

BETH ABRAHAM BROTHERHOOD

The Beth Abraham Brotherhood was formed in February, 1959. It disbanded in March 1966. Its chief function was the maintenance of a tallis and tephilin club of boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 18. They met every Sunday for morning services, a talk from Rabbi Isaacs, a discussion, and a big breakfast put together by our Chef Lazer Shapiro.

Though the Brotherhood had only one function, it was a very important one. It helped to instill and implant our Jewish tradition in the minds of our young at a time when it was tempting to stray, and, it served the brotherhood as well because we all needed the constant and continual reminders of our tradition so that we could better practice our religion and its morality.

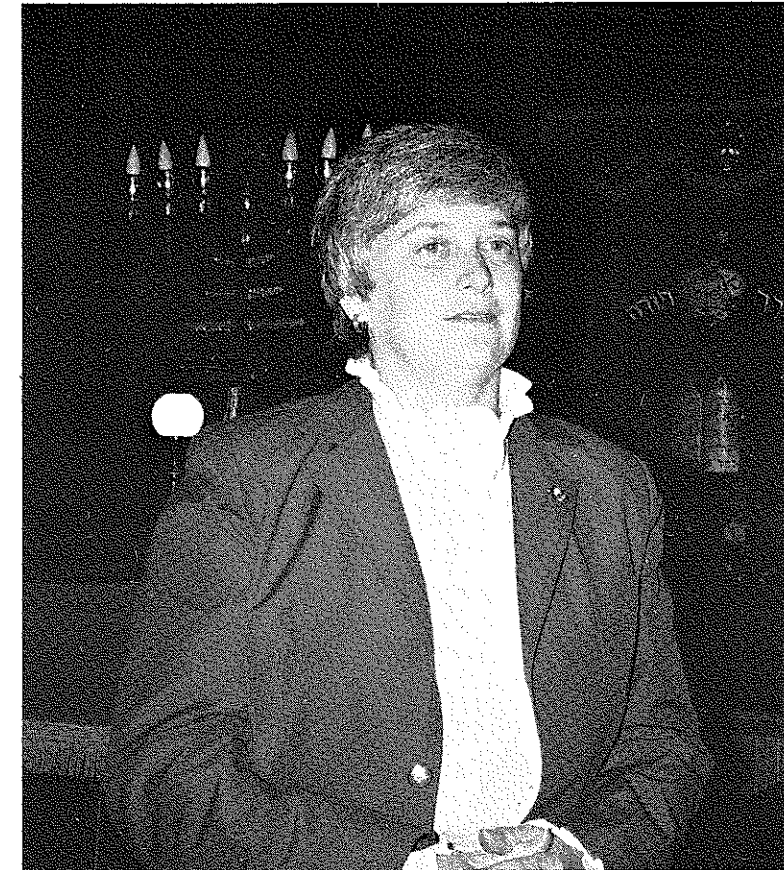
Al Bernstein
Past President
Beth Abraham Brotherhood

OFFICERS OF BETH ABRAHAM SYNAGOGUE



Front: Jerry Williams, Vice President

Back, left to right: Dr. Howard Berg, Financial Secretary; Sam Nyer, President; Stephen Emery, Recording Secretary; Sanford Podolsky, Treasurer.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR SISTERHOOD PRESIDENT

For the past 43 years, the Sisterhood has worked with enthusiasm and devotion towards the enrichment and improvement of the Synagogue. With the help of funds raised through a variety of projects; a yearly Luncheon Fashion Show, a variety of plays, (both original and Broadway), rummage sales, and a "Tree of Life" just to name a few, we have updated the sanctuary, the vestry, the kitchen, the building itself, and are now working on our latest project, landscaping.

On behalf of the Beth Abraham Sisterhood officers and membership, I would like to extend our congratulations to the Synagogue on its first 50 years and hope that we may all work and worship together to make the next 50 years as successful.

Louise Rolnick
President, Beth Abraham Sisterhood

HISTORY OF THE SISTERHOOD

The constitution of the sisterhood of Beth Abraham Synagogue states "the objectives of this organization shall be to foster and further the highest ideals of Judaism; to promote closer fellowship among its members; and in cooperation with the Congregation, to strive for religious, social, and educational activities." Beginning in 1940, it has strived to live up to these very fine goals.

