

25
YEARS



JEWISH
COMMUNITY CENTER
PORTLAND, MAINE

YEARBOOK

1938 - 1963

DEDICATION

Someone once wrote that “the first twenty-five years of one’s life are worth all the rest of the longest life of man.” In the sense and spirit of this quotation, the first twenty-five years of the life of our Jewish Community Center are of the deepest significance in the life of Portland Jewry.

The founding of the Center marked a turning point in the development of communal life, for it provided for the first time a focal point for all the varied activities of the diverse groups. Under the guidance of the National Jewish Welfare Board, the Center was projected not only as a meeting place for clubs, but as a creative force, dedicated through its programs to recreational, cultural, and communal needs.

From the date of its dedication in November 1938, the Center has been a unifying force and a vital factor in the growth and development of the Jewish community. The Jewish families of Portland have supported the Center with membership, with financial aid, and with leadership, and it is to these families that this 25th Anniversary Yearbook is dedicated.

We cannot rest, however, on the accomplishments of the past. The mission of our Center is a continuing one in purpose as a community-unifying force. There is the ever increasing need of giving to every age group programs of modern living in the areas of recreation and culture.

Always, the atmosphere in our Center must be a living translation and transmission of the historical values that have made our Jewish heritage the foundation of, in fact the reason for, Jewish Community Centers — a force that relates Jews to each other and to the community.

May our Center, in the words of Psalmist, go from strength to strength.

— Israel Bernstein

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

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Our gratitude goes to the many people who contributed material covering the twenty-five years of Center history. My personal thanks are extended to the members of the Editorial Committee and the Pictorial Research Committee who spent countless hours in preparing this book for publication. We hope that you, the reader, will understand that space permitted us only the highlights of years and events and the names and pictures of only a fraction of the many hundreds of people who have contributed to the Center's growth. This Yearbook is published solely to commemorate a quarter-century of community service. The true and complete history of the Center remains in the hearts and memories of those who lived it.

—MRS. CHARLES A. COHEN,
Chairman, Editorial Committee



President's Greeting

As the holiday season draws near, this has always been the time to reflect for a moment and make your resolutions for the New Year. This is the special year, the twenty-fifth year of our existence, and all our resolutions take on a greater meaning for all of us. We feel a much deeper sense of responsibility in formulating our goals and purposes for the coming year. Your Executive Board and committees have worked more during this past hot summer than ever before. All of our thoughts were geared to and around the "25" and "silver" anniversary themes.

We are very proud of our first effort, this 25th Anniversary Year-book. The many, many people who worked so feverishly all summer to create, edit, and compile this worthy memento are truly to be commended.

We will open the fall season with the Silver Anniversary Ball and Installation. This will be followed by a Founders Banquet, a Dramatic Night, and many wonderful programs to give you 25 nights of pleasure and entertainment. This will be the greatest year for your membership ticket.

In order that we may attain even greater heights in the next twenty-five years, I firmly believe that this is the year that we must rededicate our purposes and aims to determine our course

of action. The survey will determine this course for us. Your cooperation will be urgently needed so that an intelligent appraisal can be made of our needs and wants. The ultimate goal of a new Center is my ambition, and I know that my feelings are shared with many. Only through your efforts can this dream come true, just as it did twenty-five years ago!

The wonderful spirit and cooperation of all your officers, board members, and committee people helping me run your Center has been more than gratifying. This strong, wonderful, conscientious group of people are my good right hand in helping shape the policy and program of the Center. To all of these people, my most profound thanks!

On behalf of the Officers and the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community Center, I wish to take this opportunity to extend their good wishes to all the membership and the Jewry of Portland for a Happy New Year.

To all Center members and to all of our friends, Lenore and I, along with our daughters, Sandy and Patti, wish you a happy, prosperous, and healthy New Year! May all our hopes and ambitions for the coming year be fulfilled!

