

CHAPTER 6

FROM HILLCREST TO A “NEW JERUSALEM”

By Stanley Schwartz



ON MAY 11, 1996, BETH ISRAEL

celebrated its 135th anniversary.

A commemorative booklet was produced that contained the history of the congregation to that time.^{lxxv} The temple's new senior rabbi, Jonathan Stein, felt the congregation needed a boost in morale, so the annual fundraiser was elevated to an anniversary celebration.

By 1996, Beth Israel's membership had increased to nearly 1,300 family units (singles, couples and families



Future Home of

**CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL**



A REFORM TEMPLE SERVING
ALL SAN DIEGO

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 619/239-0149

Executive Director Stuart Simmons, Rabbi Jonathan Stein and Past President Mary Ann Scher formed committees to plan Beth Israel's new home in University City.

living in one household). The Jewish population in San Diego County was estimated at 86,000, or about 4.3 percent of the total county population of about two million.

Rancho Bernardo and areas of North County were the new suburbs that attracted retirees and young families with children. Jews were moving north, making it difficult for Beth Israel to retain and attract new members. Many felt the congregation had outgrown the temple buildings at

Jerusalem in San Diego

By Jerome Levy

APPROACHING THE MAIN entrance from Towne Centre Drive, visitors are struck with a sense of history and place. The temple's magnificent stairway, stone facade and silvery rooftop watchtowers, reminders of ancient Jerusalem, dominate the scene. As you enter the Price Family Courtyard, the trees, rosemary shrubbery, arches and buildings of stone are before you along with the Sophie and Arthur Brody Tree of Life. The domed Glickman-Galinson Sanctuary is on the right; the Evelyn and Ernest Rady Family Administration Center is on the left with the Lee and Frank Goldberg Family Religious School behind it. The Foster Family Chapel completes the surrounding structural area. Architecturally, the chapel evokes the memory of Beth Israel's previous temple at Third and Laurel, with similar stained-glass windows and dome. Next to the chapel is a Holocaust memorial sculpture entitled *Kriah*, donated by the Men's Club, which is meant to evoke the tearing of cloth as a symbol of mourning for the six million Jews killed in

the *Shoah*.

Entering the sanctuary building on the right, there is a transition from secular space to sacred space. The progression is from the dome-topped entry into the Krichman Family Sanctuary Entry Lobby with five art-glass windows by Napa artist Gordon Huether – each themed to a book in the Torah – to the sanctuary, the *bimah*, or pulpit, and the ark. Colors gradually deepen from the neutrals of the desert upon entry, to the richer blues and scarlet as we approach the *bimah* and the interior of the ark. These materials and colors were selected for the most sacred part of the sanctuary from descriptions of the original Temple found in the Hebrew Bible.

The ceiling inside the sanctuary reflects the form of a tent, representing both the ancient and modern wanderings of the Jewish people. Light is an important design element: light bathes the *bimah* from a skylight dome overhead and illuminates a dominant stained-glass window that faces east toward Jerusalem. This main central window, depicting the Sabbath, is flanked on either side by three long, narrow stained-glass windows that portray God's creation of the earth in six
(continued on page 90)

(continued from page 89)

days. The four large windows facing the southeast, also by Huether, illustrate the theme *The Journey to God: Our Ancestors as Models*.

The front of the sanctuary is constructed of Jerusalem stone. The *bimah* itself is relatively low with seating curved around it. The design reinforces the concept of gathering as a community and also emphasizes the congregation's connection with its rabbis and cantor. Above the ark is a stylized *ner tamid*, eternal light, inscribed in Hebrew: "The light of Adonai is the soul of man."

As you leave the main sanctuary, five niches in the rear wall, three of which contain the doors to the sanctuary, draw the eye. These are reminiscent of ancient cave drawings. Beyond the doors, on the wall opposite, are five etched-glass windows with texts from the Five Books of Moses (Genesis 49:1; Exodus 3:16; Leviticus 8:3; Numbers 21:16; Deuteronomy 31:12) illustrating the theme of gathering together. In the far end of the vestibule is the Glazer Family Gift Shop.

In addition to the grand staircase, two elevators from the lower parking area and a ramp from the upper parking area provide access to the campus.

The congregation can justifiably be proud of its campus architecture and design, which have won three awards:

- The Award of Merit from the Pacific Coast Builders Conference 2002 Gold Nugget Awards competition in the category Best Public/Private Special Use Facility
- Award for Liturgical/Interior Design at the Interfaith Forum on Religious Art and Architecture's Faith and Form Awards Program, 2002
- Grand Award Winner in the Concrete Masonry Design Awards Program sponsored by the Concrete Masonry Association of California and Nevada and co-sponsored by The American Institute of Architects, California Council



The Glickman-Galinson Sanctuary, shown under construction, was dedicated in October 2001.

