

Presidential Matters

by Steve Aronowitz



It wasn't the same, not even close. But, it worked. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur service by stream or zoom did what it was supposed to do: bring the holiday to hundreds of congregants who would have preferred to be finding a parking space and looking for a seat in a crowded synagogue.

I walked over to the shul on Yom Kippur morning as a member volunteer with the tech crew, to assist with any request (there were none, thank goodness, as they were on top of everything). I watched them mix voice levels of the Rabbi, the Cantor, and cut to pre-recorded *aliyas*, readings from members, or choir performances. At home, on a computer or television screen, I took it for granted; in person, the precision to make it work flawlessly was monumental.

It was also a bit eerie. I looked towards the *bima*, turned to view an empty social hall, normally filled with smiling faces, happy to be where they belonged on this solemn day, only to see the Rabbi, the Cantor, and two production team members.

It was not the way it was intended. However, to some extent, the anticipation of attending synagogue for the High Holidays, interrupted months earlier by a pandemic of sadness and concern, worked itself back around to satisfaction once more.

The production of the High Holiday services was a phenomenal undertaking and required the efforts of many, starting with Stan Wirtheim who put the entire operation together. Stan has justifiably earned the reputation, "If something needs to be done, call Stan!" He assembled volunteers, Richard Spivack, George Klein, and Mark Hoffer to assist with onsite production,

The time consuming task of connecting with congregants to pre-record segments by zoom was coordinated by members, Debbie Sosman, Diana Charlop, Jessica Levy, and David Goodman (recent Lehigh University graduate!). Jessica was also assisted by her friend, Derek Grimaldi. Then, all the recordings had to be inserted precisely during the live service. That was handled by the tech crew, Jeremy and Evan, from Media Place. I have heard from countless members complimenting the production. Like most things, live is better; however, I will recall 2020 services as another special accomplishment in this congregation.

High Holiday services require enormous hours of preparation by the Rabbi and Cantor, and while appreciated, may go unnoticed; on this holiday, their time and commitment made all services come off flawlessly. It was a monumental effort!

We all share the desire to return to a crowded synagogue. For now, on behalf of Julie, Mitchell, and Diane, I wish you and your families a healthy and happy new year.