



THE STAR

NEWSLETTER

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TEMPLE BETH TORAH, 130 MAIN STREET
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

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New Year's Message from Rabbi Seth

We really don't know what's going to happen to our world. The convulsions we're going through have shaken public confidence in prospects for an eventual return to normalcy. Jewish time's familiar festival cycle and forward-looking messianic challenge, its *keva* (fixed routines and predictable patterns) and *kavanah* (keen sense of moral purpose), would have us aspire to something coherent, meaningful and noble. How do our revered religious rhythms play against the discordant noises emanating, these days, from citadels of power? What can our spiritual practices—the upcoming holidays when we congregate to improve ourselves—say to address a moment so disorienting and terrifying as this?

Let's take one current event and see it through the prism of Jewish spirituality. Black Lives Matter has resurged as a civic movement. Racist oppression, baked into the walls of American history, isn't a foregone conclusion—a perpetual historical inevitability: the edifice of hate could crumble. BLM comes in a particularistic form (the demands of Black Power) to broadcast a universalistic message: *human decency can prevail!* The message is a Jewish one; we share it with and learn it from our sister religions, our brethren cultures.

There are, admittedly, and always have been Jews who favor the shtetl over Tel Aviv—not broadminded, secularly aware, multicultural, future-thinking community but religiously traditional, narrowly clustered ethnocentric faith in home and synagogue. However, such an attitude belongs to a shrinking (if loud, self-aggrandizing) minority. We don't have to view our non-Jewish neighbors with antagonism; we can be in alliance with them. Black lives matter to us because they contribute to the well-being of the global community which sustains us as well.

Most Jews know cooperation and science, not isolation and superstition, are what promote well-being for ourselves along with everybody else. The insight is not unique to the Children of Israel. Neither is the insistence on affirming the common humanity of this planet's inhabitants despite our painfully honest assessment of the disappointing social reality—the negative way people treat each other all too often. The African-American community, like the Jewish, suffers mistreatment but still demands fairness and cries out for civility, still works to make a better society. What is unique to Jews is our longevity in the striving for peace and justice; we've been at this struggle longer than anyone else, and we keep that counterintuitive, pure-hearted flame of hope burning.

The Jewish people's very survival in the shadow of horrible, unrelenting man-made evil is a hopeful sign; we bear witness by enduring injustice as well as acting for righteousness. So now, facing a dreadful, convoluted historical crisis—a mixed mayhem of environmental disruption, viral pandemic and political unrest—arising from powerful men's reckless depravity, Jews have a choice: whether to keep advancing the cause of decency, generosity, kindness; to be active witnesses for the sake of the good; to not give up on the world. Can we stay true to our mission: helping to lead the way and thereby holding fast to the commands of our ancient holy covenant?

Let us stare down and subdue the present evil—not for the sake of a return to normalcy but, as our Biblical prophets exhorted, to create a better, nobler normal: to turn today's perilous, lonely uncertainties into tomorrow's unmitigated, shared blessings.

May your New Year be filled with the enlightening, enlivening spirit of Divine Hope.

Message from your president

Dear TBT family and friends. It is hard to believe that this is my last High Holiday message to all of you! I am entering my tenth year of being your executive leader, wow! Unfortunately, this is our year of reckoning. The Covid pandemic struck in March and TBT was forced to close its doors to in-person activities. Lucky for us, Seth held Shabbat services and Torah study via Zoom so we could still have our spiritual connection to TBT. Barry Goldberg, our treasurer was able to secure an SBA Paycheck Protection Program loan to help cover Seth's salary till the end of our fiscal year. And then there was tropical storm Isaias. No power, no AC to protect our precious Torah scrolls. It took down most of our birch tree, Maurice and caused significant damage to our Felicia bench in front. And then our 5-ton AC unit totally fried. Could anything get worse? Yes, it could. We are starting a New Year unable to use our beloved building for services, and as a rental property that supplemented our small income substantially. We have a financial obligation as a congregation to pay Rabbi Seth's salary until his retirement at the end of June 2021. That being said, I implore each and every one of you to not abandon TBT at this time. We need you to pay your 2020-2021 dues in a timely fashion and dig deep for your Yom Kippur appeal contribution.

