It is early March as I sit and try to write this, my last “Side Bar” column. It seems hard to believe that 10 months have gone by. Fewer than eight weeks to go until the 121st president takes office. …

What a year! Since taking office, my older son was married and, as you know from past columns, our daughter and younger son and their respective spouses became parents of our grandchildren, Clare and Patrick.

Since my last writing, we traveled to beautiful Jamaica for the PBA Midyear Meeting. Our initial block of reservations sold out early and we had to get extra rooms! Winter weather issues caused some to be delayed getting there or arriving home, but the location was, I believe, great. Some remarked about the lack of really hot weather, but I can only say that it beat 5 degrees and a foot of snow at home!

The tube slide was great fun, the hotel staff couldn’t have been more accommodating and the warm ocean water, the pool, good food and just “vegging out” were very relaxing. A great winter break! And how about that omelet man at the breakfast buffet? He was amazing!

Thanks to all who attended the meeting, presented the CLEs, went to the classes or helped with the events. PBA Meetings Director Wendy Loranzo and crew really did an outstanding job! I was sorry that Executive Director Barry Simpson was under the weather and missed out on much of the fun.

After Jamaica, Sharon and I spent a few days at home, then headed off to the ABA meeting in Houston, Texas. Another chance to escape the frigid northeast and make contact with lawyers from around the country. Sharon and I were even able to get in a delightful Sunday lunch with some old friends from our daughter’s college days.

Luzerne County continues to surprise me. Elaine Cook, president of the Wilkes-Barre Law & Library Association, and team delighted me by making me an honorary member of their bar. (I am told that a dues notice is in the mail.)

I returned to Wilkes-Barre for a nice reception honoring new Luzerne County President Judge Richard M. Hughes III and new U.S. Magistrate Judge Joseph F. Saporito Jr. of the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

I then had the opportunity to attend the quarterly meeting of the Schuylkill County Bar Association. I met with bar President Anthony Urban and many others, and I finally got to see Ron and Linda Pellish’s law office in Pottsville, hometown of Yuengling beer.

I was given the opportunity to address the PBA Family Law Section winter meeting in Lancaster and point out the benefits of the PBA’s Lawyers Saluting Veterans initiative. Section Chair J. Paul Helvy is working hard to increase membership in the section.

I missed the Dauphin County Bar Association meeting due to snow and bad roads, but I was later able to make it to the Cumberland County Bar Association for a very nice event. Chief Justice Thomas G. Saylor and Justice J. Michael Eakin are Cumberland County members. The event’s master of ceremonies and Justice Eakin kept us all laughing.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Delaware County Bar Association Executive Director Bill Baldwin for his hospitality. I had some time in Chadds Ford before the DCBA’s January meeting, and he gave me an office to use, Internet access, a printer and food. Thanks, Bill, for all you did to make me feel at home.

Judge Terry Nealon of Lackawanna County pointed out to the Scranton Times-Tribune that lawyers from northeast Pennsylvania currently head up the three biggest statewide attorney organizations: yours truly as PBA president; Malcolm L. MacGregor, president of the Pennsylvania Association for Justice (formerly the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association); and Matthew P. Keris, president of the Pennsylvania Defense Institute. In February, the newspaper did a nice article on the three of us titled “Leaders of the Law.”

I went to the PBA Conference of County Bar Leaders annual meeting at the end of February. Once again, a nice gathering of bar leaders. Lancaster was the host city and, as usual, lived up to its reputation.

Frankly Speaking: A Journey Concludes
We have done a lot this year, but we still have a long way to go. Next time this column comes out, it will be Bill Pugh’s turn to write to you, but I will try to do a follow-up letter.

Some final observations:

The PBA is supposed to be the organization that represents ALL the lawyers of the commonwealth. It would have been easy to use this column and the position of president to advance my own social, religious, political and moral positions, but that would have been as wrong as those who may have criticized me for those positions.

Tolerance is a two-way street. We need to be respectfully of all views, and we have the right to be respected for ours. Please remember that when we take extreme positions or try to enforce politically correct ideas we risk antagonizing many others. I believe that the PBA is the table at which to meet, discuss our positions and find out where we agree and where we disagree. We will not agree on everything (nor should we), but there is no reason we cannot leave the table as friends. Calling (nor should we), but there is no reason we

cannot leave the table as friends. Calling

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