

GETTING TO KNOW OUR CO-PRESIDENT

by Miriam Wagman

LESLIE WACHTEL

“My father was a sweet man,” Leslie informed me, who taught me that “a Jew must belong to a synagogue” and “a Jew has to support a synagogue”...words which precisely echoed my own sweet father’s words. Both are gone now but their memories remain alive, and together we shared a nostalgic moment. Leslie had done her growing up in New Jersey where her mother and sister still reside, then left to enter college and move into the next phase of her life.

Leslie and Andrew met in a chemistry class at RPI and chemistry happened. Shortly afterward they became an item. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s School of Engineering was an ambitious leap into a man’s world for a diminutive eighteen year-old girl. The ratio was ten to one in favor of men, but Leslie graduated, nonetheless, with a Degree in Engineering. Her first job was with Puritan Bennett where she wrote software for electronic spirometers which attached to a ventilator. (Any further explanation will have to come from Leslie personally.) From then until Andrew completed his medical education they rarely found themselves on the same coast, but somehow they made it to the *chuppah*. Together once again, they moved to Los Angeles. Andrew was doing his Fellowship at Cedars while Leslie, at Teradyne, was continuing her career. And in due course there followed three remarkable children...wholesome, interesting and distinctly individual.

Rachel is the eldest and the ideal role model for her siblings...independent, cool-headed, committed to Judaism and fond of children. With a Master’s Degree from JTS, she has found her niche as Director of Education for a synagogue in Seattle.

Sarah, recently married, is in her fourth year of medical school. Committed not solely to science and mankind is the romantic little girl who, at a presentation of Fantasia, at the age of five, became aware of the harp. She fell in love with the instrument and is today an accomplished harpist.

And binding the family together comes Eli. A passionate Dodger fan like his parents, he is otherwise clear-headed, analytical, politically aware and a law student.

Which brings us to Leslie...a multi-talented lady and longtime member of Sinai Temple. In a short period of years she has amassed a long history of achievement on the Temple Board as Vice-President of Administration, Programming and Education, as well as Co-Chair of the Religious School PTA.

Then Sisterhood came a-calling in the person of Lisa Pompan, in need at the time of a Treasurer. Leslie voluntarily agreed, “I can do that,” she said. It was the beginning of another long history.

I introduce you to our Co-President, Leslie Wachtel.