



# THE STAR

**NEWSLETTER**

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VOL. 22 NO. 5

TEMPLE BETH TORAH, 130 MAIN STREET  
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

# Militancy...or Illumination? (a Hanukah Message)

## from Rabbi Seth Riemer

**M**attathias and his sons the Maccabees take matters into their own hands, moving assertively to push back against Syrian-Greek injustice and aggression. In confronting hostile, malign powers, they brush off patient, prudent pressure in favor of audacious, hotheaded confrontation; meet the wicked evildoer with no sympathy but only firm opposition; and reject as wishful thinking the belief that cooler heads will prevail. “Reasonable” Jews no doubt thought the Maccabees’ military strategy foolhardy and suicidal and preferred subservient assimilation, yet against all odds the fight succeeded: a ragtag Jewish army kicked out its larger, militarily superior foe. Militancy trumped diplomacy. On some occasions such militancy is the right approach; is now one of those occasions? The story and choices are complicated, and their complications reflect back (like the flickering Hanukah candle glow) on us both as Jews and Americans: our world is similar to theirs; we have much in common with the Maccabees and their generation.

How can that be? They were facing an immediate menace of forced assimilation; we live with secure rights in a pluralistic democracy. Yet, American politics are in an unsettled state of flux and extreme polarization approaching civil war; if things reach

that point, all bets are off as to the continued viability of those liberties we claim. There remains the abiding, perpetual and noble hope of finding common ground, but the turf Americans share is turf we squabble over, and it has turned out to be quicksand; the foundations of our democracy are surprisingly unstable. This frustrating situation could tempt us unwisely to take our cue from the Maccabees and exchange compromise for militancy.

Then and now, a fluid cultural atmosphere encourages social fragmentation leading to political instability that in turn forebodes violent conflict. Our Hellenistic-age ancestors lived, as we do, in an environment of mixing and experimenting among disparate social groupings and spiritual disciplines, all this activity influencing Jewish life in eclectic and dissonant ways. Well, the Jewish world is rarely other than internally tumultuous. However, that period was an especially tragically fateful one; within the roughly 240 years spanning the start of the Maccabean Revolt (167 BCE) and the destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE) lay seeds of inexorable societal breakdown, the cataclysm of our people’s exile, and long subjugation to Rome and Christendom. The tragedy ensued (not inevitably but understandably) from a rowdy jostling of various religious and cultural

habits and attitudes among Jews living in a broad geographical range (from Persia to Babylonia to Egypt), with tiny eretz yisrael roughly in the center to bear the pressures and absorb the tensions of all that explosive ferment. America's vast geographical breadth likewise holds multiple contending human perspectives and interests.

Americans may have lost the will to embrace, affirm and integrate all of that variety (cases in point: rural and urban Americans routinely detest each other, Republicans and Democrats tend to despise each other, whites and people of color are mutually suspicious); it threatens to consume this nation from within, destroying us as a sovereign democratic republic, one side alternately mocking and bullying another. Americans, like our Jewish ancestors, feel—wrongly, I insist—they can't withstand the heat until cooler heads prevail but must lash out, just as Mattathias did, guerilla commando fashion, against "the enemy." Here some historical perspective is in order.

We enjoy lighting the Hanukah menorah, spinning sevivonim and eating latkes and sufganyot. Early on, rabbinic teaching directed us to these activities that steer us

away from militancy and militarism. Besides appeasing (in the pre-Zionist era) Roman and then Christian authorities fearful of Jewish resistance or rebellion, our Rabbis were applying a historical lesson about disastrous consequences—for Jewish communal stability—that had followed on the heels of the initial Maccabean-Hasmonean military triumph. It did nothing to stanch the hemorrhaging of Jewish culture—the assimilation, corruption and rancor. The lamentable result is well-known: over a painful, centuries' long ordeal, our Jewish commonwealth disintegrated and was swallowed up by greater worldly powers. While admiring the Maccabees' militant zeal, we should be careful not to emulate it out of hand.

At least, before we go to the ramparts, gambling on our ability to beat all those wicked forces arrayed against us, we—Americans applying a signal lesson of our Jewish history—should take some time to light the hanukiyah, gamble for fun with the dreidel, eat latkes and sufganyot, and reflect thankfully on the miracle of the oil.

Happy Hanukah!

# End of the Year Co-Presidents' Message

As our 2019 draws to a close, we have much to be thankful for. Thanks to your continuing support, TBT has survived and thrived for another year. Our biggest accomplishment was the scraping, repairing, priming and re-painting the front and part of the sides of our building. Dave Forrest was instrumental in the completion of that project. Hopefully, our TBT family will continue to be generous and continue to support the Building Fund so we can finish the rest of the building next spring.