Third and Laurel. Rabbi Stein wrote in the 1997–1998 issue of *Preview*: "When our current building was constructed in 1925, our congregation membership was 60 families. We now approach 1,400. Our entire building, and especially our educational facilities, are seriously overtaxed in their usage." He continued, "Our entire facility is in serious need of updating and renovation. Every day we cope with lack of space and problems with plumbing, lighting, ventilation, acoustics, barrier-free access, and security." Moreover, the board of directors was repeatedly advised that the sanctuary and social hall required structural enhancement for the safety of the congregation.

Various properties and concepts (including keeping Third and Laurel as a second temple site in addition to a new North County site) were considered before a decision was made to purchase land on the eastern edge of University City, adjacent to the UTC Westfield Towne Centre Shopping Mall. Once the decision was made to remain one temple on one site, the congregation sold its property in Rancho Santa Fe and chose to situate its new temple in this more central location between three major freeways and with access to a large parking garage.

Past President Mary Ann Scher and Rabbi Stein formed committees in 1996 to select the architects and begin the planning process for Beth Israel's new home.



Construction began in March 2000 on Beth Israel's third home, a campus reminiscent of the Old City of Jerusalem.

May Sebel and Dan Epstein were tapped to co-chair the Architect and Building Committee. Rabbi Stein and Executive Director Stuart Simmons participated fully in planning and fundraising.

The architectural firm of Austin, Veum, Robbins and Parshalle was selected. The architects extensively studied the hilly site and saw a strong physical relationship between the new temple site and Jerusalem. Doug Austin and Randy Robbins traveled to Israel for spiritual and

aesthetic inspiration and to research the architecture there in order to create Beth Israel's new home as a reflection of the Old City of Jerusalem.

The two architects then designed the campus with authentic ancient features, including domes, arches, watchtowers, Jerusalem stone, and a Biblical garden. Melissa Garfield Bartell chaired the art committee, Helene Ziman, the interior design committee, and Sally Wyte, the landscape committee. A construction development committee was formed with Ted Mintz as chair.

During Rabbi Stein's years at Beth Israel, many new programs and committees came to life, including the Young Jewish Network, an expanded Social Action Committee, Mitzvah Day and a Caring Community committee. Rabbi Stein was involved in Beth Israel's high school program, and the growth of a strong youth group occurred during his rabbinate. He was especially concerned with Jewish adult education and taught at least two multi-session courses himself each year, along with single-session courses and Shabbat morning Torah study. Rabbi Stein worked closely with Robert Price, Elliot Feuerstein and Stan Foster to raise money for the new Beth Israel campus. In the general community, he served as chair of the board of United Way of San Diego County and as a member of the San Diego Human Relations Commission, among other civic involvements.

September 1994 marked Beth Israel's first congregation-wide *tashlich* service. The ceremony of *tashlich*, a symbolic casting of one's sins into a body of water on Rosh Hashanah afternoon, came to the congregation through the efforts of Lisa Braun-Glazer. Three years earlier, in September 1991, Braun-Glazer, her two daughters, and Howard Hian, Bonnie Hall and



The tashlich ceremony on Rosh Hashanah afternoon has become a large congregational event at La Jolla Shores beach.

Stephanie Hall had cast away their sins in a small *tashlich* gathering. Since that time the ceremony has grown to become a large congregational event at La Jolla Shores beach, with a brief service, music, the ritual casting of sins into the ocean, and picnicking on the beach afterward.

Beth Israel's High Holy Days family service began in September 1995. Braun-Glazer compiled a new *machzor*, or High Holy Days prayer book, for this service. The family service continues to be held in the Copper Room in Golden Hall with a capacity crowd of two- and three-generation families.

In July 1996, Sisterhood changed its name to Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ). The group initiated a number of very successful programs, including a kick-off luncheon, lectures open to the entire congregation, and a New Member Shabbat jointly sponsored with the Men's Club. WRJ also continued to raise funds for its own activities and for Beth Israel's general fund.

In 1995, Helene Schlafman retired after almost 20 years as director of education and became director of education emerita. She continues to teach in Beth Israel's Lee and Frank Goldberg Family Religious School, where she has taught since 1967. Jane Cohen, Schlafman's assistant, served as interim director of the religious school in 1996, and Rabbi Dana Magat and Susan Stein were responsible for the religious school the following year. Rabbi Sheryl Nosan became director of the religious school in 1997 and served for three years.

In July 1997, Cantor Arlene Bernstein came to Beth Israel after serving for four years as cantor of the Classical Reform congregation Temple B'nai Torah on Long Island, formerly named the Suburban Temple. Cantor Bernstein arrived about a year and a half after Cantor Deborah Bard had left, a period of time during which Beth Israel was served by Cantor Sheldon Merel, who had been urged out of retirement, and by cantorial soloists. Gerald Rosen was elected president of the congregation in July 1997. In October 1997, Beth Israel adopted a new gender-sensitive prayer book for Shabbat.

A capital campaign, called *Preserving Our Past... Building Our Future*, for the new synagogue complex started with major donors and then expanded to the entire congregation in April 1998. Joseph and Beverly Glickman served as honorary campaign co-chairs, with Pauline and Stan Foster, Diane and Elliot Feuerstein, and Allison and Robert Price serving as chairs of the campaign.

