

THE STAR

NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2018

IVAR-SIVAN-TAMMUZ/ 5778

TEMPLE BETH TORAH, 130 MAIN STREET
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT



Message from Rabbi Seth

Spring didn't really happen here. It came like a secret agent in disguise or like the melodrama's abducted heroine, unable to speak, the wicked, mustachioed villain (Winter) having covered that sweet ingénue's mouth with duct tape. And now summer is peeking cautiously around the corner to see if the coast is clear. We'd be rash to venture an opinion on the subject.

Eight years ago I produced a play of mine here at TBT. The action takes place in June, and it is snowing. Prophetic, or just timely? What's next—Hanukkah in July?

We can go with the flow as long as it doesn't involve massive coastal flooding and other man-made cataclysms. Climate change (or whatever you want to call it) has made a mockery of seasons, whose "succession," the Shabbat eve blessing (the one right after Barehu) declares, "God will "set out" in a reliable, dignified way. That promise, the notion of a coherent calendrical cycle, seems to be fading. The divine design appears in disarray, and Mother Nature is upset.

Don't get the wrong impression about God's role in these apocalyptic events. God has not broken his age-old promise to maintain predictability and order. It is we who have failed to live up to our end of the bargain. We're the ones messing around with the natural rhythm. God, scratching her head as she tries to deal with our antics and clean up after us, wonders what disaster we'll cook up next, what new form of insane disruption we might have in mind.

Whatever happens to the planet, I wish for tranquility in your world:

May you and your loved ones enjoy a summer blessed with joy and fulfillment.

I also hope and pray none of us get caught in a summer blizzard. Have fun, and I hope to see you around! If you want to meet up for coffee, please let me know—I'd love it. If necessary, I'll ski, or kayak, to Starbucks to see you!

NEWS AND NOTES FROM TBT

THE VALUE OF HISTORY...Helene Rosenblatt/ contributor

Anshei Israel Synagogue is a historic building located in Lisbon, Connecticut. The Orthodox Jewish Congregation was founded by 15 families and the synagogue constructed in 1936. It was built by George Allen & Sons. The interior is a single room that is lined with five benches before an altar which held the sacred ark.



The congregation's membership dwindled throughout the 1940s and 1950s, limiting the services to holidays before finally closing in the early 1980s. Rules in the congregation were not as strictly enforced as in the Old World, there was no curtain to separate the sexes and distant members were allowed to drive part of the way to its services. The Town of Lisbon took ownership of the property in the 1980s. The synagogue is currently maintained by the Lisbon Historical Society. The synagogue was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

It is recognized as an architecturally significant example of "a small country Jewish house of worship". It remains an important pre-1945 Jewish house of worship in a rural setting and possessing integrity in its design. In 2001, the building was featured on Connecticut Journal, a program of Connecticut Public Television. In 2005, the building was in need of repairs due to neglect and damage from squirrels. The Lisbon Historical Society received a \$5,000 grant from the Quinebaug Shetucket National Heritage Corridor to make repairs on the synagogue. Repairs were done to repair

the structure and the electrical wiring was replaced for free by the students at the Norwich Regional Vocational Technical School.

Thanks to Harold for letting us know about the Lisbon synagogue. Sad to see it is no longer used by Jews, but glad it has survived as an historical artifact.

Now to CURRENT EVENTS...

Temple Beth Torah – and the Fight to Preserve History Temple Beth Torah is currently in its own fight to preserve history. TBT was built in 1824 as a Methodist Church and was purchased from the church after it outgrew the space in 1960. Founding members of TBT were involved with the Masons and worked with their Masonic Brothers on the acquisition and transition to a Jewish Home of Worship in 1960. Today TBT needs extensive repairs to stop the water damage from the former Steeple area, as well as the fix much of the exterior of the building. TBT Board Members have met with contractors who helped layout a plan for repair priority and gave some estimates of cost. I began working on researching monies for Historical Preservation. In April, I submitted a pre-grant application to the "National Fund for Sacred Places, and in early May a requested a Pre-Application for the Maintenance & Repair Grant from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation site. Those applications were completed online and are pending any notification positive or negative.