Special thanks to Phil Lohman, Micki Bellamy and Deb Hammer for producing and editing The Star and for keeping us all so well informed with each excellent issue.

We had many celebrations throughout the year that were enjoyed by all. Our Purim celebration was a huge success. More than 25 revelers attended! The Kids' Shpiel was just adorable and all enjoyed Rabbi Seth's parody song of "Killing Me Softly"! Refreshments provided by Cecile were delicious, as usual!

The Israeli Pot Luck Supper was a big success with 20 in attendance. The food and company were great! Even though our Israeli emissary was unable to attend, we were nevertheless, able to celebrate Kathryn Kenzel's conversion and the birth of Karen and Bob Klein's new grand-daughters.

The new shortened format for the High Holidays was a big hit, thanks to Rabbi Seth's excellent editing skills! The new 9:30am start time was perfect, enabling us to have a minyan from the start.

Thanks to Gary and Sam Evans for putting up our Sukkah this year. Since Gary is so busy being Wethersfield Town Manager, we need to find a new Sukkah Building Team. If there is a Religious School dad or other member who is interested, please let the board know.

A very big thank you to all of the TBT families who donated food for our TBT food drive which went to the Wethersfield Food Bank. The shopping cart was overflowing with food! Thanks so much!

The end of the year culminates with our Chanukah Party. This year it will be Sunday, December 15th from 11:00am-1:00pm. We know it is the week before Chanukah actually begins, but that date puts us into Winter Break! **Please RSVP by December 8th.** The cost is \$7.50 per person, \$20.00 max per family. There will be a late fee for people who RSVP after December 8th. After December 8th, the cost will be \$12 per person, \$30 per family.

Please make checks out to TBT and send to:

**Sallyanne Scott 105 Sunmeadow Drive East Berlin, CT 06023**

Again, thanks so much for your continuing support for TBT!

We hope that 2020 brings peace, joy, good health and happiness to entire the TBT community!

Shalom, Sallyanne and Kathi TBT Co-Presidents



# Israeli Emissaries visit and join Sukkot party



Rabbi Seth teaching the kids to shake the lulav and etrog for Sukkot.  
Religious school kids doing Sukkot activities during visit by Israeli emissaries  
Shaked and Michal....Photos by Michelle Cyr

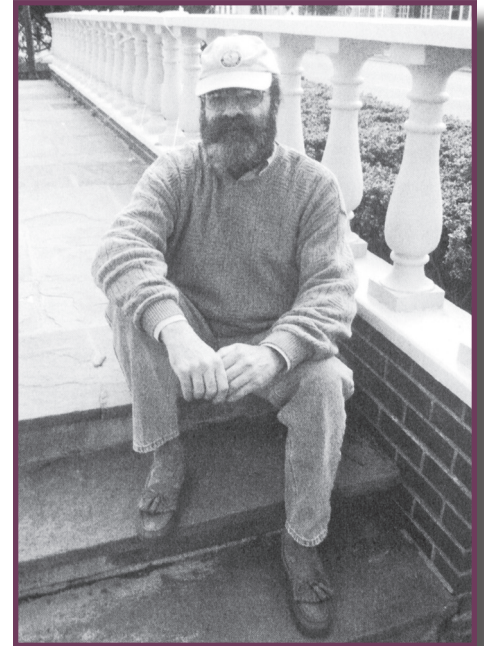


# Past TBT president Michael Kay passed away

DEB HAMMER: I am sad to share with you that former President of TBT Michael Kay passed away on October 25 in Burlington, NC. In addition to serving as President, Michael was a teacher in our Sunday School, able to lead services in a pinch and, perhaps, TBT's biggest cheer-leader. It was my honor to be his VP, fellow teacher and friend. May his memory be for a blessing.

Full obituary as printed in the Hartford Courant, November 2, 2019

**Michael Alan Kay**, 75, passed away on October 25 in Burlington, NC after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. Mr. Kay was born on September 15, 1944 in Hartford, Connecticut to Fay and Arnold Kay. He was a graduate of Hall High School in West Hartford and the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. He raised his family in Tidewater, Virginia and returned to Connecticut before retiring to North Carolina to be closer to his family. He is survived by his three sons, Harris and his wife Reatha, of Chicago, Illinois; Peter of Los Angeles; and Brant and his partner Abby Ampuja of Durham, NC; four grandchildren, Lila Grace and Oliver Ryan of Los Angeles, and Elizabeth Therese and Alexander David of Chicago; and his brother Brian, of Las Vegas. The family wishes to thank White Oak of Burlington for its wonderful caregiving during his final months and asks that, in lieu of flowers, his friends consider a donation to the Parkinson's Foundation.