(continued on page 97)

From Mothers Club to Women of Beth Israel

By Joani Gross

THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY at Beth Israel has been known by four different names in its history. In 1892, when the Mothers Club was formed, it was the only temple committee or auxiliary and it was responsible for maintaining the religious school that had been established six years earlier. The Mothers Club paid the teachers and gave gifts to the students. It also supported the choir. Indeed, the Mothers Club's fundraising was a major factor in Beth Israel's survival through some difficult economic times.

In 1912, the Mothers Club changed its name to Sisterhood, which was the usual nomenclature for women's auxiliaries at that time. The name signified the larger role performed by the group beyond supporting the religious school and choir. It was Sisterhood that hosted the first community seder in San Diego in 1913.

Over many years, Sisterhood membership waxed and waned. When Nadine Finkel became program coordinator in 1978, one of her first jobs was to reactivate Sisterhood into a vital component of the Beth Israel family. She started with lunch meetings and broadened the group's scope with classes, a book club and speakers, especially on current events. When Rabbi Lenore Bohm came to Beth Israel as assistant rabbi, she became very active with Sisterhood, stimulating its growth even further.

Sisterhood grew steadily from that time on, evolving into a vibrant group of women, 400 strong by 1988. With varied and very successful events, Sisterhood was a huge contributing force to Beth Israel's programming and fundraising. In 1982, Program Directors Bonnie Graff and Barbara Goldman created annual women's retreats in Idyllwild. Sisterhood members attending these retreats celebrated Shabbat, nature, the arts, food and friendship.

In 1984, Career Women's Network (CWN) was launched as a women's discussion group to address issues of women who worked outside the home. It developed into the speakers arm of Sisterhood, providing networking opportunities and programs particularly for women who were working outside the home.

Among the highlights of CWN programming were speakers as diverse as Sherry Lansing, the first woman president of a major movie studio, women's rights



From Mothers Club to Women of Beth Israel, women have been at the core of communal Jewish activity.

attorney Gloria Allred, *Ms. Magazine* editor Letty Cottin Pogrebin, television personality Judge Judy, and experts in the fields of law, Jewish literature and the arts. The group hosted a weekend celebrating Jewish women in the arts and an evening featuring Jewish female comedians. CWN, together with Sisterhood, held women's seders, organized an annual women's conference, and hosted two major art exhibits by the Safrai Gallery in support of Israel.



Throughout the decades, the women of Beth Israel – shown here at the 2011 Women's Seder – have contributed considerably to the congregation's programming and fundraising.

Career Women's Network proved very successful and continued to thrive until 2001, when it merged back into the larger women's organization, bringing together the fundraising role of the women's auxiliary with the professional and educational goals of CWN.

The next name change came in 1996, when Sisterhood became the Women of Reform Judaism. The change was in keeping with the Reform Movement and the national organization for Reform women, and marked

another significant expansion of activity, reaching out to all women of the congregation.

Finally, the name Women of Beth Israel was adopted in 2000, and the organization remains a pillar of the congregation, organizing programs, events and speakers; promoting friendship and service; contributing annually to scholarships and camperships; underwriting

programming such as Scholar-in-Residence weekends and musical programs; reaching out to homeless women through Rachel's Women's Center; and helping to create a sense of community, together with the Men's Club, by sponsoring Café Beth Israel on Sunday mornings when religious school is in session.

Shabbat Morning Torah Study

by David Kroll

AN INCREASING NUMBER of Beth Israel congregants are finding that Torah study is a rich and rewarding endeavor. The study of the text and associated readings asserts a strong pull on those whose backgrounds vary from lifelong students proficient in Hebrew to complete newcomers just finding their way to Torah. Torah study at Beth Israel attracts Jews by birth and Jews by choice, and for many it is a step on the path to conversion.

Torah study at Beth Israel is eclectic. Our discussions include analyses of the text itself, historical contexts, Rabbinic insights, Midrashic interpretations and explanations, discussion of philosophical and moral issues, and expositions of the Torah as story, drama, ethical rules, mitzvot, and a source of fascinating insight into who we are and how we should and do live. Discussions also center around the existential questions of creation, right and wrong, the nature and possible eternal life of the soul, reward and punishment, and an appreciation of the Torah as poetry and great art.

Beth Israel's Shabbat Torah study grew out of the Shabbat morning Minyan. In 1993, two years after Minyan services began, two Minyan regulars, David Kroll and Moshe Tzadok, began staying after the service to read and discuss the weekly Torah portion. Moshe Tzadok was born and raised in Israel, and his Hebrew fluency was a great asset. These discussions lasted many hours, sometimes until late afternoon.

After approximately three years, other Minyan participants asked to be included, and our group increased to 6 to 12 each Shabbat morning. Since

the temple was closed after Shabbat morning services, our study was held in the school courtyard at the temple building at Third and Laurel. The discussion, facilitated by David Kroll, was a lively encounter with the text based primarily on its surface meaning, with issues and questions raised by all participants. Torah study continued in this format until approximately 1999, when Rabbi Stein took over leadership of the Torah study sessions.