With Miriam Viner as its first president, the sisterhood was constantly seeking new ways to help meet financial obligations to the Synagogue. Card parties, food sales and rummage sales held regularly in various local stores were always a good source of income. At many of the monthly meetings, a donation of some gift was usually made to be raffled. These raffles or door prizes were always very special. Some of them included a candelabra donated by Mr. Lazar Shapero, the Synagogue sexton, candles made by Ruth Emple, a ceramic platter donated by Bessie Wald, and a set of terrycloth towels given by Lillian Salzman.

The annual Chanukah and Purim parties were always looked forward to and planned with great zeal. Whether held in the vestry of the shul or at the Jewish Community Center, these affairs could always be counted on as being enjoyed by all who attended them. Our sisterhood women were there baking the best hamantashen for Purim, the greatest latkes for Chanukah, or providing juicy, red apples and chocolate candy for Simchas Torah. Rhoda Bernstein, Celia Segal, Jean Striar, Marian Flash, Bessie Katz, Ida Less, Ida Bytenski and Barbara Podolsky were just a few of those diligent workers who gave of themselves for these purposes.

1960 marked the year Rabbi Henry Isaacs and his lovely wife Roz joined our community. In so doing, they both played an active role in the sisterhood. The Rabbi, on many occasions, was enlisted to entertain at the monthly meetings. His musical abilities were a highlight and he was even invited to speak on various topics. One scintillating talk was on the subject "Why men do not sit with the women in the Synagogue and why women do not sit with the men in the Synagogue." This topic provided the meeting with a lively, but pleasant discussion. Roz Isaacs never seemed to say "no" and volunteered her time and energies to serve in areas where most others refused. She was instrumental in raising vast sums of money for the good of the organization.

Over the years there were a variety of funds set up to fulfill special needs of the shul. The Remembrance Fund, kept by Dena Slep for many years, was a means of memorializing those who have passed on. The Happy Day Fund was an area where contributions could be made for happy occasions. Ruth Striar is now chairman of this fund.

The Life Membership Fund, instituted by Mim Viner with encouragement from Sarah Striar and her family, was originally set up for the betterment of the kitchen facility. With the first bronze plaque donated by Mim herself in honor of the sisterhood, the funds raised to date reach well over \$6,000. At the present time, this fund is used for emergency purposes only.

To honor its 25th anniversary and the rededication of the Sisterhood in 1965, plans were set in motion to remodel the building. The tin walls were replaced with wood paneling, the spittoons were removed, the Jewish star on the ceiling was covered with a dropped ceiling and new lighting was added. Carpeting, new lavatories, an enlarged bema and a new ark were all included in the job. But, it

wasn't until 1979 that the vestry was remodeled and 1981 that the kitchen, under the superb guidance of Priscilla Williams and her committee, was completely redone with all new appliances, dishes, cookware, etc. purchased. At this time also, the sisterhood took responsibility for the beautification of the grounds, and a garden in memory of Pat Viner was donated by her family.

A Tree of Life, constructed by former member Tom Kirwan, enables people to donate a silver or gold leaf honoring or memorializing an occasion. The first leaf placed on the tree honors the Fifteenth Anniversary of Rabbi and Mrs. Isaacs.

It was with the suggestion of Nettie Shapero in the year 1971 that the sisterhood embarked upon the first of many successful fashion shows and luncheons. Rose King, Nancy's, Cortell-Segal's, Ward's, Porteous, and Doncaster Sport have been the contributors of the fashions these past 12 years.

The Beth Abraham Players also had their debut in 1971 with the production of "Shalom, Shalom". Written by Norma Berg, with a cast of Beth Abraham members and friends, it was open to the general public. Because of the play's huge financial and social success, other productions periodically have been staged. "Come Blow Your Horn," "The Odd Couple," "Fat Can Be Funny," "Catskill Capers," were all performed.

Over the years the sisterhood has worked in cooperation with the local NCSY and Jr. NCSY groups, helping to make their existence in this community possible. The sisterhood has also provided all the refreshments at the Selichos time and meals for residents at the local hospitals during the holidays. Finally, it has always been instrumental in organizing the means and finding the people to purchase and donate any needed items for the Synagogue.

Rabbi Isaacs has often remarked that without the Beth Abraham Sisterhood, the synagogue would be an empty place. "You have brought life to this building, you have added your own special touch in beautifying it, in bringing warmth and tradition where it belongs."



