

By Virtue of Their Office

I'm going to preface this by stating what I hope is obvious to most of you: my heart and soul lives in this congregation; in the years before I became the education director I was a vice president, a trustee, and a committee chair. And I have loved it all. I'm interested in congregational governance even as I strive to make all of our educational programming meaningful and in line with our congregation's mission statement, which includes the words "...we are dedicated to the never-ending process of Jewish learning."

Over the long weekend, Rod and I drove up to visit my 94-year-old dad, a career lay leader of my hometown Cape Cod Synagogue, and he says I'm crazy. I looked at my dad with all the admiration a daughter can have, plus a little more, and decided he's right, and it doesn't change a thing about the love I have for this place. And – the work I am doing as an ex officio member of our Cantorial Search Committee is no exception.

On first glance, the term ex officio would seem to have a negative connotation, ex most often meaning something one is no longer, like an ex-president, ex-employee, etc. One might even assume it means "ex-official" However, it is a wholly positive expression.

Robert's Rules of Order explains : "Frequently boards and committees contain some members who are members by virtue of their office, and, therefore, are termed ex-officio members."

At another website that dives deeper into the details of board and committee work in general, I found something even more specific: "Ex officio board members are not necessarily elected or appointed, rather they agree to serve in a position because the organization needs their expertise or influence in that position."

I particularly love the part that reads "...because the organization needs their expertise..." Not only did I agree to be on the Cantorial Search Committee, I am excited to be a part of it. I am honored to be thought of as someone whose expertise will lend itself to furthering the sacred work of this committee. But – that expertise has been enhanced, refined, and informed by the wonderful partnership I have had with Cantor Perper. His sense of humor, his voice, his spirit, his presence in my life here at BHSS has made it richer and his friendship and steadfast support have lifted me up many times in the past 13 years.

Along with Rabbi Ilana and our president, Judy Teich, the other ex officio members, we as a committee are reading resumes, asking questions and listening for answers – and voices. We have come together as a unified group of very different people to discuss and consider- not always agreeing - but always respectfully, and we are going to find a cantor who is everything this, my beloved congregation, deserves.