After the congregation moved to University City in 2001, our rabbis have continued to serve as Torah study leaders. Torah study is scheduled from 8:30 to 9:45 each Shabbat morning, with the Minyan service moved to 10 a.m. so that participants can attend services after study either with the Minyan or in the sanctuary. Attendance continues to grow, and for the past few years Shabbat morning Torah study has attracted 30 to 50 engaged participants each week. Each rabbi has brought special talents as study leader, from penetrating scholarship to compelling drama.

The true magic of the Torah study is the evocation of each participant's insights, questions, observations and viewpoints. The whole becomes much greater than its parts, and amid laughter and bantering at our disparate contributions, we are often left breathless by coalescing insights and understandings that profoundly affect us. Torah study weaves together the study of religion, applied psychology, sociology, history, ethics and morality, rhetoric and debate, quiet and intimate revelations and insights, into a beautiful tapestry that broadens our minds and souls.

The Men's Club

By George Wise

IN ITS EARLY YEARS, the Men's Club met sporadically. It was organized and active for a time, then dissolved, then reorganized later. The first mention of the Men's Club was on January 19, 1927, by Rabbi J. K. Levin at a temple board meeting. It was next noted on November 25, 1930, when temple President S. I. Fox appointed a Men's Club committee that included Nathan Baranov, Samuel Busch, Col. S. Frankenberger, Arthur Gaines, Nathan Schiller and Morris Penter.

There was little mention of the Men's Club again until the fall of 1946, when it was reorganized. For a time the group was known as the Temple Men's Club, then as the Temple Brotherhood, and, at the urging of Harry Guterman, its name reverted to the Men's Club. In its early years it held lox and bagel breakfasts and also ran some fundraising activities for the temple.

In 1954, the club was reactivated, enjoying Sunday brunches and an annual picnic. Meetings were held in the temple library. In about 1974, the Men's Club began holding an annual blood drive, which continues to this day. The group also raised money for prayer books, the congregation's Shabbat challah, and the temple's general fund.

Over the years the Men's Club has contributed to Beth Israel in other important ways as well. The group



For many years, the Men's Club Yom Hashoah candle project has provided each Beth Israel family with a yellow candle to light on Yom Hashoah and raised funds for Holocaust remembrance and education.

raised funds to air condition the sanctuary at Third and Laurel and for the *bimah* named in honor of Rabbi Moise Bergman. The Men's Club annual Yom Hashoah candle project provides each Beth Israel family with a candle to light on Yom Hashoah, and also brings in funds for teaching about the Holocaust and other Holocaust-related projects. The Men's Club donated \$40,000 for the construction of the Kriah Holocaust memorial sculpture at the congregation's new campus in University City.

During his presidency, George Wise resurrected what is now an annual Men's Club Shabbat service. Larry Krause organized the first Men's Club Minyan service. In 2008, Larry Krause spearheaded a project, starting with a group of Men's Club members, to research and write

this history of Beth Israel for the temple's 150th anniversary. The history book project updated and expanded upon the history previously written by Stanley Schwartz, Beth Israel's archivist who also serves as president of the San Diego Jewish Historical Society.

The Men's Club also initiated the highly successful Dinner Forum, monthly lectures by experts from a variety of fields and open to the entire congregation. A recent addition to Men's Club programming has been the Men's Discussion Group, which meets two mornings a month and is regularly attended by 20 to 25 men.



The Men's Club erects a sukkah in the Beth Israel courtyard.

Tikkun Olam/Social Action Committee

By Judy Fisher and Bonnie Graff

BETH ISRAEL'S Tikkun Olam/Social Action Committee (SAC) puts into action the Jewish values of *tikkun olam*, or repairing the world. Formed in 1967, the committee fell into dormancy for several years until it was reinstated under the leadership of Jerry Goldberg in 1994. The committee's comprehensive framework for social action includes advocacy on social issues, education, opportunities for hands-on participation, and support for Israel.

The kickoff event for the newly invigorated committee was the Sunday night of Martin Luther King Jr. weekend. African-American churches were invited to hear social activist Rabbi Albert Vorspan, senior vice president of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), who served in the URJ Commission for Social Action for 50 years.

Operation Understanding, conceived by the SAC and co-sponsored with the San Diego Urban League for almost 10 years, was a year-long program for high school students from African-American and Jewish backgrounds. Joe Gotkowitz, one of the SAC's founding members, funded and helped to spearhead the project; he received the 1997 Peacemaker Award from the National Conflict Resolution Center for his significant contributions. The annual highlight was a two-week trip that took the teens across the country and included destinations of importance to both groups – among them, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Religious Action Center in Washington, D.C., and the Southern Poverty Law Center and important civil rights movement sites in the south.

Since 1986, Beth Israel has partnered with St. Vincent de Paul to provide a nourishing hot brunch for 800 to 1,000 adults and children every Sunday morning. Known as the Hunger Project, this is the congregation's longest-standing mitzvah project. In 2005, the Reform Movement's Religious Action Center honored Beth Israel for this project with the Irving J. Fain Social Action Award Honorable Mention.

