

## AZ Insider: Surprise Performance at Jewish Benefit

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket

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Kathy Shayna Shocket has the inside scoop on people that make a difference.



Kathy is behind the scenes with the "key" players.

If you heard the rumor about the "piano man" casually mingling with guests and performing at a Phoenix fundraiser, well, it was true. But the performer who reigned behind the piano keyboard at the Scottsdale benefit wasn't **Billy Joel**. (Billy is nicknamed for his signature hit "Piano Man".) It was **Keith Mishkin**, of Cambridge Properties. Not only was the Phoenix businessman tickling the ivories like a professional, but he sang and performed a light hearted song he wrote especially for the event. His surprise performance was part of the Tree of Life Award Dinner. The annual dinner supports the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and it was the first year it was held at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts.

Most of the 300 guests had no idea Keith had such a wonderful command of the piano keyboard, let alone an enjoyable singing voice. Listed on the program as part of the entertainment, many guests assumed Keith would simply be delivering some sort of speech related to real estate, or the charity. But surprise, surprise. His wonderful performance was a delightful way to "warm up" the audience for the evening's headliner, the **Todd Herzog Band**. Todd, the multi talented singer, songwriter and musician who performs at various temples in the Phoenix area, is also the Cantorial Soloist at Temple Solel in Paradise Valley.

Mazel Tov and congratulations to the evening's honorees **Martin and Joan Mollen** and **Bob Ramsey** and **Jenny Norton**.



*Dr. Martin and Joan Mollen with JNF's Ted Kort*

Pictured above in this photo I snapped as the evening was winding up, are Martin and Joan with **Ted Kort**, the longtime and respected regional director of JNF's Arizona Region. The Mollens and the Ramseys were presented with the Tree of Life Award in recognition of outstanding community involvement, dedication to American-Israeli friendship and devotion to peace and the saving of human lives.

Both Ramsey and Norton have threaded humanitarianism into both their vocational and private endeavors. Ramsey is regarded as one of the fathers of the modern ambulance service.

Chairs of this year's dinner were **Vicki Cabot**, **Lanny Lahr**, **Nelson Lerner** and **Patrick McGroder**. Guests enjoyed a sit down dinner prior to moving into the theater.



*Nelson and Lisa Lerner*

Artistically speaking, besides the performances of the Todd Herzog Band and Keith Mishkin, I loved the painting titled "Jerusalem - 50th Anniversary". The uplifting painting was part of the exciting raffle prize donated by Ramsey and Norton. It included the painting and a trip for two people to Las Vegas, two nights at the Mirage and two tickets to see the Beatles Love show.

The artwork alone is a gem. The acrylic painting is set over an original **Peter Max** poster. The pop culture icon is the official artist for the Jerusalem celebration.

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Aileen Becker

Here are a few of the candid moments I photographed spontaneously from the view at my seat during dinner. I was a guest at the table hosted by **Ahavas Torah**.



Wylie and Bill Silverstein, Rabbi Jordan Brumer and Eddie Pantiliat

Lots of people came to greet those like **Wylie and Dr. Bill Silverstein, Eddie Pantiliat, Dr. Dan Lucas and Dr. Jeff** and **Aileen Becker**. Between bites, they had a chance to schmooze.

Proceeds from the Tree of Life Award Dinner will go to the Aleh Negev Rehabilitative Center in Israel. The Arizona Region is near completion of its \$1.2 million commitment to build a vocational Center for Aleh.

The dinner co-chairs, who also worked hard on the planning of the event, were **Joe Anderson, Mary Dewane, Bob Blakemore, Dan Stewart, Shelia Schwartz**, and **Pat and Sandra Cantelme**.

*A footnote:* During the dinner, there was a moment of silence for those murdered and wounded in the Tucson tragedy and prayers for the recovery of Congresswoman **Gabrielle Giffords**. Gabby (as she is affectionately known as), who is Jewish, was still in critical condition at the time of the dinner.



*Kathy Shayna Shocket is a freelance writer, photographer and TV -Field Producer based in Phoenix. She has written and reported for prestigious publications such as **TIME** magazine, **PEOPLE** magazine, **MONEY** magazine, the **Hollywood Reporter** and **The New York Times**. You can reach her at [redkarpetgirl@aol.com](mailto:redkarpetgirl@aol.com)*