— SAMUEL I. BUROKOFF



Margaret Chase Smith
U. S. Senator

I wish to send my greetings to all members of the Jewish Faith on the occasion of their New Year and best wishes and congratulations to the Jewish Community Center on its 25th anniversary.

You have a most commendable program of outgoing service to the Portland community through your Center. Your service to others, through the various functions, is a tribute to your Faith; and in helping others, I know that you receive the richest rewards. These are in intangible and unlimited terms of helping people to find pleasure in living and bringing happiness to depressed souls. May the New Year bring to each of you the fulfillment which is to be had only through Faith.

— MARGARET CHASE SMITH



Edmund S. Muskie
U. S. Senator

I welcome this opportunity to extend congratulations and best wishes to the Jewish Community of Portland on the 25th Anniversary of the Jewish Community Center.

Your organization has contributed much to the city of which you are a part. The humanitarian principles of which determine the direction of the Center have served as examples of good faith over the years. It is most essential at this time in our history that Americans of all faiths join in an effort to set aside racial and religious ferment so that all of us may live according to the freedoms and rights granted to every citizen by our Founding Fathers.

Centers such as yours that breed culture and brotherhood are best equipped to guarantee a more progressive future for our country as a whole. I hope that your organization will continue to grow and prosper in the years ahead so that your good work may be increased and your services further rendered to the community as an example of the high ideals of your faith.

— EDMUND S. MUSKIE



Stanley R. Tupper
Member of Congress

I am delighted to take this opportunity to extend my sincere best wishes as the Jewish community prepares to celebrate the coming of their New Year and to also congratulate the Portland Jewish Community Center on its 25th Anniversary.

As problems both domestic and foreign rapidly increase, the results attained by all civic and cultural organizations such as yours, become ever more vital and necessary. We must all do what we can, in our own particular way, to maintain our American way of life, and make our individual and collective contribution to our fellow man.

I know the Portland Jewish Community Center will continue to be a most valuable asset to the City of Portland and the State of Maine.

— STANLEY R. TUPPER

It is a great pleasure to extend my New Year's greetings to the members of the Jewish community and to offer my heartiest congratulations to the Community Center on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

The faith which inspired the founders of the Community Center in 1938 has been richly rewarded. Through the boundless energy of many dedicated individuals, the vision of twenty-five years ago has been translated into a record and tradition of service to our community. The Center's direct and profound influence on so many of our citizens cannot be measured.

May this anniversary occasion and the New Year provide you with inspiration and rededication to guide the lives of both youths and adults toward good citizenship, good behavior, and good living. These are the true foundation-stones of all communities, and those which make the Greater Portland Community one of the most fortunate in New England.

With very best wishes for the New Year, I am Sincerely,

—GRAHAM W. WATT



Graham W. Watt
City Manager

It is with sincere pleasure, personally, and on behalf of the Greater Portland United Community Services, of which I have the honor to serve this year as President, to extend warmest congratulations to the Jewish Community Center as it celebrates its 25th anniversary of outstanding services in this area.

Two years ago I was privileged to act as Chairman of our Citizens' Survey Committee, charged with evaluating the work of all local Health, Welfare and Recreation agencies. We worked with an able and experienced team of professional consultants led by Mr. Merrill Krughoff, Director of the Institute of Community Studies, United Community Funds and Councils of America.

In his preface to the Survey Report, Mr. Krughoff observed: "There is something about the civic climate of Portland not found in areas of the country concerned mainly with growth and bigness. This community is mature. It is concerned with quality. It applies the mind as well as the heart to the solution of human problems."

Warning that, because of "belated development of public recreation," some voluntary agencies have understandably been pressured into trying to fill a vacuum of enormous need for mass activities, the Survey recommends that these agencies make every effort to concentrate on their mutual primary objective, i.e. "to make available to their clientele the unique cultural components of their individual programs, emphasizing development of character, ethical standards, social skills, and cultural virtues."