Connie Unger chaired Beth Israel's first Mitzvah Day, leading a highly successful event that served as a model for Mitzvah Day efforts for several years thereafter. As many as 600 adults and children gathered each year for a rally at the synagogue before teams went out to serve



Mitzvah Day teams went into the community for projects as diverse as painting out graffiti to singing to seniors.



Beth Israel members carry a banner in San Diego's Pride Parade.

the community. Projects were as diverse as painting and gardening, sorting clothing, shoes, and other donated items, and visiting and singing to seniors.

The SAC also has offered a variety of educational programs, including an African-American–Jewish dialogue; several sessions of a political advocacy how-to primer called *How to be an Effective Noodge*, organized by another of the committee's founding members, Elaine Moser; a well-attended forum on public education; and a program to heighten awareness about the genocide in Darfur.

The committee launched a major effort to educate and recruit members for the Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA). It has presented resolutions to the Beth Israel board on social issues, including hand-gun violence and breast cancer research. At the request of the board, the SAC reviewed several URJ national resolutions. After the terrible events of 9/11, the SAC brought in speakers to address the concerns of congregants.

(continued on page 96)

(continued from page 95)



Beth Israel members have become experts at collecting and distributing donated goods to social service agencies and packages to American soldiers in war zones.

Partnering with outside organizations such as Mama's Kitchen, Voices for Children, and HIPPIY, the SAC has worked to provide meals for people with AIDS, legal and mentoring support for foster children, monthly USO dinners, and books for preschool reading programs in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The Social Action Committee joined the Interfaith Partnership for Children and the Environment and advocated in the California legislature with the Lung Association, Breast Cancer Fund, and Nurses Association. In coordination with Jewish Family Service, the SAC has also directed collection projects for needed items.

The SAC has encouraged congregational participation in the San Diego LGBT Pride Parade, Jewish Family Service Mental Health luncheons, MLK All People's Breakfast, held annually on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Volunteer for a Volunteer on Christmas, an Israeli/Palestinian dialogue, and more. It raised awareness of the environment by facilitating an energy audit of the congregation's campus, monitoring the implementation of changes, holding Green Fairs, and introducing recycling bins to the campus.

The committee started a community-wide Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service in San Diego. Karen Shein and Bonnie Graff recruited First United Methodist Church, the Islamic Center, the Mormon Church, Chinmaya Mission San Diego, and other synagogues to clean up Balboa Park and plant native plants there. The gathering of hundreds of people from various faith communities to work together was as beneficial as the restoration of the park's canyons.

Habitat for Humanity building crews met quarterly

on Sundays, captained by Glenn Farber. The SAC began *Yad l'Yad*, Hand to Hand, which continues under the name Knit and Nosh. The committee coordinated donations and provided and served dinner to the Crest community after the Cedar fire of 2003. Beth Israel opened its campus as a temporary shelter for seniors who were evacuated from Seacrest Village Retirement Communities during the 2007 fires. During both fires, many Beth Israel members were moved to volunteer and donate to those affected by the fires.

With generous donations from Phillip and Francine Ginsburg, the committee prepared and served approximately 100 dinners every month from 2004–2009 to military personnel and their families at the downtown USO. The Ginsburgs also helped institute the SAC's Adopt-a-U.S.-Soldier program, which coordinated semi-annual packing and distribution of more than 50 gift boxes to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. After Friday night services, children wrote letters to the soldiers for inclusion in the packages.

The SAC also has engaged in traditional social action fundraising, collecting funds for Nothing But Nets to protect people in poor areas of the world against malaria, and for New Orleans school children affected by Hurricane Katrina.



Social Action projects include many hands-on activities, including picking up litter and planting native species.



Two community-wide Social Action Walks for Darfur raised awareness of the genocide in Darfur and tens of thousands of dollars in relief aid. Ami Minter (co-chair of the Walks with Judy Fisher) is shown with speaker Rabbi Lee Bycel.

Among the Social Action highlights of the past decade were two Walks for Darfur, co-chaired by Judy Fisher and Ami Minter. Again Beth Israel led the way, reaching out to the entire San Diego community and raising awareness as well as \$80,000 to \$100,000 for relief aid to the region.



Beth Israel's Social Action Committee facilitated an energy audit of the congregation, monitored changes, and introduced recycling bins to the campus.

(continued from page 91)

In March 1998, under the direction of Principal Jill Green, Beth Israel Day School was accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Director of Education Emerita Helene Schlafman was elected to the board of directors of PARDeS, the national organization of Reform day schools. Beth Israel acquired additional cemetery spaces at El Camino Memorial Park.

Beth Israel's associate rabbi, Dana Magat, accepted an offer in June 1999 to become the rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in San Jose, California. Allan Ziman was elected president of the congregation in July 1999, focusing on construction oversight of the new campus. He was closely involved with the building committee, fundraising committee, and with flooring for the facility. Ziman was also involved in the sale of the Third and Laurel facility, proceeds of which greatly increased the temple's unrestricted endowment fund. Ziman was proud to be able to achieve balanced budgets for both years of his presidency.

