

President's Message September 2008

On August 16, I was fortunate to be dining in Driggs, Idaho, with my wife Linda. In the middle of our repast, the full moon was rising to our east over the Tetons. It was an awesome experience. My first reaction was to add 42 days to the day, and calculate that erev Rosh Hashanah would be on September 27. I guess I could not be faulted if I made the estimate September 28, since that would be the DAY and not the EREV. I am looking for wiggle room here. As we know, erev Rosh Hashanah is September 29. This must be one of the reasons that we celebrate both September 29 and September 30 as Rosh Hashanah. Imagine no communication other than smoke signals. Somehow Jews managed to make it in the so-called olden days. Check our website at www.jcnwj.org for exact times.

At this time of year, as the summer winds down, many different emotions surface. Hope for a new year, renewal, rekindle old friendships, atonement for past mistakes, and the chance to start over again. Our shul is really special in allowing us to embrace all of these, and more, feelings at this time of year.

The best part of our embracing the New Year is our own Amateur Hour. For those too young to know this cultural event, go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original_Amateur_Hour. I have added this link to establish that there is nothing new under the sun. Major Bowes was the progenitor of American Idol. Yes, it was Frank Sinatra in the early days of this venue and now it is Carrie Underwood, Kelly Clarkson, Ruben Studdard, Taylor Hicks, and Clay Aiken. La plus ca change, la plus c'est la meme chose, or something like that. Back to our Amateur Hour. Our "amateurs" may not be as great as Rabbi Lewis or our student Cantor Kadin, but Rabbi and Cantor taught us well. You have to come to services to see our new CAST for this New Year, 5769.

As we know, we are enriched by the volunteers in our shul. It would not happen without you. A few thanks to those who have embraced this ethos. I have greatly benefited from Charlotte Fels teaching me Hebrew and adding awesome color to the words and paper, whether they be in English or Hebrew. Howie Hirsch adds his special schtick, and the course is to be recommended to all who want to take their Hebrew studies to the next level. A special thanks to our lay Torah study group ensemble, they will finish the Torah in my lifetime. Other activities have had great to low response by our members. One thing Hillary got right is that "It Takes a Village." We are our own village.

Please contact me at arvesen@att.net or by phone at 917-941-4332 for any questions or comments.

Shalom,
Jim Arvesen

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