Please check out <https://cttrust.org/cttrust/page/connecticut-trust-grants> and <https://fundforsacredplaces.org/what-were-looking-for#Need> for more information on these granting programs. Any suggestions for other grants would be most welcome. I would like to save our "home" for a number of reasons, including its personal and Historic value. Updates on grant proposals will be provided in the future..

You can do something easy to help support TBT!

USE Amazon smile to purchase from Amazon.com. What items qualify for Amazon smile? Purchases Eligible for AmazonSmile <https://org.amazon.com/>

Be sure to choose : Temple Beth Torah, Inc. Wethersfield, CT as your charity

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

How do I shop at AmazonSmile?

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

Which products on AmazonSmile are eligible for charitable donations?

Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages. Recurring Subscribe-and-Save purchases and subscription renewals are not currently eligible.

Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

How do I select a charitable organization to support when shopping on AmazonSmile?

On your first visit to AmazonSmile smile.amazon.com, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. We will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

Donations. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages on smile.amazon.com. Recurring Subscribe & Save purchases and subscription renewals are not currently eligible.

Amazon.com Help: Purchases Eligible for AmazonSmile Donations
<https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html...>

Amazon.com Help: Purchases Eligible for AmazonSmile Donations
You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages on smile.amazon.com.

Donations to TBT since November 1, 2018

(revised 3/8/18)

Wishing Ralph Horowitz a Speedy Recovery

Deb and Joe Hammer Kathi and Eliot Mag

Building Fund:

Sallyanne and Barry Scott Debra Ehrlich

Year End Donation:

A.Z. and Evelyn Soforenko Carol Gershenson

In Memory of Alfred Dresner, Father of Mara Dresner:

Marty and Judy Gold Joseph and Debra Hammer
Eliot and Kathi Mag Fred and Rhoda London

**In Memory of Louis Kohn, Husband of Elana Kohn, Brother-In-Law of
Samuel E. Karff**

Eliot and Kathi Mag

**In Honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Max Diamond, Grandson of Johnny and
Freda Goldstein:**

Marty and Judy Gold Eliot and Kathi Mag

In Honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Grandson of Marty and Judy Gold

Eliot and Kathi Mag

In Memory of Harvey Goldberg (Received 3/8/2018)

Rhoda and Fred London

In Memory of Alan Kaufman

Judy and Marty Gold (received 3/8/2018)

FROM TBT BOARD REGARDING 2018 YOM KIPPUR YIZKOR DONATIONS

Dear TBT Members and Friends,

The TBT Board unanimously decided that each name to be read on the Yom Kippur Yizkor List would require a donation of \$18 per name. As you all know, everything is getting more expensive and our building is not getting any younger. It is in need of many repairs that go beyond the ability of our dues to address. Through these Yizkor donations, we hope to be able to tackle some of these repairs.

We are also asking you to consider making a donation to TBT when there is a Yahrzeit for one of your loved ones. Please know that this is entirely voluntary. Making a contribution would be a mitzvah and would be appreciated by the entire congregation.

We thank you in advance for your support.

FROM Judy Gold

Hello friends,

Yes, our Honey Store is now open for 2018! For those not familiar, we host this fundraiser each year. It's a very "sweet" way to wish friends and family a Happy New Year, while helping to support TBT.

This year's flyer is attached. In it, you'll find a link to our virtual store homepage. Our returns from this fundraiser grow exponentially once we hit the threshold of 50 jars sold, so let's get going!!

Thanks for participating (your loved ones will thank you, too!),
Your TBT Ways and Means Committee

Temple Beth Torah, Wethersfield, CT

HONEY FUNDRAISER 2018



This 8-ounce jar of delicious kosher honey arrives in time for the Rosh Hashanah holiday, decorated with a colorful label, and includes a personalized card reading "L'Shana Tova—Wishing you a Healthy and Happy New Year." This card also lets the recipients know that a donation has been made in their honor to **Temple Beth Torah.**

What better way to wish family, friends and business associates a "Sweet and Healthy New Year" than sending a jar of honey?

