other intelligent and capable naval officers.

The last path is led by a local captain. His name is Derek Jeter. Derek played his entire 20 year baseball career for the New York Yankees. He was an all-star more than half his career and holds many NY Yankee records. What makes Derek Jeter a true captain is that throughout his career he was always able to step up and lead by example. Jeter's batting numbers are greater during the Playoffs and World Series than during the playing season. Jeter quickly acknowledged the current obstacles of the upcoming short Playoff or World Series, analyzed those situations, understood what it took to make both, himself and the team, a success and pushed himself and his team to take actions that led to World Championships.

I suggest we choose the path that Derek Jeter traveled. We cannot let our future as a religious and community leader be led by Mother Nature as this will not allow us to have a plan for the future. do not suggest that we be led by Edward Smith who had a great history and much knowledge but was unwilling to adapt to new and emerging situations. Today's world is a very different world than the world we enjoyed 20, 10 or even 5 years ago. We need to understand these changes and plan for the future based upon the latest information available. Therefore, I want to suggest that we follow Derek Jeter's path. The road ahead may have obstacles we never encountered before, but, as the Executive Vice President, I plan to step up my game and this synagogue's game so that when these situations are addressed, we continue to remain the Champion that we truly are. It is my hope that we will all choose this path together.