

President's Message March 2011

"I'd rather be lucky than good"

This quote was attributed to Lefty Gomez, a pitcher for the New York Yankees, mainly in the 1930's. This month's column will tell of how this applied to me last month. I was in Northern California on business last month and had a three day weekend in between meetings. During that weekend, my parents were travelling north to Santa Barbara to go to the Santa Barbara Film festival. I was able to make plans to drive the five hours to visit them. While I was headed in that direction, I was able to get in touch with an old friend, who I had not seen nor spoken to in 25 years, but had been in contact in the last year, thanks to Facebook. We made plans to get together on Friday night. I asked if we could go to shul at her synagogue, but it turned out that they, like we, have bi-monthly services, and that weekend was their "off" week. As I drove down to Los Angeles in the 300 mile fog bank, known as "the 5", my mind had lots of time to think. I remembered that [Cantor Coyot](#) had gotten a job in Los Angeles and called Rabbi Lewis to find out what congregation she was at. When I found out she was in Woodland Hills, I called my friend and asked if she would like to go to services at this shul. She said yes, and went on the internet to find out the location and time of the service. She called me back with the information that Cantor Coyot was going to be installed as the congregation's cantor that evening. This "I'd rather be lucky than good".

As we were walking up to the synagogue, Cantor Coyot pulls up along side of us, recognizes me and asks me what I am doing here. I replied, "I was in the neighborhood and thought I would drop in". We went to the service and it was a rousing celebration. One of Cantor Coyot's song leader teachers, Merri Lovinger Arian from [HUC](#) in New York flew out for the celebration, as well as the cantor's mother and sister. Merri completely energized the temple with her rousing guitar playing and passionate enthusiasm. I could tell what a great teacher she must be. Cantor Coyot led a conga line through the synagogue during L'Cha Dodi, to greet the Sabbath bride. We had a wonderful time at this service.

Afterwards at the Oneg, I got a few minutes to speak with Cantor Coyot, and sent her warm greetings from everyone at the JCNWJ.

Shalom and Love,
Howie Hirsch