In December 1999, Helene Schlafman was selected for the *Moreh Derech* outstanding educator award by the URJ department of education at its biennial convention. Barbara Haworth chaired the 1999 Purim Ball, called *A Night in Shushan at King Ahashverosh's Palace*. As in Beth Israel's earliest years, the celebration of a Purim ball was met with great enthusiasm.

A NEW CAMPUS GOES UP

A ceremonial groundbreaking for the new synagogue complex was held on January 9, 2000. Work began at the site on March 16 of that year. Under the general contractor, Lusardi Construction Company, walls started going up in September. Upon completion in 2001, the new synagogue complex consisted of five buildings: one containing the Glickman-Galinson Sanctuary, the David and Dorothea Garfield Social Hall and the kitchen; a second, the Foster Family Chapel; a third, the Evelyn and Ernest Rady Family Administration Center, containing the administration and clergy offices and Epstein Family Conference Room; a fourth, the Feuerstein Family Activity Center; and a fifth, the education building.

The first floor of the education building contains the Jackie Novak Youth Lounge as well as the Bill and Sid Rubin Preschool classrooms. The second floor contains classrooms and offices of the Lee and Frank Goldberg Family Religious School. The third floor contains the Sophie and Arthur Brody Library and the Elene and Herbert Solomon Computer Center.

Beth Israel Welcomes Seacrest, Averts Crisis

By Lesley Mills

AS FIRES RAGED through San Diego in late October 2007 and people fled their residences in record numbers, the Beth Israel community opened our campus to 130 seniors who were evacuated from Seacrest Village Retirement Communities in Encinitas and Rancho Bernardo.

Pam Ferris, Seacrest's president and CEO, put out a call for help to Beth Israel's Executive Director Lesley Mills. Mills consulted Rabbi Michael Berk, who responded, "The Jewish way is to say yes and then figure out how." Within a couple of hours Seacrest's residents and staff arrived at the congregation in buses, making the synagogue their home during the crisis.

Countless congregants, staff and friends volunteered their time, services and supplies to fulfill this mitzvah. The Seacrest residents slept on donated mattresses interspersed throughout the David and Dorothea Garfield Social Hall and the Glickman-Galinson Sanctuary. The seniors were treated to meals, good company, games of bingo and even a concert performed by Beth Israel Chai Band and Youth Choir members.

Seacrest residents stayed at Beth Israel for three days and two nights, at the end of which they received the all-clear to return safely to their residences. For some the experience was so wonderful they didn't want to leave our temple.



More than 100 Seacrest Village seniors camped out at Beth Israel for three days and two nights while fires raged near their retirement communities. A sea of mattresses greeted the guests.



Friendly temple members served meals and provided entertainment for the seniors evacuated to Beth Israel.



Rabbi/Educator Sheryl Nosan and Rabbi/Cantor Arlene Bernstein set a high standard for Purim finery in 1999.

These buildings cover 65,000 square feet, compared to 25,000 square feet at Beth Israel's Third and Laurel synagogue. Despite challenges presented by the sloping lot, the *bimah*, or pulpit, in both the sanctuary and the chapel are located on the traditional, eastern side.

Approximate cost of construction was \$20 million. No mortgage was needed since the funds were raised in advance.

A special meeting of the congregation was held in September 2000 to authorize the sale of Beth Israel's Third and Laurel property to J. Peter Block Companies. The preservation of the sanctuary was a condition of the sale. Beth Israel's leadership helped make the introductions that led to Conservative synagogue Ohr Shalom's ultimate acquisition of the property on which the sanctuary, social hall and school buildings sit. Coincidentally, Jerry Goldberg was the last president to serve Beth Israel at Third and Laurel, and his sister, Susie Meltzer, was the first president of Ohr Shalom at that location.

Rabbi Sheryl Nosan accepted an offer of a pulpit in Australia in 2000. Rabbi Sheila Goloboy was engaged as associate rabbi, and Rabbi Amir Wind was brought on as religious school director. In August, Michael Kessel was appointed principal of the day school.

Rabbi Stein elected to leave Beth Israel to become senior rabbi at Temple Shaaray Tefila in New York City at the expiration of his contract in June 2001. He announced this decision in September 2000, following an extended effort among lay leadership, the rabbi and ultimately an independent facilitator to resolve various issues and concerns, including changes in Shabbat worship practices. A search for a new senior rabbi ensued, and in February 2001, Rabbi Ben Kamin was elected senior rabbi. He previously had served at The



Upon completion in 2001, Beth Israel's new synagogue complex in University City consisted of five buildings on approximately 65,000 square feet.

Knit and Nosh

By Sheryl Russell

BETH ISRAEL'S SOCIAL Action Committee supports Vista Hill Parent Care Program, which serves women with children and pregnant women who are recovering from a variety of problems, often including physical or emotional abuse and substance abuse. Some of the mothers are working to regain custody of their children. The program offers these mothers psychological guidance, instructions on infant and child care, food, clothing, and in some cases, housing. While the mothers are achieving their goals, their infants and toddlers are cared for by professional staffers. Infants are provided with diapers and food in a nursery on site. Toddlers receive nutritious meals and snacks and participate with staffers in educational games and other activities. Above all, the children are well cared for in a safe and loving environment.