Both before and since publication of the Survey Report, it has been gratifyingly evident that the Jewish Community Center continues its most commendable efforts towards achieving this objective.

We salute you on this memorably happy occasion. We wish you every success in the splendid work to which you are dedicated, and pledge to you our whole-hearted support.

— S. ALLAN HOWES



S. Allan Howes
President
United Community Services

It is with great pleasure that I extend my greetings of the New Year to the members of the Jewish community and my congratulations to the Community Center on the joyous occasion of its 25th Anniversary.

I have long felt and admired the tremendous role which the Community Center plays in the life of our entire community. Its good services reach every corner of our city and touch all our people, regardless of race, color, or background. From its very beginnings, records of valued accomplishment have followed close upon lofty goals and expectant hopes. Countless individuals have pulled together to bring the Center to its present level of eminence.

May the next quarter of a century prove as rewarding as the first twenty-five years as the Community Center works to bring a richer and more rewarding life to all Portlanders, young and old.

Again my, very best wishes on this landmark anniversary and for the New Year.

— RALPH AMERGIAN



Ralph Amergian, Chairman
Portland City Council

During the twenty-five years of its existence the Jewish Community Center has served the City of Portland most ably and commendably. It has been a centripetal force in a community displaying centrifugal tendencies.

There is hardly a Jew in the city of Portland whose life has not been touched by the Center.

The Center has been host to youth and adult, to the very old and the very young, to religious activities and cultural activities, to social groups and Zionist groups. It has entertained through its dramatic presentations and has instructed through its lectures. It has been the setting for marriages and for Bar Mitzvah celebrations. It has been the scene of banqueting and of basketball games. It provides for scouting and for camping. It provides office space for the Jewish Federation and, at one time, even for a rabbi. It has instructed in the playing of bridge, golf, and dancing. It was a USO center during the war and a relief center during the fires of 1947.

We have seen the Center serious and frolicsome. It has been gay and it has been reserved. We have seen it dance, sing, have fun, and we have seen it grit its teeth in determination to the task before it. We salute its twenty-five years of achievement and look forward to its growth as part and parcel of the Jewish community. One of the New Year prayers reads, "And let them all make one bond to serve thee." The unifying bond of the Jewish community of Portland has been the Community Center. May it continue to serve us for many years.

Mrs. Bekritsky joins me in extending our felicitations to the Jewish Community Center in its twenty-fifth year of existence and in wishing its membership, and all the Jews of Portland, a happy and prosperous New Year.

— RABBI MORRIS BEKRITSKY



Rabbi Morris Bekritsky

Again as we approach the beginning of another year our minds and hearts are naturally turned inwardly. We are attempting to ask ourselves provoking questions and to wonder what we have achieved in this life.

This question we address not only to ourselves as individuals but, by the nature of things, to the collective life we live — to our community. For some of us life has brought its blessings; for others much is to be desired. Whenever we can, in all sincerity, say life has been good, we have achieved personal fulfillment although we realize it is only partial.

The above words, I feel, can be directed to our communal institutions. Our Jewish Community Center is to be congratulated upon its twenty-five years of existence. Much has been accomplished within its walls, yet the great challenge of constantly finding a greater commitment to Jewish life and Jewish values confronts it too, as it does each and every one of us. I hope and pray that within the next twenty-five years the Jewish Community Center will continue to flourish and find for itself a continually meaningful and purposeful existence. I extend to the entire community of Portland my best wishes for a good and prosperous year.

— RABBI HARRY Z. SKY



Rabbi Harry Z. Sky



Sanford Solender
Executive Vice-President
National Jewish Welfare Board

It is truly a pleasure to congratulate the Portland Jewish Community Center on its 25th anniversary and to extend to its officers and members best wishes for a Jewish New Year in which the high ideals of our Jewish tradition will be strengthened and given new stature among all peoples.

