

WE'VE TOPPED OFF THE ROOF!

Beth El has just passed a huge milestone! The last framing element at the Sanctuary light monitor was lowered into place on Thursday, Dec. 16th with an olive tree fastened above it. As the crew framed the roof's highest point, a group of us came to celebrate and to thank the entire construction crew that has worked so diligently through the rain and mud to build our new home. It was a very emotional moment as the tree was set in place. Afterwards, we shared our first oneg in the new Social Hall!

The completion of the roof is not only a physical event, it also is a powerful emotional moment. Standing in our new Sanctuary, it was apparent that our new home will be so much more than just a building. Rather, it will be an ever evolving framework for the *ruach* (spirit) of our community. Sheltered under this wooden *chuppah* (canopy), for the first time we could see and feel the framework that will house the untold number of life events that will occur within it.

Early in the design process, we made a concerted effort to create a building that literally wrapped and embraced the site. This enveloping sense is now evident as you pass under the continuously unfolding cover of the roof form. From the moment you arrive at the front porch of the



upper level entry, a portion of the roof literally soars out and invites you to enter its canopy. This entry is punctuated by the project's only skylight, which sculpts a beam of sunlight at these entry doors.

As you enter through these doors into the Gallery, with its direct view to the restored creek, you will be drawn toward the core of the building—the Sanctuary—where the complex roof form will enhance the spiritual experience within. The parallel bow string trusses create a swooping canopy that is serene and human in its scale while also soaring towards the essential heart of the Sanctuary at the bimah and ark.

From every part of the building you can sense its embrace because of the continuous wrap of the roof eave around it. This will be especially true at night, when the glow from within will surround our courtyard, giving warmth and protection to all who enter. Next month I'll discuss the art and graphic components that will form an integral part of Beth El's site and building experience. Meanwhile, on behalf of all of us at the construction site, I'd like to wish you all the best for a very special New Year.

Alex Bergtraun