I remind you that Kathi and I are retiring as of June 30, 2021. We will not alter this decision. Therefore, in order to maintain an effective congregation at TBT, we need a leadership person who will take the reins of the executive board. If you can help, please call me at 860-828-3377. The future of TBT is in your hands. The final decision is up to YOU!

And so on a more gentle note, I close by extending wishes to you and your families for a sweet, happy and prosperous New Year filled with love, good health, and peace. Le Shanah Tova.

Sallyanne

LOTS OF THANK YOU'S!

A special thank you to Dave Forrest for repairing the TBT sign after Tropical Storm Isaias. It was literally hanging by a screw! Now it looks as good as new!

Also, a thank you to our next-door neighbors Larry and Lorraine, for all the beautiful plantings next to our driveway where all the nasty pine trees once stood! Now it is lush and lovely, full of color, bees and blossoms!

Another thank you to our neighbor on the other side, Tom Sapia. He offered us use of his WIFI for the holidays prior to Barry Goldberg securing a grant for TBT to install our own WIFI

Honey From the Heart Participants

Kathi and Eliot Mag, Deborah and Aaron Jainchill, Cheryl and John Hinze, Mara Dresner, Rhoda and Fred London, Judy and Marty Gold, and Geraldeen and Phil Lohman. **Many thanks to you. We were very successful this year. Wishing all a Sweet and Healthy New Year.**

Judy Gold



Air Conditioning

Our treasurer, Barry Goldberg reports that our 30 year old AC unit has been replaced with a High Efficiency 5 ton unit. This had to be done. The Sanctuary has no windows to open and without AC the room is very humid and hot. The humidity was at 68 and the temperature was 88 degrees. You could smell the musty smell of mold and mildew in the room. Once the AC is working this should dry out the Sanctuary and protect our precious Torah scrolls.

Thanks to each and all of you who have contributed to the AC emergency fund. Please see list of contributors below.

Here are before and after pictures!



Hurricane Isaias roared through the Northeast. Wind damage in Wethersfield was quite extensive. Our ancient birch in front of TBT lost two great arms which fell on wires along Main Street. Third arm is in jeopardy.



Michele's photo shows tree on street wires.

Maurice intact before storm.







The Felicia Shpall memorial bench was hit hard and TBT's sign was clipped but Dave Forrest has reattached it.





Eversource lifted the trunks off the wires and disconnected TBT's electricity. Our town crew came and hauled away fallen trunks. Electricity was subsequently reconnected but Eversource neglected to notify us! Switches were still engaged and the system was fried.

Ow!



Harold Reflects...

From time to time The Star calls on senior member Harold Nevins to reflect on TBT's rich history...you may remember his last article which recalled the design and construction of the Lions of Judah that grace TBT's bima, the gift of the Carlin Family....

Here he reflects on the Matriarch of Temple Beth Torah.

The tall tree in front of TBT was shaken to its roots by that last hurricane. It was a white birch planted by a member of the congregation in memory of her husband, Maurice. Helena Kavalier was her name. Most members never met her. She was sent to TBT by the Almighty to look after all the children in our religious school. At that time we had forty children in various grades. It was a wonderful marriage but Maurice was taken early and then Helena dedicated the rest of her life to TBT and the children. It was fitting that as a living memorial she planted a tree that was beautiful and strong and thrived. Cy Levine often spoke of Helena and Maurice because she met Maurice in a 5 & 10 cent store owned by Maurice's family in the same shopping center where Cy and his brother Don had a pharmacy.