For more information please contact:
Judy Gold
860-521-0334
goldjrg88@gmail.com

Your cost is **\$12.00 per jar** which includes shipping and handling within the United States. We will gladly mail orders outside the United States for an additional fee. To order honey go to [TBT Honey Store](#), and follow the step-by-step instructions. This is now a secured site. Major credit cards are accepted for payment.

Order by July 11, 2018 to avoid a \$5.00 per jar shipping fee.

New Years Greetings Time Again!



Marc Chagall, The Shofar

Before we know it, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur will be here.
Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on Sunday, September 9th!

Just like last year, we are not mailing greetings to our members,
but rather displaying them on a large graphic
in the Sanctuary for all to view!

Our own Phil Lohman, will again be designing this year's greetings.

The cost is \$36 per family unit
(ie. Sallyanne and Barry Scott, Todd, Tenley Anne, and Aaron).

To have your family included in the greetings, please send your check
for \$36 for each greeting to
Judy Gold, 88 Balfour Drive, West Hartford, CT 06117.

So, please don't delay... to be included as a well-wisher,
we MUST have your check by September 1st .

YOUR CHECK IS YOUR RESERVATION!

The Unorthodox Matchmaker

Yocheved Lerner-Miller pairs up misfits — the divorced, the middle-aged, the newly religious — in the Lubavitch Jewish community in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

By **MARISA MELTZER** APRIL 2, 2018
Lifted from *The New York Times*

Yocheved Lerner-Miller is a matchmaker for Orthodox Jews who come from unorthodox backgrounds.

“Look, the perfect boy from the top yeshiva and the perfect girl from the best seminary probably don’t need me,” she said, sitting inside Choco Latte, a kosher coffee shop in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn. “I deal with divorced people. I deal with older singles who are already in their 30s, 40s, 50s and beyond. Sometimes they’re just people who somehow missed the boat, or they’re converts.”

Even though Ms. Lerner-Miller, 55, lives in Kensington, she jokingly referred to the section of Crown Heights south of Eastern Parkway around Kingston Avenue as her shtetl. For Lubavitch Jews, members of the Orthodox movement she belongs to, it’s an area “where everybody somehow ends up at some point.”

Ms. Lerner-Miller has earned a reputation in the community for pairing up oddballs and outliers — words she uses affectionately and with which she identifies.

Born Jill Lerner into a nonpracticing Jewish family in Brooklyn, she was always drawn to religion.

“I would say, ‘My friend down the street goes to Hebrew school every week. Can’t I go?’”

“My grandmother would say to me, ‘You’re Jewish. That’s enough.’” On family vacations Jill would remove the Bible from her motel room bedside table and hide in the bathroom, memorizing its pages.

The road to religion was hardly a straight path. When Ms. Lerner-Miller was a teenager, she moved with her family to Florida. She stayed in the Miami area for college, first studying at University of Miami and then at Barry University, where she earned a degree in systematic theology. Later, at SUNY New Paltz, Ms. Lerner-Miller got a master’s degree in educational administration.

She worked as an E.M.T., and, as a classically trained pianist, became a music teacher in public schools. She also was, briefly, a practicing Catholic after becoming friends with a group of missionaries.

“I did what every other secular person did: I did my own thing, because there were no rules,” Ms. Lerner-Miller said. “The belief that the world is all yours is not very healthy or smart, and it doesn’t lead to more happiness. It leads to confusion in a lot of cases. I certainly did things that I’m not so proud of. I didn’t do anything illegal, but I was just kind of free floating through the world.”

It was just over 20 years ago that Ms. Lerner-Miller began exploring her Jewish identity. Her fascination was prompted in part by a three-year struggle with fertility.

“I said finally to myself, to God, as it may be, ‘Listen, God, I’m kind of lost here. I don’t know what I’m doing. I’ve been through Christianity. I’m looking into Judaism. I’m already in my 30s. If I can just have one child, I’d be very happy. And in order to prove it, I will make my house kosher.’”