In marking this quarter-century to your community, you are opening a new page in the rich history of your Center and the people of Portland.

The Portland Jewish Community Center is a fine example of that combination of heritage and vision for the future which constitute the hallmark of the Jewish Community Center movement. You may take pride in the energy and foresightedness which prompted your leaders to establish the Center, in the understanding of your community which encourages it to continue to support the Center and in the community-mindedness of your members who look to the Center as a unique, Jewishly-oriented institution.

The National Jewish Welfare Board is built firmly into the foundation of your Center. Some of the strength JWB has gained from Portland's participation in our work and program has been returned to you in the service which, as the national association of Jewish Community Centers, JWB is privileged to provide for you.

We have been happy to share in your past; we look forward to sharing in your future.

We join with you in expressing the hope that this Jewish New Year will not only see your Center grow from strength to strength but that it will usher in the day when the ignorance of self-interest will no longer enslave our minds and the idolatry of inhumanity will no longer blind our eyes.

— SANFORD SOLENDER



William Cohen, President
Jewish Federation of Portland

May I, on behalf of the Jewish Federation, extend heartiest congratulations to the Jewish Community Center on its quarter century of dedicated service to the Jewish community.

Much water has run over the dam during these past twenty-five years. The Center was born during the days of the Depression; World War II followed shortly thereafter. The Center grew up in a community with a single religious orientation; soon there were two strong religious communities. The Center matured in an era of fantastic technological change which makes life in the 30's appear a relic of the very distant past.

Yet, throughout these periods of economic, political, and technological convulsion, the Center has maintained a constant steady course of devotion to human betterment, adapting flexibly to the changes that were taking place, but never veering from its objective of enriching Jewish community life.

The entire community is indebted to the Center, its leadership and staff, and wishes them many more quarter centuries of continued growth and development.

A healthy and happy New Year to all of you.

— WILLIAM COHEN

*This page sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Blumenthal
and Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Levine*



Victor Taylor
Executive Director



Gerald Sheriff
Activities Director



Center Staff 1963: seated, l. to r., Ethel Levine, Ruth Burke;
back row, l. to r., Walter Nadon, Van Hood, Richard
Ouillette, Olive von Hertzen.

Prior to the High Holidays, we take inventory of our past deeds and ask God's blessings on whatever undertaking we attempt in the future.

Significantly, as we approach this coming year at the Center we will attempt to mirror the events of the past twenty-five years and optimistically look ahead to the future of our Center and community.

In this Yearbook, each of the past presidents has briefly and modestly reflected the accomplishments during his regime. Each has enumerated the concentrated achievements of the officers and members of his administration. Each has emphasized that the important product of our Center is SERVICE — to all people — a philosophy that has long characterized the Center movement.

Unfortunately time has taken its toll of many of our original and ardent workers, but their wisdom and guidance have left an imprint upon us. Their efforts were not in vain. Their leadership was an inspiration to our new workers. The combined spirit of veteran experience and youthful vigor augured well for the limitless projects and problems which loomed ahead, not only in the Center but in various communal enterprises.

Many of our leaders have acquitted themselves nobly in our Center. Their visionary leadership has extended into community areas as well. It is a natural development we hope for in our past leaders and something we strive towards with our neophytes. We have been blessed in our twenty-five years with an abundance of volunteers. They have truly enabled us to fulfill the Center's philosophy. Throughout these years we have kept pace, through our National Jewish Welfare Board affiliation, with changing national trends.

Our Play Center and Jamboree activities have been blended with our physical fitness programs. A beautiful camp site was purchased on Sebago Lake. Day camping has become the summer extension of Center programming. Our new camp buildings and outstanding registration have kept pace with increased population growth. We are further exploring the possibility of summer programming for children over twelve years of age as well as increased usage of the camp site in early spring and late fall for adult activities.

