



# THE STAR

NEWSLETTER OF TEMPLE BETH TORAH ■ JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017 ■ TEVET-SHEVAT 5777 ■ VOL. 20 NO. 3

## Message from Rabbi Seth

2017 has rolled around. Our Jewish skepticism might lead us to shrug our shoulders and ask, “So what else is new?” Yet, to quote a song by Bob Dylan and Robert Hunter), I do “feel a change comin’ on.” For better or worse?

The sense I get about the time ahead is that it will involve prolonged tumult and uncertainty. Not all or even much of it—this dramatic shift in cultural mood—is due to the extraordinary, indeed momentous, election result here in America. A trend that started to surge only recently has been ongoing, worldwide, for a longer period. Maybe we’re not even at the climax but only in the middle of a major transformation in the way people and the planet as a whole think and act—the way we operate as a species and global civilization. Could these new events now taking us by storm and sweeping away conventional assumptions about what is acceptable, possible and real be just a preview of coming attractions. Again, you might pose the rhetorical question: “So what else is new?” Such “chill” unflappability goes with the territory of those—Jewish people, for instance—who are educated to take the long view.

For, the business of maintaining a sure footing amid tectonic cultural shifts is unremarkable in Jewish experience: we’re always responding and adapting to circumstances that impose upon us. Given our background as one of the most ancient peoples on earth, we have a historical perspective far broader than that of most other peoples. They have not been around for millennia to deliberately document their shared journey in this world, generation after generation, as we have painstakingly, comprehensively and perhaps compulsively done. Their conscious group memory does not extend hundreds, let alone—as does ours—thousands, of years, into the distant past. They are not in a position to recognize the spectacle of convulsive global conflict and struggle as an entirely normal, even mundane and perhaps predictable phenomenon—a “so what else is new” fact of life. The world, consequently, might appear scarier to them than to us. Oh, we real-

ize full well that the world is scary, but we don’t let its scariness faze us. We cope (an approach that countless Jewish jokes affirm and celebrate with sardonic relish!).

We’ve been there before, and we can anticipate being there again—if not a decade from now, then maybe in a century or a thousand years. Seeing the big picture as we do (assuming we keep a yiddishe kop—a Jewish head—screwed on our shoulders), we’re not too inclined to get worked up, as others are, over shocking disruptions in the social, economic and political landscape. Our background reminds us that apparently cataclysmic events we now witness are mere increments of seismic activity in a sensational spectacle that is actually taking place on a much vaster, epochal scale. Having experienced this sort of thing before, we’re used to it by now. Politicians and political systems and all the mishugas that they churn up come and go—we adapt flexibly to the realities and norms of whatever cultural environment in which we find ourselves.

So, just as much as we rightly seek to influence public policy to advance our values, push back against any political agenda that threatens Jewish security and human rights in general, and vote our conscience so as to achieve tikun olam, repair of the world, we should also take stock of the larger situation where we find ourselves and, remembering Jewish wisdom of the ages, not take anything out of perspective. We should neither worry unduly nor hope foolishly. That Jewish wisdom will bluntly tell you this is not the Apocalypse. If you’re worried about the jittery state of affairs here in America and the rest of the world, remember: we’ve seen worse and been through worse. By the same token, if you’re hopeful that all this commotion is a positive thing, the birth-pangs of a glorious golden age, and that the changes in store will be good ones, don’t get your hopes up too high, and remember: we’ve seen better and been through better.

So what else is new? Well, it is a New Year: I wish you a happy one!

## Message from the Executive Committee

The doldrums of winter weather are upon us; frankly, it's hard to think about leaving our warm homes on a blustery winter Friday night. But, at 7 pm each Friday (with some exceptions during the year) we gather as a congregation to recite the ancient prayers and recount the blessings of the recently completed week. For those who participate, they enjoy the opportunity to relax and reflect on the week gone by, and the opportunity to honor those who are no longer with us. We invite each and every TBT member family to partake in Friday evening services and to make TBT your Friday night "go to" event.

We can report that the **Karen and Bob Klein Challenge Fund** is growing and that the positive response from the Congregation is much appreciated. Some new contributions just this past month ... **Gerry and Karen Waltman, Alice Burstein, Carol Ann Gershenson, and Susan and Jonathan Reuben**. We are hoping for 100 percent participation ... the amount

of your contribution is less important than the fact that you stepped up and supported the effort to keep our physical plant in good shape. This Spring we will be able to undertake some important building renovation projects that have been put off for far too long. The local Fire Marshal has inspected the building and has uncovered some issues that we have to address immediately.

The next meeting of your Board of Directors is scheduled to meet in the social hall Monday February 13, at 7:00 PM, and TBT members are cordially invited to attend and contribute your ideas and suggestions. As the tenures of the Scotts and the Mags are coming to a close in June 2017, it is important that we have some people "in the wings" to step up and take key leadership positions.