Under the auspices of the Social Action Committee, Leslie Belden, Rabbi Sheila Goloboy and Bonnie Graff engaged Beth Israel member Susan Schlesinger, an

expert knitter and crocheter with her own knitting business, who became deeply moved by the women who were in recovery as well as the women who ran the center. In 2005, Schlesinger and a congenial group of knitters began meeting on Sundays to make blankets for the infants and toddlers, much to the delight of Vista Hill Parent Care Program and Beth Israel member Ann Mound, who is vice president of Vista Hill Development.

Originally called *Yad l'Yad* (hand to hand), the knitting group changed its name to Knit and Nosh, because of the camaraderie its members share over coffee and bagels provided by the Men's Club and Women of Beth Israel at the Sunday morning Café Beth Israel.

After two years of chairing this program, Susan Schlesinger

transferred its leadership to Susan Volsky, who has kept the group together and increased its productivity. Active volunteers have included long-time Beth Israel members Ann Mound, still with Vista Hill Development, and Elaine Moser, who has inspired her own group of senior knitters. We have donated more than 250 cozy blankets to the Vista Hill program, and the Social Action Committee takes great pride in one of its many arms that reach into the greater San Diego community.



Knit and Nosh volunteers enjoy camaraderie while producing more than 250 cozy homemade blankets for infants and toddlers in the Vista Hill Parent Care Program.



Excitement abounded as Beth Israel members and staff watched the sloping dirt lot become a five-building, Jerusalem-inspired campus.

Temple-Tifereth Israel in Cleveland. In May 2001, Rabbi Amir Wind resigned as director of the religious school and returned to Israel with his wife and daughter.

Beth Israel's final worship service at Third and Laurel was held on October 26, 2001, and the new sanctuary on Towne Centre Drive was dedicated on October 28, 2001. It was a joyous affair that filled the new sanctuary and social hall to overflow capacity. Chaired by Mary Ann Scher, the event was attended by many government officials, Jewish community leaders and dignitaries, including the mayor of San Diego. Rabbi Kamin was installed as senior rabbi. The highlight of the event was the procession during which the congregation's Torah scrolls, dressed in new covers made for their new home, were marched into the sanctuary by the clergy, President Jerry Goldberg, and representatives of the Foster, Garfield and Glickman-Galinson families.



Carried reverently into the Glickman-Galinson Sanctuary, the Torah scrolls were dressed in new covers created especially for their new home.

Saving the Historic Third and Laurel Synagogue, A Personal Narrative

By Stanley and Laurel Schwartz

IN THE LATE 1990s, when Beth Israel planned to leave Third and Laurel, some people in the community began to think of what might happen to the building in the future. With its rich history and classic good looks, community members couldn't just let the building be demolished as some people might have preferred, to expedite the sale of the property.

One of the first steps we took was to nominate the synagogue for historic designation. We decided to seek designation at the state and national levels to avoid a local confrontation. While placement on the State Register of Historic Resources or the National Register of Historic Places would not guarantee the building could not be demolished, acceptance on either of these lists would require anyone who wanted to demolish the building or to alter its exterior to go through an environmental impact study and prove that what they wanted to do would be beneficial to the community.

We worked with the local historic preservation society, Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO), to hire a professional historian to write the report, but we conducted much of the research ourselves. Fortunately, some of it had already been done when we wrote *A Brief History of Congregation Beth Israel* for its 135th anniversary in 1996.

Three categories could qualify the building for historic designation: the reputation of the architect, the importance of the building's architecture, and the cultural significance of events that took place there. These events had to have taken place during a specific time period at least 50 years earlier, so the period we researched was from 1926 to 1950.

First, we spent many hours at the County Administration Center, where we searched the microfilm and found the 1923 deed of purchase for the three lots on which the synagogue was built and maps showing the specific lots. As Judaica booksellers, we found several books on synagogue architecture in our own collection, which helped us define the architectural style of the synagogue and determine its significance.



Beth Israel had a rich history at its Third and Laurel location, including distinguished visitors and momentous events that took place in the sanctuary and adjoining temple center.

A trip to the San Diego Historical Society in Balboa Park yielded a detailed research paper about architect William Wheeler, written by a student at the University of San Diego in 1982. At the San Diego Public Library's Central Library, downtown, we searched the unindexed microfilm for newspaper accounts of anything having to do with the synagogue during the 1920s, '30s and '40s. We found the architect's drawing and a description of his plans for the building along with his obituary. We also found newspaper accounts of important community events that took place in the temple center. The collections of the Jewish Historical Society of San Diego contained old Jewish newspapers describing the famous people who visited San Diego and spoke in the temple center.

All these documents went into preparing the nomination to the state and national registers written by historian Alex Bevil, whose fee was paid by contributions from the community.