The tree struggled against the elements of Hurricane Isaias and when it could resist no longer two trunks broke off and crashed down on electric wires and the Felicia memorial bench. One trunk remained that reminds me of a V. V for victory and saying we won and we will grow stronger for future generations.

In our archives we had a photo of Cy and Helena dancing. Ah yes, do you remember? WHEN? DO YOU? Rita reminds me that Helena would make a gift of a crocheted covered hanger or a toilet paper cover as a token of her appreciation. Her calling was teaching young children. Sadly the rest of the tree must come down before it falls in the next storm and causes serious damage. Hopefully another birch will be planted as a reminder of Helena's faith and dedication.



Helena dances with Cy Levine at her 100th birthday party at the Hebrew Home.

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting was held in back of TBT. We discussed the coming changes and how we will go forward.

Rabbi Seth will be doing his Aliyah and Sallyanne and Kathi plan on retiring in 2021. A committee was formed to consider options.





L'SHANA TOVAH

FROM YOUR TEMPLE BETH TORAH FAMILY

MAY YOUR NEW YEAR
BE HAPPY, HEALTHY
AND SWEET!

High Holiday Greetings

Rabbi Seth Riemer and Barbara Checknoff

Dennis and Micki Bellamy

Cecile and Barry Bronfin and Family

Alice Burstein and Family

Carol Gershenson

Judy and Marty Gold and Family

Barry D. Goldberg & Lynn Kaplan Goldberg, Michelle,
Bill, Brett, Elizabeth, Evan, Wesley, Lee, Jillian and Michael

Debra, Joe, Sam and Lily Hammer

Ralph, Maureen and Hannah Horowitz

Geraldeen and Phil Lohman and Family

Steve Leon and Family

Kathi and Eliot Mag and Family

Rita and Harold Nevins

Helene Rosenblatt

Sallyanne and Barry Scott, Todd, Aaron and Tenley

Karen and Gerry Waltman and Family

Rhoda and Fred London, David, Inna, Sam, Jack and Jonah

Janet and Joe Rosenblatt and Family

Yizkor is an opportunity to bring to mind those we have lost in our lives. It is a time to remind ourselves of the people who have been important in our lives, the experiences we shared with them and the love and wisdom they have imparted to us.

May their memories be for a blessing.

