

Presidential Matters

by Steve Aronowitz



I am confused. Like Tevye in *Fiddler On the Roof*, our dilemma is puzzling. On one hand, the numbers tell the story. Our community has changed. On the other hand, look what is happening here, practically every day. On the other hand, our congregation is getting older, members are moving away. On the other hand, there is an excitement, an enthusiasm that is palpable. On the other hand, can we deny the demographics? Potential member families hardly exist. Are we at the point that there is no other hand?

As co-president of the synagogue and co-chairperson of the Consolidation Committee, and along with individuals who also are grappling with the task of choosing which hand, I can't dismiss the feeling I have each Shabbat, each activity, each dinner event, even at each meeting: there are intangibles that will be difficult to replace if our address changes.

If you believe – like I do – that the synagogue has the responsibility to bring people together to practice the values of our faith through education, bikur cholim, and tzedakah, then if you are not taking advantage of participating in all that our synagogue is offering, you are missing what is happening here almost daily.

Here's one example: on Thursday night, February 26, we hosted a program sponsored by *Renewal*, an organization that "...helps patients and their families navigate the complex process of kidney transplant, from finding a donor to arranging the transplant and beyond." A family member of one of our congregants is suffering from chronic kidney disease. Over 50 community members attended. Why do we open our doors? Because that is who we are; this is what we are about!

And how about the Shabbat Across America dinner attended by well over 100 people and nearly 50 friends from neighboring synagogues – at our Shul, hosted by us! And that's the point – we are the community center. Over and over again, it is L'Dor V'Dor and we have come to count on our synagogue as the place to be. We know it's here for us. Have we taken the synagogue for granted???

There are countless examples of how we raise our hands to help those in need, in our area, across the country, in Israel, throughout the world. And the feeling we gain for such effort is internal; it makes us feel good, it is the right thing to do. Tzedakah is a fundamental belief that we all support and practice. When there is an issue, problem, or crisis, the Shul and our membership are quick to help by reaching into our pockets, providing food and sundries, or volunteering our time.

However, the issue remains: while Congregation L'Dor V'Dor may NOT be in immediate crisis, we are rapidly approaching a critical juncture. Salaries and operating expenses continue to rise. New costs for security and maintenance of the building need to be absorbed into our operating budget. Each of these items contribute to our increasing budgetary deficit.

Now, we face a different kind of dilemma. Consolidate or dig deep – through fundraising and individual efforts. The consolidation committee has met with the leadership of several neighborhood synagogues. We are in the beginning of this journey.

But...as I was considering a topic for this edition of Temple Talk, I thought about the missing piece, so to speak. Hearing from the membership of our congregation, as many members as possible.

I would like to invite all who are interested to come and meet with the Consolidation Committee and tell us what you think, present your thoughts. All I am asking is your commitment to join us for one hour.

For example, we need help as to effective fundraising ideas. We want to continue our dialogue with you to gain a better understanding of your issues, concerns, needs and desires related to our budget, dues structure, security, and the potential for merging.

Now is the time to help ourselves while continuing working on our plan for sustainability, before we are in crisis.

I have set Monday evening, May 11th at 7:30 p.m. for a Town Hall Meeting. This is the opportunity for the Consolidation Committee and the synagogue leadership to get direction regarding where we go (or stay).