

Presidential Matters
by Steve Aronowitz



Do I dare say, “back to normal” fully believing that better days are here in the synagogue? I’m going to respond affirmatively based on clear observations. It certainly presents a bright outlook as we head into 2023. Consider this:

Nearly 50 congregants attended our very popular Chanukah dinner at the synagogue on December 23rd. We braved a bitterly cold night to enjoy latkes and Chinese food (what else!) and come together for this annual event. Yes, we’ve been away but the food and conversation is an indication we picked up right where we left off. Led by Rabbi Yaffe and Cantor Shron, it really was a meaningful ‘welcome home’ celebration.

The sanctuary is filling up more each week as congregants are becoming more comfortable participating in-house. Of course, we will always be sensitive to those members who determine that the virtual option is the best – right now - and we will continue to provide our zoom room for programming and services.

Hundreds of NYC public school students came to the synagogue to watch Plaza Theatrics put on separate productions of Jack Frost and Scrooge. The Plaza Organization has been recognized for its contributions to the arts via various arts-in-education programs. Plaza will be using our social hall to entertain young children periodically throughout the winter. In speaking with Kevin Harrington, the producer, he emphasized the importance of exposing children to professional theater with productions suited for their level. OLNJC is playing an important role by hosting these plays. I have been told that our own administrator-in-charge, Ms. Audi Acevedo, will be starring in a must-see upcoming performance. Like many star performers, Audi has not responded to TT inquiries, choosing to wait for a formal press conference to announce her intentions.

Some very positive notes, no doubt, but the issue at our doorstep hasn’t changed; in fact, virtual programming has side-tracked meaningful fund raising efforts. Once you miss a week or two of coming to the shul, it becomes easy to forget about its role in our lives. If one of the greatest human qualities is resiliency, we adjust and reflect on the good our involvement has meant to the synagogue. So, resiliency dictates that we respect and cherish what we have built and how our contributions have steadfastly maintained the house that each of us has come to share simchas and gain the comfort of being with friends and our synagogue family.

Nothing replaces that.

You’ve heard it before: the demographics have changed. Members move, etc. All that means is each of us has to step up and do whatever we can (that is all we ask) to help us maintain what we have all come to depend on whether on a weekly, monthly, or pretty much annual basis. It doesn’t matter how often; what matters is it here for you and me and we won’t let that slip away; it’s part of who we are.

Over the next several weeks, a special committee chaired by Executive vice-president Robert Stern, will be reviewing all operations of the synagogue and making recommendations as to where we can improve.

However, while I am certain that no one is better suited to lead this task and that the committee members will exchange various opinions, we all agree on one concept: Charity Begins at Home. I ask you to take a moment now as we bring on 2023 to contribute to your House, Congregation L’Dor V’Dor, Oakland Little Neck Jewish Center.

On behalf of the Stein family and Julie and Jordan, here’s a wish to a healthy and happy new year!