



THE STAR

NEWSLETTER OF TEMPLE BETH TORAH ■ MAY/JUNE 2017 ■ IYAR SIVAN 5777 ■ VOL. 20 NO. 5

Message from Rabbi Seth

The Heart of the Matter

Shavuot begins, this year, on the evening of **Tuesday, May 30**. For that occasion we'll have a *tikun* / study session at the home of Ellen Sue Moses and Mark Gould, **79 Natchaug Drive, Glastonbury, 7:30 p.m.** for the purpose of sampling texts and themes from our vast storehouse of Jewish literature. It happens across the world in Jewish communities, who celebrate, on this holiday, the anniversary of Israel's receiving the Torah from God on Mount Sinai. For the occasion I will offer some reading and discussion topics, and I invite you to do so as well if you feel motivated to be in the "teacher" role. (If you're interested, please let us know by emailing us at sethriemer@aol.com and ellenmoses@sbcglobal.net.)

Here's a mini-lesson: The Torah ends with the word **ישראל**, *yisrael* (Israel) and begins with the word **בראשית**, *bereshit* (often translated as "in the beginning"). Thus, the last letter of the Torah is **ל**, *lamed*, and the first letter is **ב**, *bet*. From back to front, those letters form the word **לב**, *lev* (heart). The Torah—as the Jewish people's central text, the basis of our entire legal system, the core of our cultural identity, and the source of our prophetic vision—is the very *heart* of Jewish experience: the lifeblood of Jewish consciousness pulses through our Torah.

The Torah encompasses Judaism's age-old affirmation and celebration of learning, including life-long learning. People who think they've learned everything there is for them to learn are sadly mistaken. I have been guilty, more often than I want to admit, of being a "know-it-all," and that attitude is unhealthy for (to continue with the "heart" metaphor) it works like bad cholesterol to clog the arteries of reflection and block needed oxygen from coursing its way through our spiritual veins. Curiosity is, by contrast, one of human beings' better instincts. If you are curious to know more about our tradition, join us for the *tikun*!

I offer you my heartfelt wishes for a joyful, enlightening Shavuot!

JOIN US FOR A SHAVUOT *TIKUN* / STUDY SESSION

Celebrating the anniversary of Israel's
receiving the Torah from God on Mount Sinai



Come to Learn, Discuss, and/or Contribute a teaching moment

Tuesday, May 30 at 7:30 PM

At the home of:

Ellen Sue Moses & Mark Gould

79 Natchaug Drive, Glastonbury

860-643-9663

Please RSVP by May 23rd to:

sethriemer@aol.com or ellenmoses@sbcglobal.net

*Make sure you read page 4
for important additional invitations!*

Message from the Executive Committee

Something to Think About

All around us, in every religion, in every denomination, is evidence that participation in old line faith organizations is diminishing. Across the country, congregation membership is down and participation in organized religion, in general, is less important to families than in preceding generations. This observation seems to hold true not only for Jewish institutions, but for Catholic and Protestant ones as well.

You don't have to be a theologian to come up with an explanation for this phenomenon. Young families are busy today; both parents working and kids in school and active in after-school activities from sports, to music, to dance...and so much more. To add religion to the mix, even after growing up with Temple membership, Bar and Bat Mitzvah and, perhaps, experiencing Confirmation study, young families are choosing to practice their faith

in a more personal, private fashion. Add to this the number of young adults for whom religion was not a deciding factor in selecting a life partner and one can begin to understand why traditional institutions of worship and education are waning. The major participants at Temple events are those who have retired from regular employment.

