

# So long - and thanks!

by Lon Howard

Unfortunately, some health issues that I've been dealing with lately came to a head just after the start of the Natsu Basho, and caused the Henka Sightings nominations to come to a halt after day 3. That's also why the Henka Summary and Ozeki Jobsite do not appear in the current issue. Elevator Ride was submitted earlier and does appear.

These issues (undiagnosed shortness of breath episodes) have been more frequent and more pronounced in recent months, and have led me to conclude that resigning my regular duties with SFM is the right decision for me at this time.

It's been a fun four years for me, and I must also say that I consider it a privilege to have had the opportunity to share my thoughts on sumo with you through the slightly wacky Sumo Odds 'n' Ends portions, and the slightly serious Basho Summaries. Not everyone gets a chance to do something like that, and I do thank each and

every one of you that took the time to read what I contributed.

At this time, the only thing I can say with certainty about the Odds 'n' Ends pieces is that I personally can't continue them on a regular basis. We'll just have to see what might be possible for the future, and what makes sense. All of them were conceived after SFM's founder, Ngozi Robinson, asked us to brainstorm and come up with things that wouldn't be found anywhere else. In that sense, I think the overall effort was successful, in spite of the fact that the Eternal Banzuke proved to be less relevant than anticipated, and was discontinued.

Of course, I would like to thank Mark for the support he's given me over the years, and a special thanks to our Layout Designer, Olivia Nagioff, who has had to endure countless clumsies on my part on the technical end. Our original Editor, Barbara Ann Klein, was also very helpful to me

in the early days of the magazine.

But mostly, it's you – our readers – who get most of the thanks because without you, the words and pictures we put into cyberspace would be just for our own amusement, and that gets old in a hurry. So again, thanks to you for the memories.

I've had some great ones during these four years, and I'll end this with one of my favorites: a couple of photos taken during the Hawaii Jungyo in 2007, when I was allowed to tag along to a dinner with Wakanosato, courtesy of Lynn Matsuoka. One is the obligatory pose with the guest of honor, and the other (my personal favorite rikishi pic) is an assiduous Wakanosato fathoming how to dig into a dainty dessert dish.

So long for now, and I hope to see some of you somewhere, sometime.