*The Sisterhood celebrates its Twenty-fifth Anniversary.
Al Bernstein, Louis Rolnick, Rabbi Isaacs, Bea Gottlieb, Ruth Striar, Roz Isaacs*

OFFICERS OF BETH ABRAHAM SISTERHOOD



(left to right) Rhoda Bernstein, Financial Secretary; Louise Rolnick, President; Jo-Ann Kirstein, Recording Secretary; Louise Shindler, 2nd Vice President; Priscilla Williams, Treasurer. Absent: Linda Hartstone, 1st Vice President; Janet Price, Corresponding Secretary.

PAST PRESIDENTS OF BETH ABRAHAM SISTERHOOD



(left to right) Barbara Podolsky, Norma Berg, Miriam Viner, Ruth Striar, Judith Cooper. Absent were Lillian Salzman, Ida Gopan, and Janice Cohen.

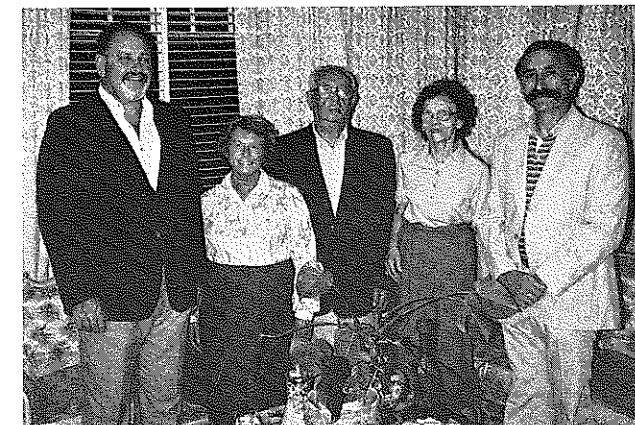
CHEVRA KADISHA

The origin of "CHEVRA KADISHA", which literally means "holy society", stems from the Talmud (some 1600 years ago). When a Jew in the community would die, it was the obligation and responsibility of each and everyone in the community to care for the deceased. With the formation of the CHEVRA KADISHA, however, the rest of the community became exempt, since the CHEVRA assumed the sole responsibility for preparing the deceased for the final resting place.

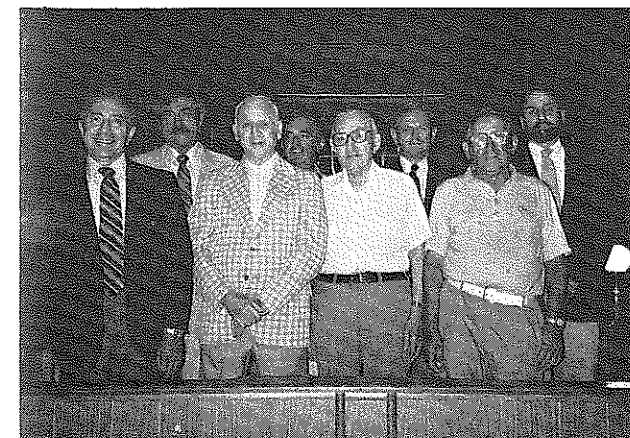
As years passed by it became the custom that children of the CHEVRA would replace their fathers as members of this society when their fathers passed away.

The CHEVRA KADISHA is also referred to as the "CHEVRAS G'MILUS CHESED VE'E'MES", "the society that deals with kindness and truth," for this is a true act of kindness since those who perform this duty do it without any ulterior motive.

Today in many cities the CHEVRA KADISHA has become somewhat commercialized. Here in Bangor, however, those women and men who are members of the CHEVRA still perform their most holy duty with "chesed shel-emes", "a kindness of truth."



Active Synagogue Members ...
Left to right: Michael Rolnick, Ida Gopan, Sam Less, Ida Less, David Price.



The Men's Chevra Kadisha
Front row, left to right: Dr. Howard Berg, Abe Striar, Philip Striar, Phil Nissenbaum.
Back row: Martin Schneider, Ben Viner, Darrell Cooper, Jerome Kirstein.



The Women's Chevra Kadisha
Celia Segal, Shirley Schneider, Louise Rolnick
Absent: Bessie Wald, Nancy Offenber, Lillian Salzman