Integrated cultural and educational activities were channeled for every age level. The Maine State Youth Assembly of high-school age children, of which we are an integral part, has been organized longer than any other Center Youth organization in the east. Frequent inter-city and intra-center activities have brought our Center and high-school youths together. For the first time in our history, our high-school juniors and seniors will be making a vacation trip to Washington, D. C. and New York City during the coming April vacation. We hope such a trip can be conducted every other year.

Nursery schools in Centers throughout the country have become very popular and necessary and we have set our sights on the development of such a project at our own Center.

It is our hope that the much discussed survey regarding Center needs and population growth will become a reality in the very near future. A detailed explanation of the necessity of such a survey is to be found elsewhere in the Yearbook.

Increased enrollment and participation by our Senior citizens is another of our future goals.

One of the most valuable assets to the Center is the Center Women's Club with its abundant enthusiasm and willingness to assist in every endeavor, be it at the Center or at the Day Camp.

The Center Women's Club members have been our perpetual reservoir of volunteers for most of our programs.

The practicality of varied programs for all age levels is no more a slogan or trite phrase. It is a reality.

As we approach the conclusion of twenty-five years of continued Center service to our membership, we must re-dedicate ourselves to the maintenance of the same high degree of respect for other agencies, both Jewish and non-Jewish, that they have evidenced towards us. We have never been an island unto ourselves.

It has been my pleasure to have been your Executive Director during seventeen of these past twenty-five years. Your assistance and suggestions have always been solicited and welcome. Only as a united force can we plan for higher purposes and loftier goals in the future.

Marion and our two girls, Joan and Sharon, join me in wishing all of you a most happy and fruitful year. With pride we join and share with you twenty-five years of service and accomplishment.

— VICTOR TAYLOR



JOHN H. REED
GOVERNOR

**STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
AUGUSTA**

GREETINGS:

I am pleased to extend greetings to the members of the Jewish community of Portland on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Community Center. The members of the community and officers of the Center can be well proud of the service which this institution has provided for the past quarter century.

The Jewish Community Center is today one of the great strengthening forces working for the civic progress of the City of Portland and is an asset of significant value to the entire State of Maine.


I am particularly happy to salute the Jewish Community Center as it enters its second quarter century of activity in full realization that this organization will achieve even greater success in the years ahead.

May I also extend best wishes to the members of the Jewish community on the occasion of the New Year. It is my hope that the coming months will be filled with prosperity and happiness for each and very citizen.

The Jewish Community Center has reached a milestone with its 25th Anniversary observance, an event which makes this New Year a particularly felicitous occasion.

With all good wishes.

Sincerely,


John H. Reed
Governor

JHR:iv

To Jacob H. Berman, a Justice of the Peace within and for the County of Cumberland and State of Maine:

The undersigned, Louis Bernstein, Edward J. Berman, Maurice Davis, Israel Bernstein, Silas Jacobson, Barbara R. Berman and Frances B. Davis, all of Portland in said County, seven or more persons desiring to be incorporated as an association for literary, charitable, educational, social, moral, religious and benevolent purposes under the name of JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF PORTLAND, hereby request you to issue your warrant to some one of the persons mentioned in this application directing him to notify the signers hereof according to law to meet at the time and place to be mentioned in said warrant for the purpose of organizing themselves into a corporation for the objects above named under the provisions of Chapter 70 of the Revised Statutes of Maine and all acts amendatory thereof or additional thereto.

Dated at said Portland this first day of March, 1938.

NAMES	RESIDENCES
<u>Louis Bernstein</u>	<u>Portland Me.</u>
<u>Edward J. Berman</u>	<u>Portland</u>
<u>Israel Bernstein</u>	<u>Portland Me</u>
<u>Barbara R. Berman</u>	<u>Portland Me.</u>
<u>Maurice Davis</u>	<u>Portland, Me.</u>
<u>Frances B. Davis</u>	<u>Portland Me.</u>
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ORIGINAL ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION, MARCH 1938