

President's Column April 2023

As I enter the last few months of my presidency, I have found myself thinking about what I value most about Bolton Street Synagogue, and I come back again and again to the theme that has guided me and has connected my communications with you during these past two years: Community. We are a group of people who care about each other and about knitting ourselves into an entity that is bigger than our individual selves. We come together to establish the Jewish rhythms of our lives, to learn from and to teach each other, to break bread together, and to support each other. That sense of community sparked one of the single most generous gifts Bolton Street Synagogue has ever received. It is my honor to be able to announce to you that Larry Wissow and Nancy Hutton, founding members whose efforts helped create the synagogue we cherish today, took the extraordinary step in late December of assuming our remaining mortgage payments, leaving us mortgage-free and the owners of a building unencumbered by debt. Some years ago, when the synagogue was in serious financial straits and facing a balloon mortgage payment we could not afford, Larry and Nancy came to the synagogue's rescue, making it possible for Bolton Street to set itself on a more secure financial path. For those who don't know, Larry's job took him and Nancy to Seattle, where they have lived for several years. But they have maintained their Bolton Street membership, and Nancy's response in a conversation about taking on our mortgage was simply, "This is our community." I know I speak for all of us when I say that I am so grateful to Nancy and Larry for their commitment to Bolton Street Synagogue and for the generosity they have demonstrated. They will be coming East in early May, and we will honor them at that time. More details will follow.

Other members of our community have been quietly generous over the years, stepping up when asked, stepping up when not asked, and making possible much of what has made our synagogue a wonderful place to gather. I am grateful to each of those members as well. And I am grateful to all who, in whatever way possible, have contributed to our Annual Fund and to our annual event. I am reminded of the story of the building of the Mishkan—the tabernacle--when each member of the community, no matter their level of wealth or poverty, contributed something, whether a precious gem or a piece of cloth. May we find ways for each of us to contribute to our community so that we may continue to grow from strength to strength.

Leslie