*Eliot Mag, for the Executive Committee*



Wow!!! "This Old House of Worship" needs constant T.L.C. Thank you to all our wonderful members who have contributed to our ongoing building fund, **The Karen and Bob Klein Building Challenge**... As you can see we have many repair projects to keep our wonderful, historic building in good condition! JP Carroll Construction installed Tyvek and new clapboards on the south side of the tower so we won't have leaks any longer! We didn't realize we had "see-through" walls there...When we had windstorms, rainwater leaked in. Many thanks also to **Gary Evans** and his friend **Joe Bierbaum** for replacement of water damaged ceiling tiles in the front vestibule, (hopefully for the last time)... NO MORE LEAKS!!! Our house is getting improvements all the time. Thank you for your continued support in keeping Temple Beth Torah safe and comfortable for all to enjoy. It takes a whole village to keep our "house" in great working order. *By Judy Gold*



A big thank you to **Dave Forrest** who tore down the moldy old ceiling in the back vestibule coat closet and replaced it with new wallboard and painted.



# Chanukah, The Festival of Lights



Sunday School students illustrated the menorah's eight days and posted them on the social hall wall. Our Chanukah Party was held Sunday, December 18th with about 35 people attending. Abundant latkes, salads and desserts were served by and to enthusiastic members. Games were played and a pinyata was smashed.



**Ralph and Phil** continued the tradition of lighting the big menorah on our recently restored front terrace balustrade!



# Ivan Finkle, past TBT president

Ivan Finkle of West Hartford, died peacefully on December 12, 2016 with his loving family by his side. Born in Beacon, New York, on October 20, 1923 to Louis W. and Pauline (Sandler) Finkle. Predeceased by his wife, Barbara (Jainchill), whom he loved for 67 years. Ivan graduated Weaver High School, class of 1941. Underage for enlistment in the Army, he left school for employment with Colt Firearms to contribute to the war effort. In November 1942, he enlisted in the Army Air Corp and was trained as an airborne radio operator, and earned his wings as an aerial gunner. As a member of the B-17 bomber crew, he was assigned to the 388th Bomb Group, with his aircraft named, "Blitzing Betsy". On Ivan's 22nd mission, he was shot down over Holland. One of six survivors, Ivan became a prisoner of war. After the war, he went on to retire from the Air Force Reserve as a Captain. His decorations included Air Medal with Three Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, POW medal, European Theatre of Operations with Two Bronze Battle Stars and the American Defense Medal. Ivan purchased The Sisson Tavern in 1959 and operated it for thirty-three years. He was a founding member of The Jewish Community Group of Wethersfield, that eventually became our Temple Beth Torah. Ivan served as a president to both congregations. Later, he and his wife Barbara, were members of Congregation Teferes Israel for over forty years. An active Mason as well as a member of the Disabled American Veterans, American X-POWs, Jewish War Veterans, 388th Bomb Group Association, Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford, Jewish Historical Society, Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, and WWII Memorial. As a private pilot, he enjoyed many hours in the air, especially when taking his two young sons for flights. Ivan and his wife enjoyed square dancing and were often the center of attention on the dance floor. Survivors: His brother, Samuel; son, Paul and his wife Susan. Son, Stephen. Grandson Daniel, his wife Julie and their three daughters, Hannah, Rachel and Eliza. A funeral was graveside on December 14, 2016 with Rabbi Philip Lazowski officiating at the Teferes Israel Cemetery. Following interment the family received friends at the SummerWood, 160 Simsbury Rd. in West Hartford. May his memory be a source of strength and a blessing to those who knew and loved him. Funeral arrangements provided by Hebrew Funeral Association, Inc., West Hartford. *Obit from The Courant.*





# Leo Rosen, mensch

Leo Rosen, a member of TBT for many years after a long and fruitful life passed away at the age of 91 on November 28. He left behind and will be missed by his beloved wife Harriet, their seven children and eight grandchildren who he adored as well as his dog, Hailey.

Leo was a quiet man and humble man. A mensch, a good guy. Leo met you with a sincere and inviting smile. He had a career filled with achievements. He served honorably as an Aviation Electronic Technician in the U.S. Navy and he could connect all the wires. Upon returning home, he earned his bachelor's degree in engineering from Trinity College and pursued a career as an attorney following his graduation from the University of Connecticut School of Law. He was admitted to the Connecticut Bar in 1950 and later earned admission to practice in several federal courts, including the U.S. District Court of Connecticut, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. He initially worked as a clerk in Hartford's Police Court from 1955-1958 and later went on to enjoy over 45 years of private practice. In addition to his firm's work, he was the attorney for the Town of Bloomfield from 1973-1985, and served as Past President of the Hartford Mutual Society. As a WWII era veteran, Leo was a proud member of American Legion Post 45 and the Jewish War Veterans. He liked to tinker and could fix anything. I asked Harriet what was your favorite restaurant? "Chez Rosen" was the quick response. They travelled around the world, but he loved his summers in Narragansett best. Yes, he was a mensch and will be missed by all. Thanks for being the best husband, father, provider and mediator. May G-d bless you and thanks for setting goals for all to reach. Shalom *By Harold Nevins*



Leo with Harriet and daughter Debbie.

