



Much to Ball's chagrin, when the first one was built it was found to be unstable: touching the ground in only three places and open in the back, the structure was insufficiently stiff, and was prone to twist when the desk surface was gripped on its sides. The problem was solved by adding an 'X' brace made of stainless steel aircraft cable that connected the diagonally opposite corners in the back of the structure. An inelegant solution, perhaps, but an effective one.

The joint between the two quarter-round sections was hidden in the front by a strip of mahogany, which was in turn decorated with a *mogen David* (star of David) that Miller had made, in the manner of a Chinese puzzle, from six interwoven strips of wood.

Gluing the six pieces together at the same time was, to say the least, a challenge, and required an impressive array of clamps. A crucifix would have been soooo much easier, but ...



TENT ARK 2008

The new ark, which would repeat the 'wavy-bottom' theme of the *ahmudim*, presented a significant design problem: the *bimah* was shallow — about eight feet from front to back — and that dictated that the ark be shallow too — less than 20" front-to-back — so that there'd be room for people to stand in front of it to remove and replace the *torahs*. But a shallow footprint, coupled with the ark's seven-foot height, meant that the piece would be unstable, and likely to tip over if the *torahs* were not removed and replaced with great care.

The solution was to run a brace between the top of the ark and a bar strapped across two tent side-poles. The brace would be invisible to the congregation — even those sitting where they could see the side of the ark — because the ark was actually in contact with a white curtain that formed a backdrop for the *bimah*, and the brace passed through a small slit cut in an appropriate spot in the curtain.