Soon after, she was pregnant with her daughter, Chana Lerner, now 21; the father is not involved and Ms. Lerner-Miller declined to speak about him. She kept kosher and raised her daughter as a single mother. When she was in her late 40s, a friend thought it was time for her to find a husband. (Ms. Lerner-Miller also thought it was time for me to find a husband: After learning I was 40 and single,

she said, “Well, what are you waiting for?”) Her friend told her to “Go start looking.’ I said, ‘Are you kidding me?’” Ms. Lerner-Miller recalled. “She said there were matchmakers, and to go find one. And that was a pretty tall order. Are they hidden? Do they advertise in the Yellow Pages? I just started to go ask people, looked online, looked at anything I could find in the Jewish bookstores.”

In consulting various sources, Ms. Lerner-Miller found that she did not fit the profile of an ideal Orthodox wife.

“One matchmaker, when I entered his office, said to me, ‘What can I do for you?’ And I said, ‘Well, I’d like a match.’ And he looks me up and down and he says, ‘When you lose 50 pounds, come back and see me,’” she said. “But who said fat old ladies with teenage daughters aren’t marriage material?”

She met Nechemia Miller, 51, who also didn’t grow up religious and now considers himself Orthodox but not Lubavitch, through an over-the-phone matchmaker. The couple went to pick out an engagement ring on their ninth date, which is considered a long courtship in Orthodox circles. “Feisty and American and independent isn’t all there is,” Ms. Lerner-Miller said.

And then she became a matchmaker. “My way of saying thank you to God was to try to help others be as happy as he made me,” she said.

Ms. Lerner-Miller has earned a reputation in the community for pairing up oddballs and outliers — words she uses affectionately and with which she identifies.

Her role, she said, is often misunderstood; she blames depictions in “Fiddler on the Roof” and “Yentl.” Today’s matchmaker is trying to combine ideas of agency and freedom with deep religious traditions. “I’m trying to encourage you to go with one person or the other,” she said. “One of the things that’s a misconception about the matchmaking process is that you’re assigned a match. You have freedom to say no.”

But she is trying to help the process along, especially in a community that frowns upon the modern concept of dating. She thinks about degree of religious practice, family background, if they want to go to foreign countries — Lubavitchers often travel to promulgate the religion — and personality.

She also prides herself in knowing which requests to politely ignore. One client was a 6-foot-2 man and only wanted to meet women taller than 5-foot-5. Ms. Lerner-Miller had a woman in mind who was a full foot shorter than the man, but shared deeper qualities with him than height compatibility.

“They had minimal religion growing up. They knew about the same amount, they were very committed to growing and learning more,” she said. “They both were college educated. They both had professions. They both had the same kind of family structure. And at that point to me, height was just like, well, not really crucial.” She instructed the woman to wear her highest heels on their first date. They’re married now and have one child.

Ms. Lerner-Miller doesn’t have a going rate, though most clients pay her \$1,000 for a match. Ultimately, she’s not in it for the money.

“I feel a great sense of awe every time a match happens, because look at the amount of people in this world,” she said. “How in the world am I supposed to know that you go with you?”

The secret to finding love and maintaining a happy marriage? Ms. Lerner-Miller says it’s more complicated than a single aphorism.

“There has to be something — a tugging of a heart. Something has to say, hey, you’re good for me and I’m good for you,” she said. “It’s not just, I’m here to have a great old time, me, me, me, me. It’s you, you, us. And that’s the whole secret to it. It takes you out of yourself, it gives you the reason to feel and deal with the needs of

another person and, hopefully, children will be wonderful, and to put you out into the community at large. There’s a dignity to it.”

Just then her daughter came into the coffee shop to say hi. At 21, she is beginning to think about finding a matchmaker of her own. “My mom is not going to do it for me,” she said, and rolled her eyes. “It would be a little bit too awkward for my mom to pick my spouse.”



SAVE THE DATE!