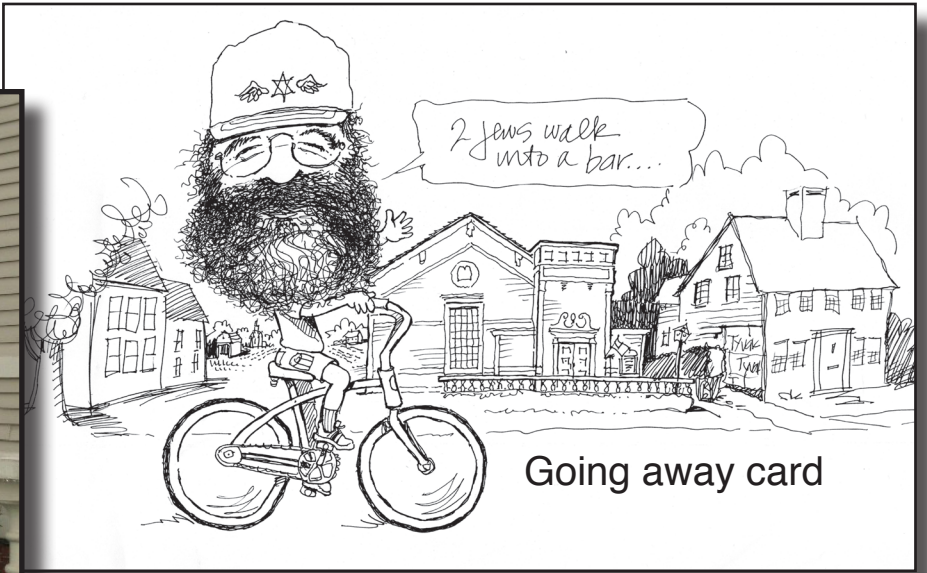


FROM DEB AND JOE HAMMER; Michael brought tremendous energy and enthusiasm to his leadership of TBT. During the time I worked with him on the Board, we'd often hold impromptu meetings on my back porch during his cycling ventures around the neighborhood. These meetings were generally 50% TBT business, and 50% Michael sharing funny stories and jokes. Co-teaching Sunday School with Michael and Susan Reuben was always interesting! He was not always the most "Politically Correct" person in the room, and sometimes used very colorful language in a booming voice to command the kids' attention — very effectively, I might add!! We had fun AND the kids received a solid education. Michael's love for TBT was infectious, and we all came to know his classic sign-off ~ "See you in Shul!"

FROM MICHELLE GOLDBERG CYR: What I remember most about Michael Kay is his smile and his love for TBT. His smile would light up any room he was in. He was a gentle kind soul and he will be missed. May his memory be a blessing.

FROM CECILE AND BARRY BRONFIN: From the 1st day he appeared at TBT, Michael was a major force there. He was very involved with the synagogue in general and with the Hebrew School. He conducted services for us when we needed a make believe Rabbi. When he was seen with Felicia, people assumed he was the Rabbi because of his beard. He will be missed by the TBT congregation.





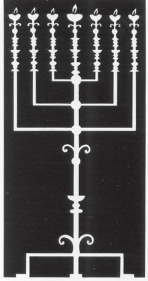
Going away card

Lighting TBT menorah with Ralph and menorah maker Tim Spratlin

Coffee in the Sukkoh



TEMPLE BETH TORAH  
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT



PRESENTED BY  
CECILE AND BARRY BRONFIN  
IN MEMORY OF  
**MICHAEL KAY**  
NOVEMBER 2019

Cecile and Barry Bronfin donated a siddur inscribed in memory of Michael Kay.



Vito's Pizza with Ralph, Phil and Cy.



FROM PHIL AND GERALDEEN:  
Geraldeen often sent a portion of  
her excellent soups to MK which  
he acknowledged with his witty  
rhymes.

One thousand pardons  
For my thoughtless delay;  
This note was due sooner  
(If not right away!).

I had it for supper  
On a night recent past;  
With fresh bread and butter,  
'Twas quite the repast.

Delicious and filling,  
A unique treat so keen;  
But what else to expect  
From Chef Geraldeen?

So, here's a big "THANK YOU"  
For thinking of me...  
The pea soup was excellent!  
(Keep cooking for three ).

Michael

### And The Winner Is...

Two bowls are placed here facing me...  
Oh, which one should I choose?  
The sumptuous one I loved before  
Or the new one...gee, who knows?