TBT's membership seems to be holding steady at about 52 dues-paying "members" consisting of both families and individuals. But, we are clearly NOT growing and not attracting a younger group and this could be a danger when we are no longer able to support basic services and building maintenance as our more senior members pass away or people choose to drop off our rolls. Our overall monthly expenses are modest and, to date, have been met by our dues structure and the generosity of some of the

"elders" who have stepped up year after year to finance special projects. We want to "think positive." But the reality of the situation is such that we cannot stick our heads in the sand and ignore what has become a national trend in every religion. I strongly believe that we have a choice to make within the near future...either commit to a hearty expansion drive or begin the process of disbanding TBT, or merging with another, existing Congregation, arranging to sell the property and calling it a day, having enjoyed many years as an independent Jewish institution.

We welcome your ideas on the subject and encourage your participation in the discussion of "What Comes Next" for TBT. This is YOUR community, and only YOU can help make it become what you want it to achieve.

Editor's Note

Dear TBT Member and Star Reader,

We hope you will take time to think about your vision of the future of Temple Beth Torah and **email** it to us at ellenmoses@sbcglobal.net

We will include your comments in the next Star with the hope this is the start of a conversation.

Also...*plus*, please, just send us an quickie email so we can know you are reading The Star. Thanks

Important Invitations!

Barry and Lynn cordially
invite everyone to their *Aufruf*

We got this email from Barry but are unable to set hebrew letters,
so this is a scan of that email.

Lynn & I would like to invite all the members of TBT to our Aufruf to be held at Saturday Morning services, May 27, 2017, @9:30AM at B'nai Tikvah Sholom, 180 Still Road, Bloomfield, CT. 06002.

We will have a kiddish after services.

Please place this invitation in the star and please note a RSVP would be appreciated. Below is the interpretation of what a Aufruf is.

Call me if you have any questions. 850-930-5472

Thank you

Lynn & Barry

Aufruf (Yiddish: אויפֿרוף ofrif,oyfruf, ufruf/ifrif or אויפֿרופֿן ofrifn), which in Yiddish means "calling up", is the Jewish custom of a groom being called up in the synagogue for an aliyah, the recitation of a blessing over the Torah.

*And also everyone is cordially invited to join us for a
Temple Beth Torah Shabbat service with a special oneg*

To honor Dave Forrest

*for all of his hard work,
dedication, and devotion to Temple Beth Torah*

Friday, June 2nd, 2017

*Shabbat Services at 7:00pm, followed by the special oneg
RSVP by May 30th to Sallyanne Scott at 860-828-3377 or batsps53@gmail.com*

And also everyone is invited to a

“Big Round of Applause for Volunteers Potluck Brunch”

We are planning a potluck brunch Sunday, **June 11 from 11:30-1:00** to celebrate **ALL** of our devoted volunteers...*“It takes a whole village”*...to successfully run a synagogue. Our Executive Board leaders and Officers have led the way by example and for all their efforts we will say **thank you!** As we all know, it takes many hands working together for success...So let's come together to give a **big round of applause** for **ALL OF US** who have worked through all these years and will work into the future for our continued success....See you **ALL** on June 11!

And please RSVP to Judy Gold goldjrg88@comcast.net to let her know how many folks are coming and what they would like to bring for the potluck!



Rabbi Seth's Doctor of Divinity Ceremony

Along with other 1992 graduates of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Rabbi Seth will receive an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree during the College's June 11 graduation ceremony. This event marks the 25th anniversary of his graduation.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, is located in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, about 10 miles north of central Philadelphia. RRC is the only seminary affiliated with Reconstructionist Judaism.

