

SUKKOT INVITATIONS TO OUR SUKKAH

Over the years, Lily had invited hundreds of people to our home for a Shabbat meal or a holiday meal. One of the traditions in the Ezra Bessaroth community was to have a Sukkah Trail on the first two days of Sukkot, where a few families who had built sukkot, volunteered to host the members who had attended synagogue services. Our sukkah usually drew the biggest crowd, because Lily would spend weeks beforehand baking bulemas, borekas, boyos and making yaprakes and fritada. She would put on the table as well, kezo blanco, kashkaval, azetunas, pishkado salado, pickled eggplant and drinks to no end. Although we could only accommodate 50-60 standing in our sukkah, there were usually, another 30 or so gathered inside the house. During the two years before her passing of pancreatic cancer in December, 2001, it had become too much for her to go through all the baking and preparation that was required. It was with a sense of regret that Leah gave up the annual Sukkah trail tradition. In Sukkot of 1999, I asked Lily if she felt up to inviting, once again, the members of the synagogue to our Sukkah, since

I would be retiring at the end of the year. She acceded to my wishes, and spent weeks again beforehand preparing all the wonderful Sephardic delicacies that everyone had come to expect. That year, it seemed the turnout was greater than ever before. She was very tired but felt that it was well worth it. Lily, may she rest in peace, passed away in December of 2000.

I remarried in March, 2003, to a wonderful woman, who happens to be Sephardic on both sides. Her name is Elisa, and she was born in Lima, Peru, but has spent most of her life in the States and she takes very good care of me.