The one before (of "mystery" fame)  
I KNOW will be so tasty.  
But should I try Door Number Two?  
Now, Michael...don't be hasty!

One one hand, there's a sure thing;  
On the other, perhaps a gamble?  
What is a poor boy to do?  
Michael...c'mon...you ramble!

This pressure great I do not need  
(Oh, why'd she give me two?)  
There has to be a foolproof way;  
Now, let me think this through.

Racking my brain...I must select  
The surest way to go.  
Aha...I know the answer...  
Eeny-meeny-miney-mo!

The winner is...Door Number Two!  
Number One will be for later.  
I seal the lid and put it back  
In my refrigerator.

One hour has passed and here I sit,  
Smiling, warm and sated.  
The soup was great and I'm so glad  
That I deliberated.

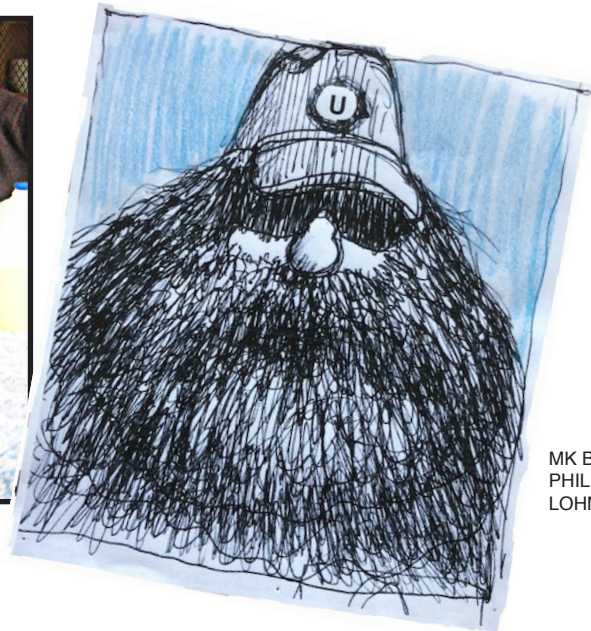
Once again, thanks to Chef G  
For yet another winner.  
One question, though, is on my mind  
Gee...what time is dinner?

*wonderful...wonderful...wonderful  
michael 2.9.07*

RABBI SETH WROTE: I met Michael only a few times--after he had left TBT, but he left a strong impression: of a deeply intelligent, wise, caring, unconventional and unpretentious soul. His reputation for these things preceded him as did his eminence as a strong, constructive, principled presence in and leader of our congregation. Michael's individualism, in particular, came across very directly during those brief moments of my acquaintance with him. How rare and wonderful for community leaders, such as he was, to stand their ground and not let political expedience overshadow personal conviction. In this regard Michael was a noteworthy example of principled leadership in the TBT tradition. We are fortunate to have felt his influence.



Luncheon with Cy, Harold, Ralph and Phil.



MK BY  
PHIL  
LOHMAN

STEVE LEON WROTE Long story short...As a kid I was expelled from Hebrew School. Didn't want my son to experience what I did... Brought my son to Michael Kay at 11 and a half years old and knew no Hebrew. What Michael Kay along with Deb Hammer did along with some other congregants led to one of the best performances in Bar Mitzvah history by my son. Thank you Michael Kay!

RALPH HOROWITZ WROTE: MK was a special person to me. MK was one of the reasons I joined TBT. MK was the President when I learned about TBT, MK made it a point to welcome me and talked to me about TBT and I would be a great asset to TBT and would like me to consider joining. MK served during Viet Nam and he really did not like talking about it. I was impressed with his service in the US Army. MK was a true hero. MK wrote poems to me and Hannah, his quick wit was incredible. One day MK heard me talking to Hannah about her winning the US Coast Guard Young Musician's Contest and would play a flute solo with the Coast Guard Band, MK said he would like to attend. That is the kind of man MK was. I am happy to have called MK my friend and I am going to miss him.

MARTY GOLD WROTE: Michael Kay's passing brings a sense of loss to Temple Beth Torah. He acted as the foundation for our synagogue during some very troubled times. He was the president for over five years and acted as the Rabbi when he was called on to do so. His remarkable synergism with Felicia created a wonderful bond for our congregation which continued for many years. His love for all of us was seen daily and his ties to Judaism were an inspiration to the congregation. May his life be a blessing for all of us. Wishing much sympathy to his family.



MK celebrated Ralph Horowitz's contributions in this whimsical poem!

