

Speech given by David Pollack, MD as he assumed the leadership as president of Congregation Ohev Shalom

Chaverim:

It is with great honor and humility that I follow Doris Elofer as the next President of Congregation Ohev Shalom. My wife Amy and I have been members since moving to Swarthmore in 1983, raised our children Eliza and Gabriel in the building from Kehillah through Confirmation, have participated in every aspect of our synagogue's vibrant and varied life, and care deeply about its success and survival in Wallingford for many years to come. I cannot wait to experience the excitement and meet the challenges of the upcoming year.

The greatest change around our building will be the arrival of Mark Sykes as our new Executive Director. Moving from Florida with his three children, Mark will undoubtedly bring immense energy, creativity, organization, and accessibility to every aspect of our operations, and I look forward to collaborating with him to fill our walls with renewed joy and ruach, as we fulfill our mission of bringing Torah, Prayer, Learning, and Acts of Loving Kindness to our community.

I am truly grateful that on both the Professional and Volunteer sides, the synagogue has two great teams which are constantly working in sync, enabling us to tackle and accomplish our diverse goals. Rabbi Robbins, Joan Joseph, and Phyllis Lebowich each works tirelessly on our behalf, raising our spirituality, educating our children, planning programming, supporting our infrastructure, everyday throughout the entire year. In addition our Vice Presidents Frances Sheehan, Matt Tashman, and Bonnie Breit, are thoroughly dedicated to their Ohev roles, bringing wisdom, humor, and loyalty to every one of the numerous projects which they spearhead with their various Committee Chairs. This year I am particularly excited to greet many new members on our Executive Committee and Board, representing a broad host of constituencies, each of whom is equally committed to preserving Ohev in our community for many generations to come:

Please stay tuned during the year for information concerning a wealth of important issues:

- A Strategic Planning Initiative, chaired by Rich Kaplan and Donna Cohen, our 1st long range task force in nearly 10 years
- Three Professional Contracts (Rabbi, Cantor, Education Director) expiring in June 2009
- Board Retreat, scheduled for September 14th, our first one in two years
- A review of our Constitution, particularly focusing on the makeup of the Board, to be spearheaded by Alan Schapire
- Several new Committees, namely Jewish Life and Learning, and Human Resources/Personnel
- The Honey Jar: finding a replacement for newsletter Editor Amy Larchuk, who did an incredible job maintaining the bulletin these last three years. **Do I have any volunteers?**
- Interfaith Participation/Integration: putting Ohev on the cutting edge of leadership within Conservative Judaism in our welcoming and inclusion of Interfaith families at our highest levels of involvement
- Novel fundraising and fun-raising ideas, including an afternoon at the Arden Theatre in January and our Presidents Bash in May
- Embracing the concept of Conservative, at least in the context of our ritual synagogue life

Thank you for entrusting me with the gavel and affording me the chance to preserve and enhance our wonderful traditions. Please always feel free to e-mail (dpollackswarth@msn.com) or phone (see synagogue directory) with a comment, concern, compliment, or idea. Of course Mark Sykes will always be available as well for your complaints.

Fondly,

David Pollack