

Presidential Matters

By Steve Aronowitz



Like so many of you who have regularly attended board and general membership meetings over many years, I've sat through discussions on various issues that haven't been the most compelling. And that's not easy to admit since I've been at the head of the table for better than 10 years! That's why I really enjoyed our January 11th meeting. At a time when safety concerns are high priority (as they must be!), and law enforcement agencies around the country have been criticized for their actions (in isolated but well publicized cases), our congregation's recognition of the officers of the NYPD 111th precinct was both timely and well deserved.

The idea of holding a formal program to honor our local police department was first brought to the board's attention by longtime trustee and men's club president, Irwin Tobin. When house vice president, Paul Stein, invited the commanding officer, William McBride, to attend our meeting, he graciously accepted and was accompanied by several department colleagues. Each officer was introduced to the membership and at the conclusion of the program, the large turnout said, 'thank you' with a standing ovation.

I can tell you that each time I have requested support, whether at high holidays, at an event or a meeting, the crime prevention unit has always said, "yes," and responded in a timely manner. It may be an officer who comes into the building. Sometimes it's a police car parked in front of the temple. Regardless of the approach, it's a partnership we need and appreciate. When we began researching upgrades for building safety, the 111th crime prevention unit conducted a walkthrough and filed a detailed written report, providing much needed direction. Based on their findings, we have begun interviewing security companies discussing various strategies. This allowed us to present the framework for developing a fiscally sound responsible plan to provide a safe place for members, employees, and guests to enjoy their experiences at the synagogue.

It's always nice to meet public figures on a personal level. Those who attended last month's meeting went home appreciating the work of the police department's officers. We had a nice turnout on a cold winter night but, of course, it's even better when attendance is higher, and that brings me to a final point. You will be receiving a letter from vice president, Dawn Singer, who is leading our annual nominating committee search for board members for the term beginning July 1. Obviously, leadership is critical to our organization's future. For many, the thought of becoming a board trustee is often brushed aside. Some say they don't have the time or experience. Please understand that we need individuals to step up and become part of the leadership team. This does not have to be a major time commitment. I guarantee you will find our group of board members friendly and eager to welcome you. Please consider a trustee position for the coming year.

