

1948 was a very good year. As you know, the State of Israel was born and later that same year, I was too. It was also when my brother Arthur was about to start Sunday school so my parents, Dr. Arnold and Lorraine Cohn, joined Temple Beth Israel when it was in Albany Park. One small problem though, my mother did not drive yet and my father was out making house calls on Sunday mornings. As fate would have it, Faye and Howard Rice were not only their very friendly neighbors but also active members of TBI who offered to include Arthur in their Sunday School carpool.

**My** first memory of TBI is being greeted by my kindergarten teacher who would care for me as much as I would love her. Little did I know that that teacher, Charlotte Glass, would become a life long friend.

I loved going to Sunday School where we sang Hebrew songs and listened to stories of K'ton Ton. At Hanukkah-time I still think about that little Jewish boy, no bigger than a thumb, catching a ride on a dreidel, and spinning through town.

In 1950's there were over 700 children in the Sunday School so the older students started attending classes on Saturday, Sabbath School. After our classes, we would march single file into the massive sanctuary and have Shabbat services. The absolute highlight each week was hearing the stories that Rabbi Lorge would tell. The Wise Men of Chelm were my favorites. And our services were never complete without hearing my favorite melodies sung by the Junior choir that included many of my friends like Sharon Podolsky Levine, Sue Ellen Lorge and even Steve Goodman. Who knew he would become a famous folk singer.

I was always excited to celebrate holidays at TBI.

My life-long ritual of helping prepare the Sukkah on the bimah started early when my mother would sit me in the first row of the sanctuary, hand me a needle and thread along with a basket of berries or crab apples to string the fruit for decorations. Back in the olden days, we did *not* have plastic fruit. As an adult this tradition continued with my mom's best friend, Dena Mae Cohen and her family, and now with the sisterhood.

In the early 60's the Temple continued to grow and members were moving to Skokie. Rabbi Lorge discussed creating a "Satellite School." A perfect site was found at Howard and Crawford but the owner would not sell; he didn't want a synagogue on the property. My father was determined and he convinced the owner that he would build a medical building there. After my father purchased the land in 1961, he offered it to the congregation interest free and the branch school opened the following year.

When I entered high school, I joined the youth group, which had grown to 200 members. I held different positions on the board and, in my senior year, it was a thrill when I won the election to become President. In my honor, my parents donated modern Torah crowns for the newest Torah. Those crowns were even used during my son and daughters' bar and bat mitzvahs and they still adorn a Torah in the ark today.

Youth Group retreats at Union Institute in Oconomowoc were magical and there were special sessions for teenagers at the end of each summer. I will never forget the Holocaust survivor who came for a week as a visiting scholar in residence. Each night before bed the young Elie Wiesel read to us from his book, "Night." I still can't believe that extraordinary week.

When it came time for college, I went with a whole group from CFTY, the Chicago Federation of Temple Youth, to the University of Wisconsin, Madison. As reform Jews we became active in Hillel. And it wasn't long before I met Ralph there and later we were married at TBI in Albany Park.

Years before, I also had my Bat Mitzvah there. I hope that I am making Rabbi Lorge proud today because I can still picture him at the back of the sanctuary calling out to me, up on the bimah, to speak clearly, and speak with confidence. And then he would demand *a little slower* and a little *louder*.

When it came time for my children's b'nai mitzvot, I hoped that they would have the same support. Arnie, named after my father, prepared for his bar mitzvah with Rabbi Lorge at the very same building that my father made possible. And now I stand on the same bimah where Rachel and Faye celebrated their bat mitzvahs with Rabbi Weinberg.

I have made so many friends at TBI over these 70 wonderful years. I owe my love for Judaism and for Israel to TBI, to Union Institute and to my family.

Thank you everyone for being here to celebrate my special birthday with me.

Shabbat Shalom