The synagogue's founders

To the editor:

I was delighted to read Nancy Heiser's feature story on the Bath synagogue in the Living & Leisure section, Sept. 19. However, as a matter of historical record, the identity of the synagogue's original founders is not that mysterious. I would like to list the names of the families who created that synagogue in 1922. In two or three instances I am missing first names. I am not suggesting equality of spiritual or economic contribution of the founders, a closely-linked community of primarily Lithuanian Jews who make up the "first" wave of immigrants in Bath 70 to 100 years ago.

First off, many of the dozen or so families who contributed to its building are well-known from my youth in the '40s and '50s. Indeed Rabbi Charles Arik's daughter and my aunt, Anna Arik (Mrs. David) Cogan (Morse High, '23) of Portland, Oregon, has helped me confirm most of the names of families who stayed on in Bath and vicinity for at least 30 years or more. In addition to Nathan Povich and Morris Povich and Mr. Isadore Singer's father, there were Nathan Petlock (my grandfather), father to Louis and Morris Petlock; Morris Cohen, the cantor of the synagogue, 1914-1946 (my father and father to Ida Levin, Popham Beach); Sam Levin; Max Kutz; Solomon Greenblatt; Mr. Goldstein (of Bath Shoe); Benjamin Gediman — father to Arthur and Henry; Abe Miller; Isaac Mikelsky, the father of Sophie Mikels and Ruth Silverman; Mr. Weinstein (father-in-law of Sam Povich); Mr. Smith, father to Drs. Joe and Jake Smith; Mr. Brown of Front Street; and Mr. Abelon of Brunswick. There are also the Arenstam, Green, and Sopovich families whose involvement is less certain.

The memorial tablets at the back of the synagogue or "shul" and back copies of The Bath Daily Times may be helpful to the new generation of synagogue members interested in that remarkable period of immigrant history. My apologies to any family who may claim roots in Bath if parents' or granparents' names have been omitted.

Nathan F. Cogan
Portland, Oregon