

Waterfront gazebo in Tiburon honors Jewish child's memory

LESLIE KATZ
Bulletin Staff

One day, Lori Margo Meislin was a healthy 7-year-old who loved ballet, classical music and reading bedtime stories with grandma. The next, she was dead, victim of a rare viral infection that claimed her life within 24 hours.

Ever since that tragedy 27 years ago, "I have been dreaming about something that would create joy out of that deep sorrow," says Barbara Meislin, the child's mother.

Last month, Meislin's dream came true when she erected a flower-adorned gazebo in memory of her blue-eyed daughter. Made of white wood with a sloping roof and deep gray slate floor, the octagonal structure now graces the Tiburon waterfront and is open to all who want to sit inside and gaze at the rippling bay and San Francisco skyline.

On a recent sunny Saturday afternoon, friends and family gathered at an interfaith ceremony to dedicate the gazebo to young Lori's memory.

"I had wanted to create some place where people whose hearts were perhaps broken could come and sit by the water," says Meis-



Barbara Meislin displays program for gazebo dedication ceremony.

lin. With the help of local architect Andrew Skurman, she and former husband Jerry imported the gazebo from England as a gift to the city of Tiburon, where Meislin is a longtime resident. The gazebo "is the most fanciful and childlike fixture that I could think of. It has a sense of playfulness that represents the spirit of a child."

Participants in the dedication honored Lori's spirit in various ways, clasp 18 long purple ribbons that hung from the structure to represent *chai*,

Hebrew for life.

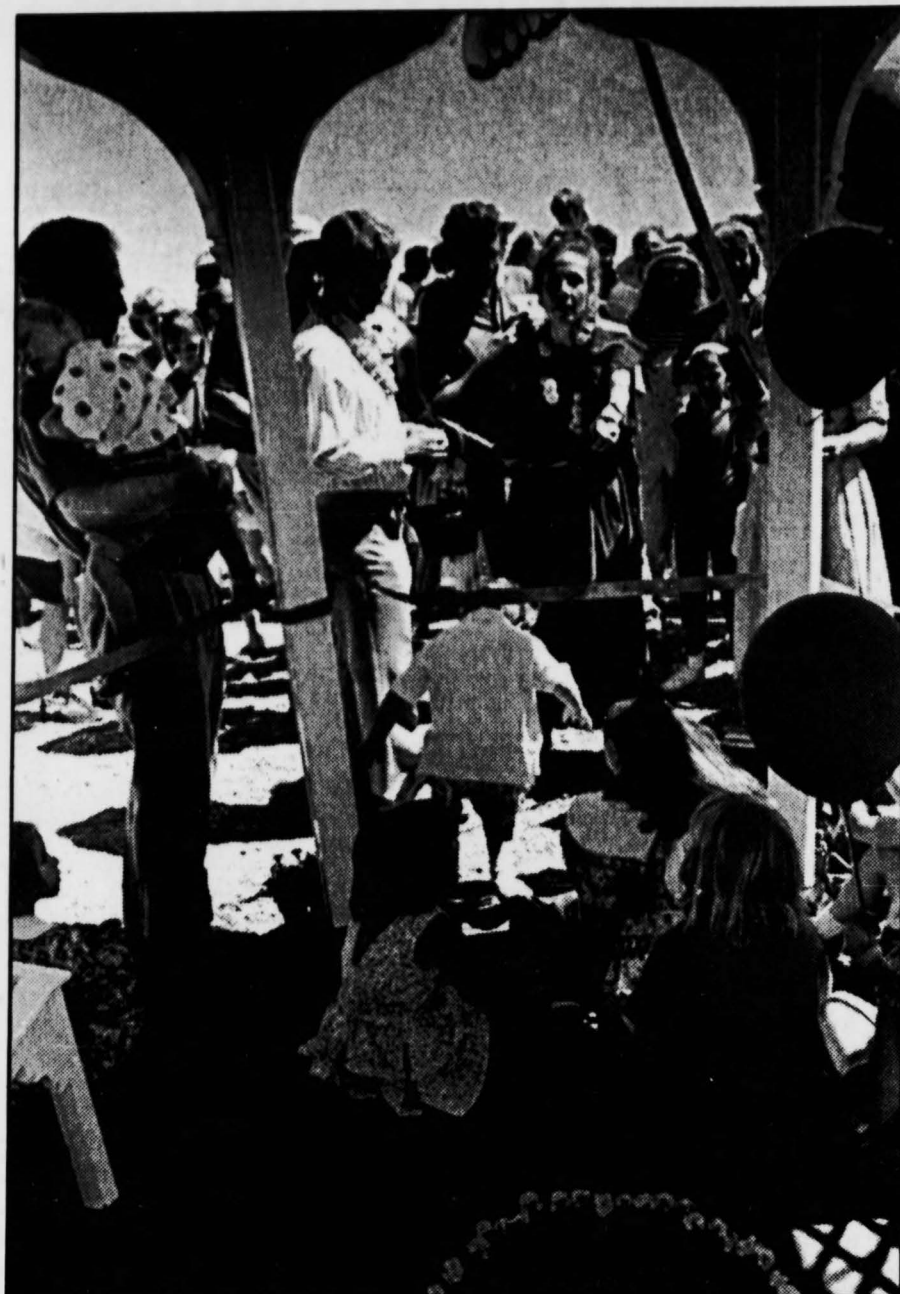
They listened to Meislin speak of her belief in the need to find hope in the face of deep sorrow. And they uncovered a circular plaque on the gazebo floor that reads: "Beloved little lady Lori Margo Meislin, child of sunlight, child of starlight, child of moonlight grace, shine your joyous light of love on all who find this place."

