

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Anat and I visited Israel this summer and spent some time with Dror and Hadar. We are so proud of them and the other young IDF soldiers defending Israel, and wish them all health, and happiness. As I write this, the summer is almost over and the new year and High Holidays loom ahead. A good time to reflect back on the past year.

The most significant event of the year was Rabbi Yaffe and his family moving to Harvard Chabad, and Rabbi Weiss and family joining our community. The departure of a rabbi and arrival of a new rabbi is a difficult process. ..

In June we had a tribute to the Yaffes for their eight years with us and 17 years in the greater Hartford community. Thank you to the organizers and helpers, Ann, Irina and Renana and Gary. There was good food and a warm relaxed atmosphere. Personal memories were shared via photos, letters and speakers, and the Yaffes were presented with a memory album, PowerPoint file, a mezuzah and certificate. Yishar Choach to the many many people who devoted their time, energy and money to make this event so personal and moving.

Many months were devoted to the new rabbi search. We brought in three candidates and sorted through resumes and interviewed many more on the telephone. I want to take this opportunity to once again thank George, Bob, Larry, Renana, Leon, David, Lenny C., and Irina -- who worked so hard (meeting many times at 9- 10pm) throughout this search process. I would also like to convey my appreciation to our members who hosted, made shul dinners, had candidates over for lunch, drove them around etc. I think we had three Friday dinners and special Saturday kiddushes in a span of 4 weeks! Since then many have been involved in facilitating the move into the rabbi's house, especially Debra L. Thank you so much! This was definitely an energy drain on our small Agudas family (the "Shtiebel in the big building"). As you may know there was much discussion both inside and outside the committee regarding the pros and cons of the different candidates, and whether to keep on bringing in candidates. I think it was a healthy process and am excited to be working with Rabbi Weiss.

Rabbi Ari Weiss has a strong background in education in both Orthodox and Conservative settings. He most recently was the middle school assistant principal and teacher at the Rambam Academy in Baltimore MD. He has also served as the associate rabbi at Young Israel of Margate. He has a BA in Psychology and Semicha from Rabbi Berel Wein. He is also a superb Hazzan and Torah reader. His references and our other contacts in Maryland spoke glowingly of him and we are extremely fortunate to be able to invite him, Deena and their five children into our Agudas family. As of September they will officially be here, and we look forward to spending time together at services, classes and at our September 4th Friday dinner.

While all this was happening we continued to carry out our "usual" activities. We had our annual meeting on Sunday June 7th, a special Shavuot program, including our annual Jewish Jeopardy contest, dessert treats and a midnight study session with an array of interesting talks at the Fried's. We also continued with the Sunday breakfasts (thanks Mike) and monthly Friday dinners (thanks Mike, Gil, Anat/Etan and others) right through the summer.

We look forward to having Yoni Kadden lead us again on the High Holidays, and hearing inspiring Divre Torah from Rabbi Weiss and women leaders of our congregation. Also mark your calendars for a very special Rabbi AvRutick Memorial lecture featuring Rabbi Lookstein on November 15th.

Wishing you and your family a Sweet and Healthy New Year!

Etan

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