## Kathi's TBT Fire Inspection report January 20, 2017

Kathi Mag and Ralph Horowitz met with Michael Mokrycki from the office of the Wethersfield Fire Marshal in order to have a fire department inspection of 130 Main Street. It was acknowledged that the building has not been inspected for many years—probably more than 10 years, hopefully less than 20. This will apparently become an annual event. The building passed inspection with the following conditions:

1. Wallboard ceiling in sanctuary furnace room must be repaired and sealed. It is currently hanging down over the furnace.
2. Door to the sanctuary furnace room must be kept shut when no one is in there. There is currently a large rock sunk into the mud/dirt floor which is holding the door open. We need to remove this rock and as much dirt as is needed to allow us to close the door. (Ralph took care of this.)
3. Emergency lights needed battery replacement and Ralph and Dave took care of this!

We should get a letter from the Fire Marshal advising us that we have 30 days to correct these items and be ready for a reinspection. Additionally, it was verbally noted that the “storage room” at the southeast end of the social hall could be a fire hazard, and should be cleaned up. I did not tell him it was a Sunday School room.

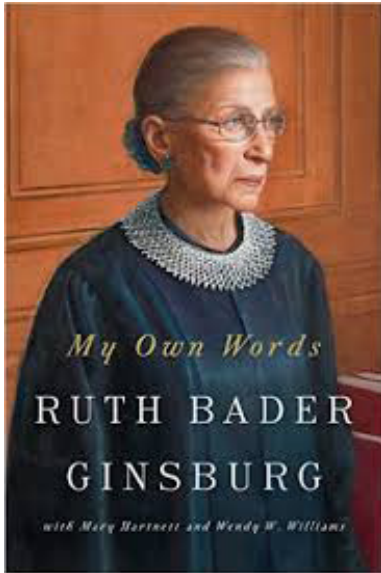
Before the inspection, the CO detector was “chirping”. I had changed the batteries earlier in the month, and again (with Deb Hammer

and Dave Forrest) on 1/16/17. Ralph checked it out and it did not go off again during the inspection. However, on Sunday 1/22/17 at 8:00 a.m. I received a call from Seth. The alarm was going off. Seth said it was the CO alarm, so I asked him to call the fire department, as a bat mitzvah student was due to arrive shortly. The fire department determined that the alarm was defective (said the normal life of a CO detector is about 7 years) and replaced it with a new one at no charge to us. They did suggest (but did not mandate) that we have both smoke and CO detectors near the furnaces, the water heater, and in the kitchen.

It is my suggestion that in addition to making the corrections noted in conditions 1-3 above, we also invest in additional smoke and CO detectors for the classrooms, the kitchen, and near the furnaces and water heater in the dirt basement. The fire department says CO detectors that give a readout of CO ppm on the front panel are a good idea.

The inspector said we could move the sanctuary fire extinguisher just outside the door in the Social Hall and that we should place signs above the extinguishers. It is recommended that we hang the extinguishers on hooks on the wall below the signs.

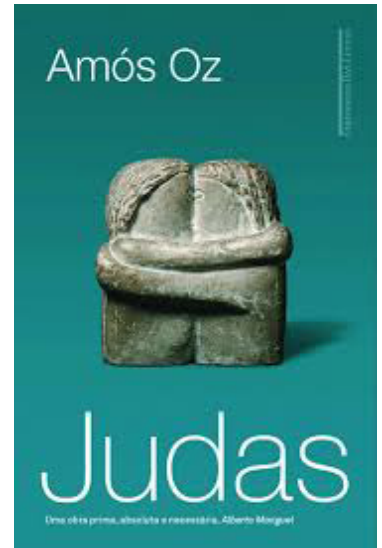
**EXIT SIGNS:** If we are going to keep the illuminated exit signs, we need to make sure they work, otherwise take them down and replace them with the dayglo EXIT signs.



## Book Club News

*Ellen Sue Moses reporting*

The TBT Book Club met on Thursday, January 26th and discussed “My Own Words” by Ruth Bader Ginsburg with Mary Harinett and Wendy W. Williams. We discussed Justice Ginsburg’s life as a lawyer, Judge and Justice. We also focused on her most driving issues, gender and racial equality past and present. Justice Ginsburg approaches these issues from the perspective of providing freedom and fairness for women and men, those of color, and the LGBT community through freeing everyone from stereotypic biases.



