



From Your President

It began 11 years ago when Neil Berman installed me as president of (then) Little Neck Jewish Center. He said, "My close friend, George Aronowitz, is looking down and wondering, "installed my son as *what?*" And so began an 11 year run as president of an organization that has become a significant part of my life for better than 20 years, having first become a member over a decade earlier.

My goal was simple; a two part mission: if the membership would accept me, all I wanted was to last from September 2007 to December 2009 when Jordan became a bar mitzvah. I had the vision of standing on the bima, bestowing the traditional gifts to our newest *adult* and then handing over the presidency to the next president.

I learned a lot as president, about myself, about leadership, and, most importantly, about the beauty and value of being a member of a synagogue. One thing is certain: success happens through collaboration; it is never a single person who bears sole credit. And that was clearly the case here. Consider some of the highlights and note the contributions of many:

2009. Cantor Raber retires and the search for his replacement lands Cantor Shron. He needs to fill the void created by Cantor Raber's retirement. The outgoing Cantor's record of accomplishment is well documented. Now, look back 10 years and appreciate how the warmth and sincerity of Cantor Shron has captured members – from children preparing to become b'nai mitzvah to adults attending informative classes in addition to his work alongside the Rabbi at services.

2010. Rabbi Prouser leaves and, once again, we are *searching*, this time for a Rabbi. We get very fortunate, landing Rabbi Yaffe. In a very short period, Rabbi Yaffe demonstrates the skills one seeks in a religious leader. His compassion for each member, his passion for the synagogue's place in the community, lift a congregation almost immediately that, at the time, seemed unlikely. Don't tell Rabbi Yaffe that demographics project a bleak outlook. Every move he's made rebuke that assumption.

2010. In a decision of which we continue to reap the benefits, the Board appoints Audi Acevedo as Bookkeeper and promotes her a few years later to the role of Managing Director. Her work and dedication surpasses any expectations of office personnel. No wonder many refer to her as Ms. V'Dor! This could not have happened without the support, guidance and consistency provided by Edith Schatz who has been maintaining our records and communicating with our membership as our Office Secretary with warmth and dedication for more than 18 years.

2012 – 2013. Oakland Jewish Center president Robert Stern and his board determine that the best match for a consolidation is with Little Neck. Respective committees come together as one, quickly reaching agreement which has *saved* both Jewish centers.

2018. Two outstanding leaders, Marjorie Goldstein and Mitchell Stein, decide to put their names on the ballot to become co-presidents. Their mission: lead a congregation to continued success, financially and inspirationally. Bet on it!

So, 11 years is a long time. It wouldn't have happened without the devotion of my family, Julie and Jordan. It wouldn't have happened without the goodness and patience of the Rabbi and Cantor. It wouldn't have happened without leaders and contributors like Dawn Singer, Chuck Wayne, Stan & Lois Wirtheim, Judy Samuels, George Klein, Richard Spivack, Perry Heidecker, Ken Guttenplan, Ted Goodman and Paul Stein, as well as up and coming leaders, such as Marc Figelman. It wouldn't have happened without the encouragement from Julie and Mel, Esther and Don, Janet and Irwin, Linda and Howard, Nina and Irwin and Don Schoenholt. Please forgive me if I have inadvertently omitted anyone from this list. Through 11 years, these friends guided me whenever they felt it was necessary. The last part is most significant. The measure of friendship is guidance when the recipient may not recognize the need.

Continue to look for me on Shabbat, sitting next to my buddy, Steve Kanfer. The conversation may not be significant to most; it's the point that coming to temple each Saturday is part of our fabric. It's who we are and where we want to be.

As a congregation, all of us have shared joy and have been with each other for support. The value of membership has been priceless!