

Presidential Matters

by Bob Stern



As I thought about a topic for this month's column, I thought about how many From the President articles I've written since assuming the presidency of Oakland Jewish Center on January 1, 2007. An exact count is unlikely but, suffice it to say, it's been a lot.

Why is this relevant you may ask? Quite simply, it's the January 2007 date and the fact that we will soon be dating our checks January 2016. Yes, it's been nine years. Nine years of problem solving, nine years of frustration, nine years of satisfaction, nine years of making friends and enemies, nine years of comforting people, nine years of patting people on the back for a job well done. And on and on.

I've been proud to serve as president of OJC and co-president of Congregation L'Dor V'Dor. It's been an honor, a privilege and a huge responsibility. The job of president is often a thankless one but you know that going in. Still, over the years, many individuals have assumed the mantle of leadership and led the congregation positively.

The term of President or Co-President is two years. That's as it should be. Allowing anyone to preside longer is unfair to the individual, and also unfair to the congregation. Despite one's best intentions, it's difficult to maintain one's intensity over a long period of time. Let's all remember that the officers of the congregation are all volunteers. These positions are undertaken in addition to their real jobs and lives.

Steve and I have publically announced that this term, ending June 30, 2017, will be our last. I'll let Steve answer questions about his decision. I'm definitely stepping aside when our current term is up. We've recently been criticized as being tired, burned out and disinterested after nine years. Tired, yes. Burned out, possibly. Disinterested, absolutely and categorically as untrue as can be.

We are very fortunate that our congregation includes many very intelligent, dedicated and capable individuals. Many of these folks serve on the current Board of Trustees. Others have elected to help in their own way. Still others remain on the sidelines for whatever reason.

It's time for somebody or somebodies to step forward. Ideally, the person(s) assuming the presidency will have experience on the Board. The good news is there will be another canvas for Board members shortly. Think about it. Consider taking the leap. That's all one can ask.

On a lighter note, Steve and Julie and Lesley and I wish you and your families a Happy Chanukah.