At the same time, we, Ohr Shalom member Joy Heitzman, and former city council member Lucy Goldman solicited signatures to support the nomination of Third and Laurel for historic designation. We collected several hundred signatures, most from outside the Jewish community, and sent copies of the letters to the State Office of Historic Preservation. Articles about the

controversy over the potential demolition of the historic synagogue appeared in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, with a major article on the front page, and in the Jewish newspapers.

On May 26, 2000, we flew to Sacramento with Goldman and Bevil to testify at the State Historic Preservation Commission. Before the committee meeting, we gathered in the office of state legislator Susan Davis, who was very supportive of our efforts. Our group successfully convinced the commission of the synagogue's historic value.

During this whole process we were guided by organizations throughout the country that help preserve historic buildings, including the State Office of Historic Preservation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Partnership for Sacred Places and the Los Angeles Conservancy. San Diego preservation architect Jim Kelley-Markham put us in touch with the person who led restoration efforts at First Church of Christ Scientist on Second and Laurel.

Due to national and state recognition of the synagogue's significance and the publicity generated by the controversy, Beth Israel decided to sell the building to a local developer who promised to restore the building and allow another congregation to use it.

Dedicating Beth Israel's Third Home

THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN and construction of Beth Israel's third home on Towne Centre Drive, members gathered to share the excitement of this momentous project. Among the first events was a groundbreaking ceremony on the site, with music, food, entertainment, speeches and photos with the temple's "builders" in hard hats holding shovels. These events culminated with the historic dedication of the building in October 2011.

The dedication event, chaired by Mary Ann Scher, began with a brunch honoring Campaign Chairs Stanley and Pauline Foster, Robert and Allison Price, and Elliot and Diane Feuerstein. In addition, tribute was paid to the Architect and Building Committee, co-chaired by May Sebel and Dan Epstein, and Construction Development Chair Ted Mintz. Those who had held leadership

positions were guests of honor as well.

The dedication ceremony was held in the magnificent new Glickman-Galinson Sanctuary, beginning with a Torah processional and affixing of the mezuzah on the sanctuary door. Special guests included representatives of all major San Diego Jewish organizations and guest speaker Rabbi Michael J. Cook. Proclamations were presented by political dignitaries, including San Diego's mayor and a representative of the governor's office. A musical program complemented the occasion, along with remarks by President Jerry Goldberg and Mary Ann Scher. A gala dessert reception with live music took place in the Price Family Courtyard. Docent tours were held throughout the afternoon.



A Torah processional highlighted the dedication ceremony for Beth Israel's third home. The congregation's Torah scrolls, dressed in new covers made for their new home, were carried into the Glickman-Galinson Sanctuary by the clergy, President Jerry Goldberg, and representatives of the Foster, Garfield and Glickman-Galinson families.

Beth Israel again showcased its new campus to the community in 2002 when the Price Family Charitable Fund made it possible to host a free lecture open to the public by Sir Martin Gilbert, a foremost historian of the Holocaust and of the founding of Israel.

With the completion of the new campus facility, Beth Israel became one of the few congregations in the United States to have occupied three synagogues, each of which is still in use as a place of worship. The Third and Laurel temple later became the home of Ohr Shalom, and the Second and Beech building, moved to Heritage Park, is used for High Holy Days services as well as b'nai mitzvah and weddings.

In the fall of 2003, it was announced that Rabbi Kamin would not seek renewal of his contract and would take a leave of absence beginning the following January until the end of his term in June 2004. Associate Rabbi Sheila Goloboy and Cantor Bernstein served the large congregation's pastoral needs with compassion, skill and energy, in addition to performing the daily duties required of them. During this time, Cantor Bernstein led a joint Beth Israel-Federation mission to Israel for 30 adults with Steven D. Solomon, Beth Israel member and Federation board president. She also co-led Beth Israel's confirmation trip to New York with Tammy and Louie Vener.

Rabbi Paul Citrin was engaged as senior rabbi in July 2004. He served the congregation for three years,

having decided at the end of his second year to return to Albuquerque, New Mexico. In June 2006, Rabbi Goloboy left Beth Israel for a pulpit in Sun Valley, Idaho. Rabbi Glenn Ettman, newly ordained, became assistant rabbi in 2006, and served for two years. Upon Rabbi Citrin's notice that he would be leaving, a transition committee chaired by Sandy Feldman spent several months conducting an introspective study of the factors that led to yet another rabbinic transition. The review included an analysis of strengths and weaknesses on issues as far-ranging as governance, congregational communications, mechanisms for rabbinic support and liaison, responsibilities of lay leadership and senior staff, and past search processes.

At the conclusion of an exhaustive process of self-examination, a search committee was formed, chaired by Feldman and President Barbara Haworth, which recommended to the congregation the selection of Rabbi Michael Berk as senior rabbi. The congregation endorsed the search committee's recommendation, and Rabbi Berk began his rabbinate at Beth Israel in July 2007. He had been a successful congregational rabbi, and his experience as a regional director for the URJ taught him, in his words, "how to learn about a congregation." There was a clear meeting of minds that a sacred partnership between Rabbi Berk, the lay leadership and the professional staff was what the congregation needed and desired.



