

Congregation Beth El

A Celebration of Our Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

Sunday, October 22, 2006

Penobscot Valley Country Club

Orono, Maine

Evening Program

5:00 Social Hour

*Music by Ms. Ellie May Shufro (viola/violin)
And Mr. Juan Condori (classical guitar/cello)*

6:00 Dinner

*A Toast to the Congregation
Dr. Edward Harrow*

7:00

*Welcome
Mr. Gary Friedmann, President*

*Introductory Remarks
Mr. Mark Roth, Celebration Committee Chair*

*Greetings
Mr. Louis Kornreich, President, Congregation Beth Abraham
Mr. Bill Miller, Congregation Beth Israel*

*Speakers
Rabbi Dara R. Lerner
Rabbi Laurence Elis Milder
Rabbi Shoshana M. Perry
Dr. Sidney Block
Dr. Noah Nesin*

*Special Presentations
State Representative Michael Dunn/State Senator Joseph Perry*

*Rabbis Lerner, Milder, and Perry
Mrs. Shira Singer
Mrs. Ellie Pancoe*



The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration Committee

*Requests the Pleasure of your Company in
Celebration of the Silver Anniversary of
Congregation Beth El.*

*Please join us for
Dinner, music and testimonials.
Sunday, the twenty-second of October
Two thousand and six
at five o'clock in the afternoon,
Penobscot Valley Country Club,
Orono, Maine.*

*Thirty-five dollars per person
Adults only (16 and older)*

Cash bar available

Congregation

Beth El

25 Years

בבית אלה



Worship

Shabbat and Holiday Services
Community Passover Seder and other
celebrations
Adult Choir
Torah study

Education

Adult Education Classes for
Beginners and Advanced
Book group
Cultural Programs

Singles Group

20's and 30's Group for young adults
Social Action/community service
Programs on the Blue Hill Peninsula and
Mount Desert Island

Especially for Kids and Teens

Pre-school playgroup
Story Shabbat
Religious School (Pre K-12 grades)
Babysitters/playroom during Services
Youth Groups (grade 4-12)

Call For Schedule of
Shabbat Services

945-4578

An Open

Welcoming and

Inclusive

Reform Synagogue

Web : www.me002.urj.net

Email : bethel@me.acadia.net

Twenty-five Years and Counting

**Mark D. Roth, Chair
Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration Committee**

I am delighted to see all of you here and thank you all for coming to this wonderful celebration of the first 25 years of Congregation Beth El. My greatest fear in the planning of this event was that there would be 25 of you here but my fear was obviously unfounded.

I'd like to read an announcement that appeared in the *Newsworthy* column on the Religion page of the Bangor Daily News weekend edition, March 14-15, 1981.

"With the guidance of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, a group of area Jewish families is planning the formation of a reform Jewish congregation. An organizational meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, at the Mason Auditorium of the Eastern Maine Medical Center. Other Jewish families who might have an interest are invited to attend or contact Sidney Block, Clifford Rosen, Phillip Brooks, David Levy, Michael Solomon, or Elliott Strom."

That was the beginning and now, 25 years later, here we are, celebrating a quarter of a century of Congregation Beth El and the re-birth of Reform Judaism in Bangor.

It has been my very great pleasure and honor to have chaired the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration Committee commemorating twenty-five years since the formation of Congregation Beth El. For me, being a part of Beth El since the very

beginning, I can look back and see the enormous growth that has occurred and the profound impact that Beth El has had on the greater Bangor community.

Though I grew up in the Conservative tradition, having been a Bar Mitzvah in a Conservative synagogue, I didn't have a great attachment to Conservatism and didn't continue to attend synagogue after my Bar Mitzvah. Once I married and had children, there was a greater sense of urgency to return to the synagogue as my wife, Maryann and I wanted to not only raise the children with Jewish tradition, but we also wanted them to be educated in Judaism and then, ultimately celebrate their B'nai Mitzvah.