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14TH, 11:00-1:00,
TBT WILL BE HOSTING A BRUNCH TO
HONOR **RABBI SETH'S** TEN YEARS
AS OUR SPIRITUAL LEADER!

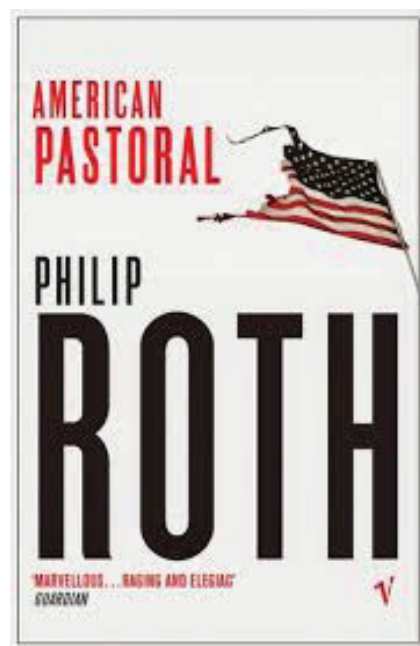
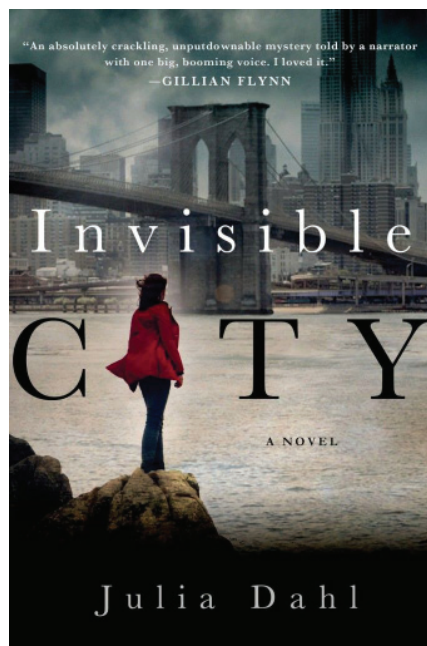


TBT Book Club

The TBT Book Club met for lunch and book discussion at Panera's in Wethersfield on Thursday, May 31st. We discussed the book "The Invisible City" by Julia Dahl. It is a mystery that takes place in an orthodox community in Brooklyn. It was a great read. We all enjoyed the book and were surprised to learn "who did it".

We will not meet again until September. We will be reading books by Philip Roth. We will all read "American Pastoral". Then we will each read another book by Roth and discuss those books.

Rabbi Seth suggested a fantastic story by Roth:
"The Conversion of the Jews" in Goodbye Columbus



Community Outreach Department

On Wednesday, May 23, 2018

Rabbi Seth presented a lecture entitled

*“Jewish Approach Toward
Interreligious Cooperation”*

to guests at Avery Heights in Hartford.

Carol wants to share this appeal.

Dear Carol,

This October, Jews across the country will take action for refugees during HIAS’ National Refugee Shabbat.

Over the Shabbat of October 19-20, 2018, the American Jewish community will dedicate sacred time and space to refugees and asylum seekers. Together, we will learn about the global refugee crisis, connect to the national Jewish movement for refugees, celebrate local acts of welcome and recommit to putting our values into action.

In the face of unprecedented attempts to close America’s doors to those seeking freedom from violence and persecution, this is a critical moment to give voice to our values as Jews and as Americans.

Participate as an individual or as part of a congregation or organization; everyone is welcome. Learn more and sign up: <https://www.hias.org/national-refugee-shabbat>.