Festooning the structure were bright orange marigolds, a flower that holds special significance to Meislin. A month before Lori died, she planted marigolds for her mother. "In June, the marigolds were blooming," she recalls. "I took a picture of those marigolds and carried them with me forever."

The dedication ceremony included representatives of various faiths: Rabbi Michael Barenbaum of San Rafael's Congregation Rodef Sholom; the Rev. Doug Huneke of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Tiburon; Yvonne Rand of the Zen Center in Green Gulch; and Nashrin Danesh, a representative of Tiburon's Muslim community.

That spirit of interreligious collaboration reflects the values dearest to Meislin. A musician involved in promoting Mideast peace, she always answers the phone with the Hebrew/Arab greeting "*shalom/salaam*."

Meislin is an active supporter of Israel's Givat Haviva Institute, which works to improve relations between Israeli Arabs and Jews. And she has long been involved in Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam, an Israeli village between Tel



Photos — Ron Greene

Friends and family of Barbara Meislin gather around new Tiburon gazebo as it's dedicated to her daughter's memory.

Aviv and Jerusalem where Jews and Arabs live together. Conceiving a common place where the village children could play together, she recently financed "Little Lady Lori's Purple Playground."

"Neve Shalom seems to represent the essence of hope in a new generation," she says. "It's a very small place that for me is a metaphor of what can happen, that a Jew and a Palestinian can

sit on a swing and swing together."

Lori's untimely death, in fact, motivated her to work to bring about peace, in the Mideast and elsewhere.

"When an Israeli loses a child, it's the same thing as when a Palestinian loses a child," she says. "The depth of that kind of loss has to show you that we are joined, we are one, and we have no time to do anything but be kind and help each other."

NORTH BAY RESOURCE GUIDE

Airport Transportation

MARIN DOOR TO DOOR

AIRPORT SHUTTLE12

For Reservations call: (415) 457-2717

Nationwide Toll Free (800) 540-4815

Service to San Francisco & Oakland airports.

Banquet, Party & Event Facilities

EMBASSY SUITES OF MARIN ALONG

WITH RINGS CATERING SERVICES12

101 McInnis Parkway, San Rafael

Terri Peralta, Director of Catering

(415) 499-9222

4020 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE12

(Marin Association of Realtors Building)

Rob Franco, Events & Facilities Manager

(415) 507-1000

Jewish Organizations

BRANDEIS HILLEL DAY SCHOOL,

MARIN CAMPUS13

180 N. San Pedro, San Rafael 472-1833

CONGREGATION KOL SHOFAR2

215 Blackfield Dr., Tiburon 388-1818

CONGREGATION RODEF SHOLOM13

170 N. San Pedro, San Rafael 479-3441

"SUCH A DEAL"

OSHER MARIN JCC THRIFT SHOP12

638 4th St., San Rafael 94901 453-BUYS

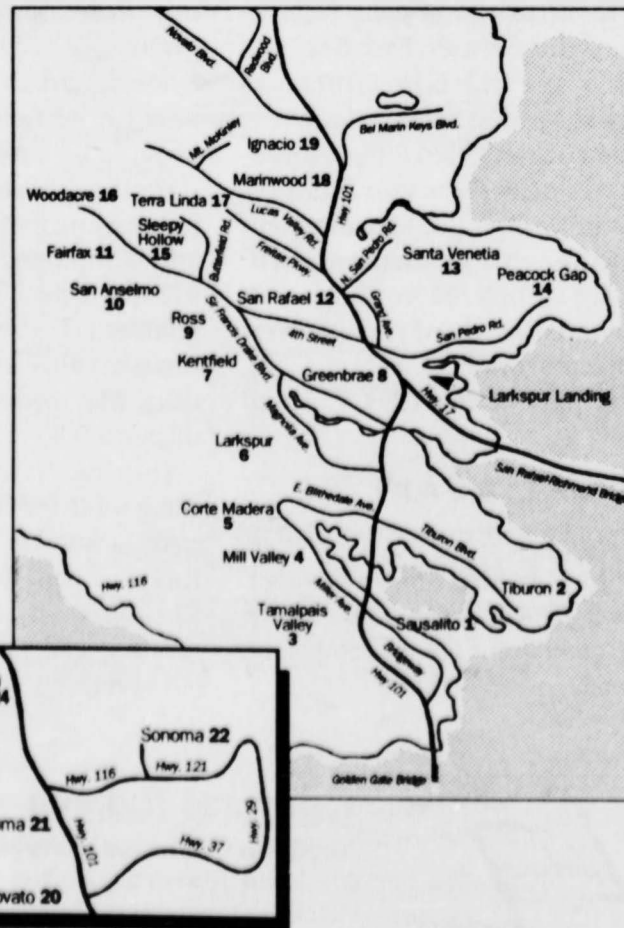
AMERICAN ISRAELI

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE25

World Trade Center #285,

San Francisco (415) 989-4140

"The American Pro-Israel Lobby"



To place a listing call Rhea Adler 957-9340