Please join us for our next Book Club discussion on March 23 at 5:00 PM in the TBT social hall. We will be discussing the famous Israeli author Amos Oz’s most recent novel, “Judas.” This is one you should not miss! For more information about the Book Club contact **Cecile Bronfin** at [cecile\\_bronfin@yahoo.com](mailto:cecile_bronfin@yahoo.com).

## The Bob and Karen Klein Building Fund

**continues on its way...**

many thanks to our members who kicked off contributions

Helene Rosenblatt,  
Carol Gershenson,  
Rhoda and Fred London,  
Debra and Joe Hammer,  
Joe and Janet Rosenblatt,  
Mara Dresner,  
Ellen Sue Moses and Mark Gould,  
Kathi and Eliot Mag,  
Sallyanne and Barry Scott,  
Bob and Karen Klein  
and Judy and Marty Gold.

These additional folks have contributed since the last Star:

Alice Burstein, Gerald and Karen Waltman,  
Jonathan and Susan Reuben, Rabbi Seth Reimer and  
Barbara Checknoff, Cecile and Barry Bronfin, Barry Goldberg,  
Kristy Notarangelo and Leonard Lev and Gary and Sara Evans

**Let this campaign continue !!!!!!!**

## Building Fund Contributions

Kathi and Eliot Mag in memory of David Goldman  
Kathi and Eliot Mag celebrating  
the recovery of Norman Andrews  
Kathi and Eliot Mag celebrating  
the engagement of Barry Goldberg  
and Lynn Schwartz  
Kathi and Eliot Mag in memory of Leo Rosen  
Judy and Marty Gold in memory of Leo Rosen

## Golden Book Fund Contributions

Maryanne and Barry Dobkin in memory of Jerry Berg  
Sherley and Neale Dobkin in memory of Jerry Berg  
Barbara and Neale Dobkin in memory of Jerry Berg

## Letter and Correction from Jeff Berg

Thanks so much for taking the time to write a very nice article for The Star in memory of my parents, Jerry and Joan Berg. I appreciate your sharing with the rest of the congregation some of the historical perspectives on their contributions to TBT. Since electronic documents live for a long time, could I please request that you correct the spelling of my sister’s name — it’s **Michele Lerer**, not *Michelle Lehrer*. Thanks again.



# Crown Market Marks New Look

## Store Holding Celebration

By **MIKAELA PORTER**  
mmpor@courant.com

WEST HARTFORD — After a year's worth of renovations, Crown Market employees will celebrate Wednesday night — a celebration made possible after a group of 50 investors saved the Crown from shutting in 2014.

"We changed everything from floor to ceilings, walls, the layout," store manager Michael Hanson said. "All 10,000 square feet has been repurposed."

The millions of dollars in investments included upgrades to the kitchens, too, making it a state of the art kitchen, director of operations Roger Keroack said.

Though store management and employees will celebrate a grand reopening, the specialty market in Bishops Corner never shut its doors during the renovations, Keroack said.

"When the Crown was saved by investors, a decision was made to make it accessible to the whole Jewish community, including Orthodox," Keroack said.

Though known as a kosher market, the Crown has catered Sunday brunches,

birthdays and christenings, too, Keroack said. Residents flocked to the Albany Avenue store when word spread that it planned to close.

Calls came in from all over the state, and frequent customers asked employees for advice on freezing their favorite Crown foods.

"A majority of shoppers feel that this is their home," Keroack said. "Things are on a first name basis here."

What started as a co-op run by three men — Sam Smith, Sam Sowalski and Jack Sloat — on Albany Avenue in Hartford, is now a 10,000-square-foot space in Bishops Corner.

The market moved to 2471 Albany Ave. in the late 1960s, Keroack said.

"Well, for me it's emotional, sentimental," said Mark Seltzer, one of the Crown's investors and son of Ralph Seltzer, a former partner. "It was a family business. We spent a majority of our years here."

To celebrate the completed renovations, the store will raffle off a Shabbat dinner each night for 18 days — 18, Keroack said, for good luck.

Wednesday night's reopening ceremony is scheduled for 6 p.m.

## TEMPLE BETH TORAH

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Executive Committee: **Sallyanne and Barry Scott, Kathi and Eliot Mag, and Karen Klein**

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Recording Secretary: **Carol Gershenson**

Corresponding Secretary: **Karen Klein**

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**Checknoff, Cecile Bronfin, Carol Gershenson,**

**Kathi and Eliot Mag, Susan Reuben,**

**Sallyanne and Barry Scott, Fred London**

Nominating Chair: **Cecile Bronfin**

Miscellaneous: **Phil Lohman with Ralph Horowitz**

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it!

1/24/17



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