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**RECONSTRUCTIONIST CONGREGATION BETH EMETH
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KEEPING THE PAST ALIVE

Elliot Skiddell

William Faulkner, the great American writer, had one of his characters say, “*The past is never dead. It's not even past.*” In school we learn history and the lessons that history teaches us, but the past that Faulkner was talking about is the one each of us carries within. We carry within us the experiences of those who came before us. If we are lucky, we grow up hearing stories from parents and grandparents. They retell tales they heard from their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. Their stories help bring to life the experiences of their lifetimes and the lessons that they learned from them. Through those stories we relive the special moments of their lives and we become repositories of the generations that came before us. However, it is not enough to just listen to the stories. We each have our own experiences and we add our own stories to the biography of our family’s saga. Then we want to tell that story to the next generation. But it always seems that just when the occasion arises to share our own stories, and perhaps a few from the annals of our family, our children are too busy and there are so many distractions that we just sigh and say to ourselves, “another time perhaps.” Resist the temptation to push the stories off to another time and find the opportunities to share them. The kids are watching a DVD and a scene in the movie reminds you of a story you heard from your grandmother or grandfather? Hit the pause button and share it then and there. They can always go back to the movie, or they may surprise you and ask for more stories because the movie was boring anyway. Shuttling the kids to another sporting event or after-school activity? Tell them to take the i-pod earphones out for a few minutes, listen to some music together and when a song triggers a memory – share it! The past is not even past, if we take the chance to keep it alive.

Elliot Skiddell is rabbi of Reconstructionist Congregation Beth Emeth, located at 36 Franklin Ave. in Hewlett. Friday Evening Services begin at 8:00 PM. Saturday morning services at 9:30 AM. Please join us!

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On Friday October 17, at 6:30 PM there will be a Pot Luck Dairy Dinner in the Sukkah at RCBE, followed by a brief Shabbat service. Join us!