In 1981, there were only two choices in Bangor for worshipping, Orthodox and Conservative. Neither one of these was a good fit for me or my family. It was at that time that the first notice appeared in the Bangor Daily News calling out to those unaffiliated Jews who wanted to explore Reform Judaism and form a congregation. The rest, as they say, is history.

For me, Beth El has been a community and a family, especially because we have no family living near us. So, we became a family with common goals and interests, and a common bond of celebrating Judaism according to Reform practices. I think my mother-in-law, Ethel Raskin, said it best in a recent note that she wrote to Maryann and me: "You know that Dad and I are not religious, but we are very, very Jewish. When you moved to Maine, I was happy when you had a small group going to services in the home of another religious group (she was referring to the Unitarian Church). From there you moved on and up until you now have a lovely synagogue. We enjoyed our

grandchildren's Bar and Bat Mitzvah's at Temple and had pleasure and happiness there." I echo those sentiments and believe that many, many people have derived pleasure and happiness by being a part of Beth El.

As a congregation, we have experienced all of the life cycle events, births with naming ceremonies and brit milot, B'nai Mitzvah for both children and adults, confirmations, marriages, and, unfortunately, deaths, some of which came much too early. We have had the spiritual leadership of four rabbis, very different, but all beloved. We have had the energy of countless members who have been board members, teachers, and committee members, all of whom have shown an unwavering commitment to the spiritual life and the daily operation of Beth El.

And, while I'm speaking of people who have given of themselves, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people who served on the Celebration Committee or whose contributions enhanced this weekend's celebration:

- Astri Brooks, who, along with her committee of Valerie Levy, Melinda Wentworth, Andrea Gabel-Richards, and Maxine Harrow, made the arrangements for this dinner and the gourmet desserts last night;
- Gary Friedmann and Eric Semmel who worked with me on the invitations, the letters to congregants and businesses, and planning tonight's program;

- Noah Nesin and his committee of Phil Brooks, Andrea Gabel-Richards and Drew Matlins, who worked on the recognition of those who have given so much to Beth El. Thanks also to Phil Brooks for the archival information that he supplied – with his help, I finally got the dates right;
- Michael Cohen for his creativity in publishing the magnificent commemorative book and his enormous generosity in making the book his donation to Beth El;
- Jeremie Day-Glider who, along with her committee, made follow-up phone calls to areas businesses to place advertisements and good wishes in the commemorative book;
- Shirley St. Peter, Beth El's tireless secretary who did everything I asked her to do, with a smile, helped me with some of the minute details, and volunteered to do many other things above and beyond what was asked of her;
- Many thanks also to the Jewish Community Endowment Associates for their generous financial support for this historic weekend;
- Lastly, Rabbi Lerner, for the wonderful ideas she generated and carried out, and her boundless enthusiasm. It was she who suggested a year long celebration, the combined educational and music program this morning in collaboration with Rabbis Perry and Milder, and, though not a morning person, agreed to lead the sunrise service atop Cadillac Mountain.

As chair of this group, I knew that all the planning was in good hands and I knew that things would get done. I remember speaking to Maxine Harrow right after the morning service on Yom Kippur when she asked if I was attending the meeting of the food committee the next night. I said that I *wasn't* going to be there and that it really didn't matter to me *what* foods and desserts they were selecting, as long as I knew that someone *else* was taking care of it and not me!

So, I thank you one and all for your contributions to this weekend's events. And by the way, for the person out there waiting in the wings to chair the 50th anniversary I've saved *all* my notes to go into the Beth El archives so that they'll be available to you - just invite me and I'll be there, *as a spectator*.

So, now, on this very special occasion, I look to the *next* twenty-five years and the future of Congregation Beth El with the confidence that we will continue to grow and prosper, and that we will remain a strong and meaningful voice in the Jewish community.

Tonight we have some honored guests here from the other congregations in Bangor to offer greetings and good wishes.