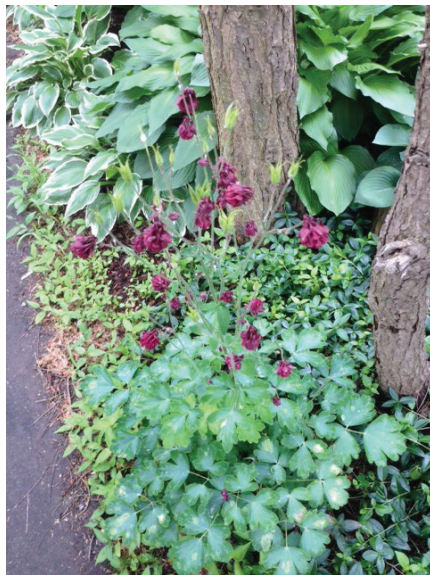
Merrill Zack Senior Director, Community Engagement In solidarity,

TBT OUTSIDE

First off, thanks to our neighbors, Lorraine and Larry Powers for planting these lovely Hastas and mulching on our weedy joint driveway divider strip. Maybe thank them?



Also thanks to whoever planted these additional flowers, below, mixed in with the Hastas. Maybe it was the Powers' as well or maybe Kathi was at work!



In front of TBT by the Felicia bench lives a giant Birch that Helena Kavalier planted to memorialize her hubby, Maurice. It has for many years been treated to healthful infusions by Graver Tree Experts. But it is starting to show lots of fungal growth at its base.



Is there *mishabera* for beloved trees?



Overheard

**Two men are waiting for a train.
The younger man asks the older man for the time,
but the older man ignores him.
After a while, the younger man again asks for the time
and again the older man ignores him.
Frustrated, the younger man finally asks,
“Why won’t you answer me when I ask
you for the time?”**

**The older man sighs and explains:
“Look, if I tell you the time, we’ll start to talk.
Then when the train comes,
you might sit down next to me.
Perhaps we’ll get to know each other,
and maybe I’ll eventually invite you to
my house for Shabbat dinner.
Maybe then you and my daughter would really get along
– why, you might even get engaged!
And why would I want a son-in-law
who can’t even afford a watch?”**

Also Neighbor Farmer Anderson's lettuce
is thriving out back!



...as are his
tomatoes in the
greenhouse!

...and our
Rhododendron
out front is very happy!

Life is good.



TBT OFFICERS 2018

Rabbi Seth Riemer

Executive Committee:

Sallyanne Scott

Kathi Mag

Carol Gershenson

Treasurer: Barry Goldberg

Recording Secretary: Carol Gershenson

Corresponding Secretary: Kathi Mag

Financial Secretary: Sallyanne Scott

Publicity and Friday night announcements: Deb Ehrlich

Membership Chair: Eliot Mag

Board of Education: Barbara Checknoff

Head Instructor: Rabbi Seth Riemer

Religious Studies Instructor: Michele Cyr

Adult Education: Cecile Bronfin

Memorial Park: Barry Goldberg

Building Chair: Gary Evans

Building Committee: Dave Forrest and Kathi Mag

Gardening: Kathi Mag

The Star: Ellen Sue Moses and Phil Lohman

Torah Study, Building Rental, Webmaster: Deb Hammer

Ways and Means Chair: Judy Gold

Ways and Means Committee: Rhoda London and Helene Rosenblatt

Receiving phone calls: Rhoda London

Kol Nidre Appeal: Barry Bronfin

Conduct board meetings: Kathi Mag

Trustee: Susan James

High Holiday Committee:

Rabbi Seth Riemer

Barbara Checknoff

Cecile Bronfin

Carol Gershenson

Judy Gold

Kathi and Eliot Mag

Fred London

Susan Reuben

Sallyanne and Barry Scott

Nominating Chair: Cecile Bronfin

Miscellaneous: Phil Lohman and Ralph Horowitz

MAUREEN HOROWITZ

ABR, GRI, SRES, REALTOR

Licensed in Connecticut since 2002



It isn't easy to find a real estate agent with Maureen's combination of skills, strengths and experience. You will want to call her whenever you or someone you know is considering buying or selling a home. Maureen is a full-time, hard-working professional real estate agent.

Maureen says, "The highest compliment you can give me is recommending me to a friend or family member. Your satisfaction is my top priority."

860.205.9678 Cell

MaureenHorowitz.Agnelli@gmail.com



411 Naubuc Avenue
Glastonbury, CT 06033

Kathi's blooming Iris' or are they Judy's?

