

The Zak Family

Ari, Shelley, Ali & Josh



Meet the Members

by Todd Wilkof

BJC: What attracted you to Beth Jacob Congregation?

Ari & Shelley: *We were impressed by the warm, eclectic, harmonious community and the warm, intellectual rabbi.*

BJC: Tell us about yourselves.

Shelley: *Ari is from deepest, darkest Brooklyn (East Flatbush--not Flatbush, East Flatbush--ask Fran--not a place you would go after dark). He was a physics major at YU when they abolished the graduate school of arts and sciences (not a good thing!) and tried graduate work in physics (did NOT go well) and went immediately for Plan B--law school. He has spent his career trying to avoid practicing law, primarily doing regulatory work for medical device companies and is now working for a start-up that is attempting to make a more natural intraocular lens for cataract implantation.*

Ari: *Shelley is a native Los Angeleno and is sooooo happy to be back in the land of no ice, people who make left-hand turns at the yellow light and not when it turns green, and a place where they do not think you are crazy when you smile at strangers. She went East to college and studied History and Science (basically, math and philosophy) and went on to medical school, initially becoming a neurologist and then doing neuro-ophthalmology. She couldn't figure out how to bill (this made for very happy patients) so she quickly took up an offer to work in a friend's sleep clinic and then retrained as a sleep specialist. Since sleep is often a part-time job, she also took on a volunteer part-time job organizing and running a volunteer day for our children's school. She is now enjoying being a stay-at-home mom--at least for the time being.*

BJC: How did you two meet?

Ari & Shelley: *We were both in NY and invited to a Columbia Jewish Graduate Students Shabbos Dinner. We were introduced while waiting in line to wash and then sat at separate tables and didn't meet again until 9 months later...*

Ari: *...when we were both at Ben Gurion waiting for the same flight and Shelley was looking around for someone to watch her bag while she made a phone call—*

Shelley: *...at which point Ari said, "Haven't I met you somewhere before?" and we proceeded to have a 10-hour first date.*

BJC: Tell us about your children.

Ari & Shelley: *We have ten-year old twins, Ali and Josh. They're in fourth grade at OHDS. We now know--it's nature and not nurture! Both kids love to read. Ali likes to act and draw and Josh likes anything with balls and angles (particularly pool and golf).*

BJC: What are your interests and hobbies?

Ari: *Shelley stares at the harp that she never practices (but may actually tune one of these days) and is considering finishing a scarf she began knitting 6 months ago.*

Shelley: *Ari gardens (at least he used to!) and roasts coffee.*

"Meet the Members" is a new feature of the BJ Beat, intended to help the wonderful members of our community get to know each other (and place a name with a face!)