

Beth El Israel Poem

By Jeff Rosenkranz

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Only 9 days ago
Our mission began
There were 80 of us
And we had a plan

Of course we soon discovered
President Bush had a plan too
So no Shabbat in Jerusalem
Oh what would we do?

The rabbi asked us to be positive
And it wasn't much of a reach
Particularly when he told us Chicagoans
We'd be spending Shabbat on the beach

Of course we almost never left the airport
Nate said his passport couldn't be found
But it almost got much worse
As he boarded a plane that was Toronto bound...

As things usually do
Everything worked out ok
We weren't sure what else would happen
Since this was the very first day

We started in Tel Aviv
And we were diving in deep
Unfortunately all we really wanted
Was to get some sleep

The first site we saw
Was Independence Hall
Ben Gurion declared statehood
And started this all

From there it was very busy
The sights couldn't be beat
Even though it seemed
Like all we did was eat

It's hard to remember
All that we have done
But I'll never forget
Along the Mediterranean a run

But there was Cesaria and Safed
Each more special than the rest
We each have our own view
Of what we think was best

We saw Ein Gedi and Masada
And swam in the Dead Sea
Had dinner with lone soldiers
Who were just like you and me

Went to a munitions factory
That helped win the independence war
And even found some time
To visit some stores

We saw many historic sights
And beautiful views
But nothing like the feeding frenzy
As we were buying Nayot shoes

We were running dawn to dusk
Even the grandparents did fine
Did everyone see Rivia
Going down the zip line?

We had lots of fun
And the drum circle was a ball
But nothing could have been more special
Than the Bnai Mitzvah ceremony at the wall

We saw disabled kids and seniors
Tried to do a few good deeds
What it really showed
Was some of Israel's many needs

And we had a chance
To do our part
At the caucus yesterday
Which Rabbi Schwab did start

It was good to speak
But even better to hear
Why we all hold
Israel so dear

This trip was special
In so many ways
Who can believe
It's already been 9 days

We did some amazing things

Not sure how we'd create a rank
While it seemed to just happen
There are actually many folks to thank

From Nola and Rachel
Always friendly never gruff
But just one question
How do you remember all that stuff?

And Devorah and Gal
You were both quite a hit
Any chance you want to come
To Chicago to babysit?

Of course our security team was working
While we toured and admired the view
Always happy they were nearby
But glad they had nothing to do....

And Naomi and Robin
What can we say
You made it look easy
Each and every day

But we know how much planning
Time and devotion
It takes to get
80 Jews in motion

Thanks also to Erika
For sharing the Rabbi
She agreed to this trip
But is probably now asking why

And of course thanks to Ari
He drew a crowd with everything he'd do
Erika, since number one is so terrific
When should we expect baby number two?

But most of all to the Rabbi
For all that you do
Many of us took this trip
Specifically because of you

A father, husband and Rabbi
You couldn't be just one
Thank you, thank you, thank you
For all that you have done

A bond has been created

Among everyone here
And unbelievable memories
We can all hold dear

We've been through a lot
And now our trip is done
We started as 16 families
And ended as just one

It's been fun and you've been patient
But I think it must be time
So let us finally bring an end
To this very silly rhyme

It only seems appropriate
To reflect and make a toast
Let's remember the fun we had
And our love for Israel the most

The last 9 days have been terrific
Much of Israel we did explore
I hope for us all this trip be the first
Of many, many more

This trip has shown us all
That Israel is truly alive
If we can all have one wish
It's that peace will finally arrive

So as we enter 2008
Let's raise our glasses high
Our trip is coming to a close
And we'll say so long but not goodbye