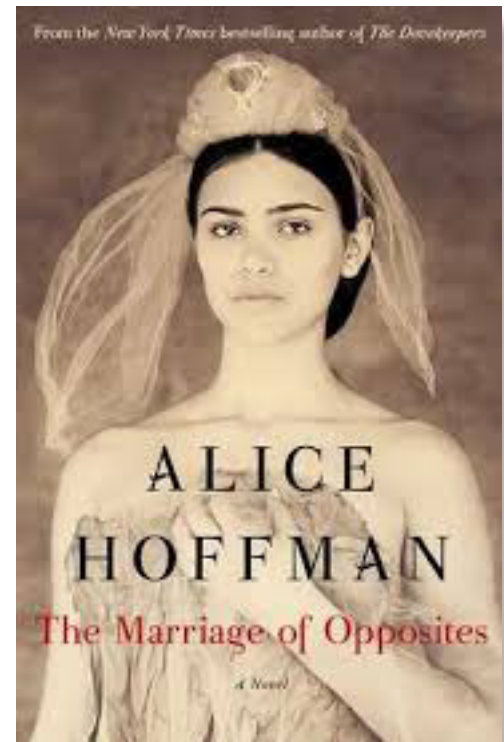
TBT Book Club

The TBT Book Club is now reading "The Marriage of Opposites" by Alice Hoffman. It is a great read about the Jewish Community in Danish St. Thomas. It is a semi-historical fiction about Sephardic Jews who escaped the Inquisition. It introduces the reader to a difficult young girl who has 2 marriages and ultimately becomes the mother of the impressionist artist Camille Pissarro.

The book club meets about once every 6 weeks to discuss a book with some Jewish content. We have great discussions. We meet in the vestry at TBT.

All are invited.

And check the blast e-mail for the date of this discussion.



I'd like to share an anecdote with you. Barry and I have had 2 Israeli high school students stay with us for a week each year. They are here to compete in an international robotics tournament at Trinity College.

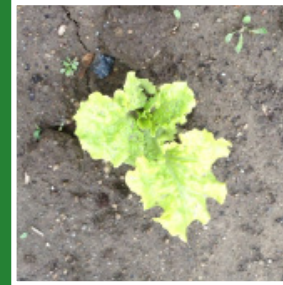
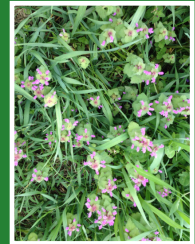
I am proud to announce our boys won 3rd prize in the high school international competition. They were with a group of 10 students from a Tel Aviv High School. They came with 2 teachers from their school. One was their robotics teacher. The other one taught Hebrew and literature.

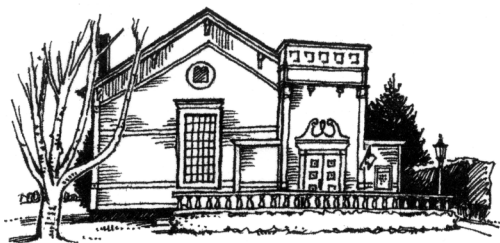
I told the literature teacher we had just read "Judas" by Amos Oz. I have read and enjoyed several books by Amos Oz. I had met him and gotten his autograph at a Jewish Book Festival event at the JCC. This Israeli teacher insisted she had *never heard* of Amos Oz. I was sure she should know him, although the book "Judas" was new.

Well it turns out the Hebrew pronunciation of Amos Oz is very different from ours. She said finally, "*Oh! Ahmoos Ohuz.*"

Cecile Bronfin

OUT BACK OF TBT





DONATIONS

GOLDEN BOOK

- 4/4/17 Fred & Rhoda London:
on the yahrzeit of Fred's mother,
- 4/10/17 Fred & Rhoda London:
in memory of Roslyn Dresner, mother of Mara Dresner
- 4/10/17 Fred & Rhoda London:
in memory of Faye Rosenthal, wife of Alan Rosenthal
- 4/14 Marty & Judy Gold:
In memory of Roslyn Dresner, mother of Mara Dresner
- 4/14 Marty & Judy Gold:
Misheberah and Get Well Soon to Bob Klein

BUILDING FUND

- 4/14/17 Sheila T. Marks
- 4/18/17 Maureen & Ralph Horowitz:
in celebration of daughter's academic honors
- 4/30/17 Eliot & Kathi Mag:
in celebration of the birth of Sallyanne and Barry Scott's first granddaughter, Tenley Epstein

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

- 4/21/17 Mara Dresner:
in appreciation of kindness and compassion to family.