HELPING OTHERS CONSERVE  
OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCES  
HAS LONG SEEMED TO BE RALPHIE'S PASSION.

HE PROMOTED "GREEN" PRODUCTS  
TO ALL OF HIS CLIENTS  
BEFORE THIS WAS POPULAR FASHION.

LIGHTING CONTROLS  
MODULES, SENSORS AND MORE  
THE PRODUCT LIST, LONGER EACH DAY.

ENERGY COSTS ARE TOO HIGH?  
OUR FRIEND RALPHIE BECAME  
THE ONE TO CALL RIGHT AWAY.

BUT THE TIME HAS NOW COME...  
IN FACT, LONG OVERDUE...  
THE TRUTH DESERVES PROCLAMATION.

EXAMINING ALL FACTS  
SHOWS CLEARLY THAT RALPH  
PUT THE "CON" INTO "CONSERVATION".

BUT AFTER JUNE 30...  
GOOD NEWS, MY FRIENDS...  
THE PLANET'S NO LONGER IN TROUBLE.

"WHY?" YOU MAY ASK.  
THE ANSWER'S QUITE CLEAR.  
THE COWBOY'S RETIRING FROM HUBBELL.

SSKK  
(SHABBAT SHALOM, KOSHER KOWBOY)

# ONEG HOST SCHEDULE November - December 2019

November 22 Heather and Darryl Latorra  
November 29 Thanksgiving Break, no services  
December 6 Moses/Gould  
December 13 Michelle Cyr  
December 20 Deb and Joe Hammer  
December 27 Winter Break, no services

***Shalom!*** This is the TBT Oneg Calendar. If you cannot participate on your "Host" date, please switch with someone else or find a substitute! As a Host, you will need Kedem Grape Juice and a challah. You can also bring cake/brownies, fruit, soda, seltzer, cider, etc. or whatever else you feel like sharing. Tablecloths are in the kitchen, upper cabinets across from the stove. If you use a cloth one, just please take it home, wash it and bring it back the next time you come to TBT. In the lower cabinets to the left and right of the sink, you will find napkins, dessert plates, plastic cutlery and hot and cold drink cups. We also have small wine/juice cups above the dish rack. Just before services are over, count heads and pour the juice. Keep in mind that we don't usually get huge crowds on a typical Friday night, so plan for about 15 people. Thanks for cleaning up when you are done!



This year's Chanukah Party will be  
Sunday Morning, Dec.15th from 11:00am-1:00pm.



**Bring  
Your  
Menorahs**







**Bring  
Your  
Menorahs**





# SCRAP





# BOOK



**TBT RAISE THE ROOF**

**GALA**

**MAY 10, 2014**

# US

**Rabbi:** Seth Riemer

**Co-Presidents:** Sallyanne Scott and Kathi Mag

**Executive Committee:** Sallyanne Scott, Kathi Mag,  
Carol Gershenson, Barry Goldberg and Karen Klein

**Financial Secretary, Lead Person for board meetings:**  
Sallyanne Scott

**Corresponding Secretary for Donations,**

**Co-President, Gardening:** Kathi Mag

**Recording Secretary:** Carol Gershenson

**Membership and Publicity Chairperson:** Karen Klein

**Treasurer and Memorial Park Director:** Barry Goldberg

**Nominating Chair and Board of Education**

**Chairperson:** Cecile Bronfin

**High Holidays Committee:** Rabbi Seth Riemer, Barbara Checknoff,  
Cecile Bronfin, Fred London, Carol Gershenson,

Susan Reuben, Sallyanne and Barry Scott, Kathi and Eliot Mag

**Friday Night Announcements:** Deb Ehrlich

**Head Religious School Instructor:** Rabbi Seth Riemer

**Religious Studies Teacher:** Michelle Cyr

**Adult Education and Book Club:** Ellen Sue Moses

**Receiving phone calls:** Rhoda London

**The Star Newsletter:** Phil Lohman, Micki Bellamy, Deb Hammer

**Ways and Means:** Kathryn Kenzel

aided by Judy Gold and Helene Rosenblatt

**Building Chairperson:** Gary Evans

**Building Consultants:** Ralph Horowitz,

Dave Forrest, Phil Lohman, Kathi Mag

**Torah Study, Building Rentals, and Webmaster:** Deb Hammer

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## 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**

**MaureenHorowitz.Agnelli@gmail.com**



411 Naubuc Avenue  
Glastonbury, CT 06033



**Did you notice that those scraggly hemlocks that grew in the driveway border are gone! This thanks to a cooperative effort with our nice next door neighbors, the Powers. Looking forward to attractive plantings next spring.**

