

President's Perspective . . . All Good Things Must Come to an End

Ah, my last Kol Emet message! Problem is I have plenty to say that could fill up another two years of messages – but I'm ready to move on. It's time to pass this column on to Marcy Kahn and assume the position as the "wise" past-president.

This 2015-2016 fiscal year has been one of tremendous transition for Ann and me. She retired and we had to adjust our time and financial commitments accordingly. I finally left the Texas Hillel Board in May after about 17 years (way too long for sitting on any board). We got our Medicare cards this month and we learned more about the Social Security system than we ever wanted to know. And now I am giving up my second job for the last two years. In some respects, I felt like practicing law was my second job. Thanks to my partners at Kessler & Collins for their patience.

While this most challenging and enjoyable part of my life is over, the transition from one set of leaders to another portends a very exciting time for our shul. For whatever we may feel as individual leaders, we are but temporary custodians. These last two years have, for the most part, allowed us to take a deep breath, digest our growth, and look into our future. The next set of leaders will begin implementing our thoughts and planning.

When I first became president, I expressed the hope that we could agree on most things and disagree without being disagreeable on others. I also expressed the hope that we could take our membership in this synagogue seriously, but not take ourselves so seriously. I hope I have done my part; and I know that our Board of Directors, Executive Committee and our major committees have done their part. We have had a few contentious debates (very few), but I do not think we walked out of any meeting with ill-will or grudges. There are too many of you to single out, but thanks for your keen interest in the issues confronting our shul and your ability to solve problems. I really feel that we had a team effort for these last two years.

As for our staff, our members may not realize how lucky we are. We have been blessed with stability and enthusiasm. I do not think that I have ever approached a staff member with a problem or issue that did not end up being resolved satisfactorily. Rabbi Weinberg, Rabbi Kushnick and Harvey Swento are three *mensch*es in every sense of the word. I still marvel at how they balance all they have to do. It has been a pleasure serving with them and all the staff who keep this place running.

Let's not forget Bob Westle and Rachel Nicholas who have dedicated long hours and thoughtful planning in making our religious school and preschool top-flight institutions. I will miss Bob as he moves on – especially the ribbing he gives me at Shabbat services.

And of course, I want to thank Ann for putting up with me for the last two years (actually 40, but who's counting). I am hopeful that we can now set aside some time to use our Netflix subscription, go on walks and relax as we move to our "retirement" years. Yes, Ann, I am a frustrated stand-up comic and newspaper columnist.

Finally thanks to all of you who allowed a shy, awkward, comically challenged Jewish boy from Tennessee the opportunity to lead. There were occasions where I had to push myself and take uncomfortable positions, but I could not have asked for a better experience. I hope you all have had a good ride also. This shul is certainly in a good place to tackle the future.

L'Shalom

Howard Rubin