TEMPLE BETH TORAH

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Rabbi Seth Riemer

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Executive Committee: **Sallyanne and Barry Scott,**

Kathi and Eliot Mag, and Karen Klein

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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**

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MORE

This from Judy Gold.

HONEY CAMPAIGN



Welcome back Temple Beth Torah. We're putting finishing touches on the Honey From The Heart website

Dear Judy,

We hope that Temple Beth Torah is ready to start its honey campaign because Honey From The Heart will be opening very soon! If you are no longer involved with your organization's honey sale, please forward this email to the appropriate person and/or let us know who to contact.

Prices will remain the same as last year: The minimum recommended selling price is \$11 and as a distributor, your cost will be \$6.75 per jar. If you are unable to sell the 50 jars required to qualify for distributor cost, we will allow a courtesy cost of \$8.75 per jar in appreciation for your efforts.

Free shipping is offered through July 24th. We guarantee delivery in time for Rosh Hashanah for orders placed by August 31st and will continue to accept orders through the High Holidays.

You'll receive an email from us as soon as registration opens. All of your materials including flyers, new order forms and reorder forms will be available for you to download from the website once you've registered. Feel free to get in touch with us at orthoney@gmail.com if you need anything or have questions before registration opens. We're always happy to hear from you!

To help you zip through registration when we open, **here's a checklist** of the information we'll need. Your previous registration information will be pre-loaded and you'll just need to update anything that has changed.

Contact information for your organization, your primary honey contact, and (optional) co-chair and alternate contact

Your payment methods: credit cards are the default method. If you also allow your customers to pay you by check, select that option

Your organization's logo: to appear on your honey web store (optional)

Your organization's mission statement and/or how the proceeds from your honey sale will be put to use: to appear on your honey web store (optional, up to 150 words)

The URL for your web page promoting the honey sale (if you will be linking from your website to your honey web store)

Your selling price (minimum \$11 or higher, in increments of \$.50)

The name of your organization as it should appear in the donation wording at the bottom of the gift cards that are included in each honey shipment

Thank you for the opportunity to be your fundraising partner again.

HONEY FROM THE HEART...THE SWEET WAY TO RAISE MONEY

MORE

MORE HONEY CAMPAIGN



Welcome back Temple Beth Torah. We're putting finishing touches on the Honey From The Heart website.

- Free shipping through July 24
- After July 24 add \$4 per jar shipping
- International shipping available (additional charges apply: \$15 to Canada, \$25 to other countries)
- Delivery by Rosh Hashanah for orders through August 31
- Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on September 20
- Orders accepted through the High Holidays

All proceeds from Honey From The Heart support Israel's Hodayot youth village, part of World ORT Kadima Mada (Science Journey). During the honey sale we will be profiling Hodayot students. We hope you enjoy learning how your participation in Honey From The Heart is making a difference in the lives of these students.

STUDENT PROFILE:

Eden Tigabo was born in Israel and came to Hodayot Youth Village in 8th grade and is now a senior at Hodayot.

"Hodayot is like my second home. The staff is so caring and warm and there is always someone who will listen to you. This is what makes Hodayot so special."

Eden is specializing in the police study track. She says it is good for her because "it demands discipline. You can't avoid wearing uniforms or saying you don't feel like it today." After graduation Eden wants to serve in the Israel Defense Forces as a soldier-teacher or serve as a policewoman. She has rave reviews of several classrooms recently updated by World ORT Kadima Mada. "It's totally different thinking and different learning – your thoughts are more creative." Eden said the modern design of the classrooms motivates learning, and the options of using internet during a lesson are new.

Eden wants to eventually become a school principal and educator and return to Hodayot as a staff member because of the special connection she has with the teachers and staff, and she would like to do the same thing for kids in need



The Bob and Karen Klein Building Fund

continues on its way...

many thanks to our members for their 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,
Judy and Marty Gold,
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,
Gary and Sara Evans,
and Leslie Levine**

Let this campaign continue !!!!!