Gary Eliot Aaronson	Andrea "Andie" Goldberg	Helena Kavalier	Henry Rosenblatt
Shirley Bloomenthal	Stanley Ehrlich	Henry London	Evelyn S. Ovrutsky
Isadore Aaronson	David H. Goldberg	Maurice Kavalier	Stanley Rosenblatt
Dr. John Blumental	Allan Ellenberg	Hilda London	Edward Packtor
Eileen Zwirn Abrams	Ann Nadler Goldberg	Judy Carlin Kessler	Sally Sackler
Meyer Blumenthal	Marlene Ellenberg	Samuel Eliot Mag	Margret Palmer
Michael Abrams	Fannie Goldberg	Ethel Klugerman	Don Safran
Sarah S. Blumenthal	Morris Ellenberg	Alter Gerhen Magid	Hoyt Parker
Amy Alsofrom	Isaac Goldberg	David Lappen	Gedialiah Scheck
Pvt. Robert Roy Blumenthal	Rebecca Ellenberg	Dora G. Magid	Clara Podolsky
Harry Azia	Marvin J. Goldberg	Anne Later	Rywka Weingarten Scheck
Celia Bronfin	Hyman Farber	David Matts	Samuel Podolsky
Rita Bailey	William Goldberg	Charles W. Later	Jacob Schneps
Hyman Bronfin	Fannie Mag Fassler	Louis Meister	Janet Poitras
Jacob Barenbaum	Fannie Matts Goralnek	Chester Later	Reva Schneps
Robert Burstein	Victor Fassler	Inge Meltzer	Francis Raim
Maxine Spector Bazan	Allison Charles Gould	Morris Leib	Marcus H. Schonbrun
Alvin H. Carlin	Sadye Feld	George Meltzer	Grace Reuben
Faye Beckerman	Ruth Ann Gould	Bernice Leib	Gloria Scott
Jeanette Carlin	P. Edward Feld	Louis Mestel	Pearl Kimmel Reuben
Louis Beckerman	Allan M. Graber	Florence M. Leinwand	Harold Scott
Carl Checknoff	Alfred Fichman	Ronald A. Michaels	Percy Reuben
Rose G. Beldner	Louis L. Greb	Isadore E. Leinwand	Steven Scott
Ruth Checknoff	Celia Fichman	Rose K. Michels	Stanton I. Revzon
William Beldner	I. Mildred Grossman	Harriet B. Leon	Freida Shein
Thomas Decker	Morris F. Fields	William Michels	Joseph J. Richman
Caroline Kramer Bellow	Ezra Joseph Gubbay	Daniel L. Leon	Benjamin Sher
Debbie Bull	Esther M. Fields	Milton Miller	Rita F. Richman
Oscar Decker	Miriam Gubbay	Sam Lerer	Felicia B. Shpall
Bertha Berg	Clara Mittman Finkel	Ruth Miller	Ruby Riemer
Johanna Decker	Harry Hammer	Mary Levin	Harry Sitcovsky
Jane Berg	Jack Finkel	Sydney Hurwitz Mittau	Neil Riemer
Baruch Dobkin	Naomi Hammer	Benjamin Levine	Louis Sitcovsky
Julius Berg	Florence Finkelstein	Sima Rosia Whiteman Mittman	Mollie Rimer
Celia Dobkin	Joseph George Henowitz	Cy Levine	Muriel Sitcovsky
Max Berg	Ludwig Friedman	Janet Baer Moses	Samuel C. Rimer
Julia Dobkin	Rachel Himmelstein	Isador Levine	Ruth Sobel
Joan Fields Berg	Karen Rome Gagne	Allan I. Moses	Steven L. Rimer
Samuel D. Dobkin	Kathe (Kata) Hopfer	Lottie Levine	Isadore Sockol
Gerald Berg	Robert Galinsky	Lillian Moskowitz	Albert Rome
Sherley Berg Dobkin	Dottie Horowitz	Lynn Raim Levine	Lottie Sockol
Molly Birnbaum	Alvin Gediman	Fannie Moskowitz	Celia Rome
Samuel Dolgoruck	Irving Horowitz	Samuel Levine	Esther Sockolof
Isaac Birnbaum	Arthur Gediman	Samuel J. Moskowitz	Eileen Rome
Sadie Dolgoruck	Tillie Horowitz	David Levy	Boosoo Straus
Eleanor Blonder	Sadye Gediman	Wilma Decker Myer	George Rome
Arthur L. Dubrow	Anna Isaacson	Carrie Melicovsky Levy	Sidney Sukiluski
Lester Blonder	Benjamin Gershenson	Julia Galinsky Naviasky	Sadie Sussman
Leon Dubrow	Bridget Jacoby	Etta Nevins	Esther Swirsky
Madeline S. Dubrow	Mildred M. Jarcho	Helga Rome	Mix Swirsky
Alfred Dresner	Beatrice Lidman	Maurice Nevins	Isaac Tamaren
Shona Zangari Gershenson	Joan Mag Karff	Dr. Leonard Rome	Sarah Tamaren
Debra Dresner	Philip Lidman	Nathan Nevins	Abraham Tauber
Sylvia Mittman Gershenson	Samuel E. Karff	Lewis B. Rome	Edith K. Toubman
Dora Dresner	Anna H. Lieberman	Claire Nordheimer	Joseph W. Toubman
Paul L. Gipstein	Milton Kamins	Martha Rome	Fred Later
Roslyn Dresner	Benjamin H. Lieberman	Haney Nordheimer	Annette Farber Rechtschaffen
Lenore D. Godin	Sally Kamins	Merrill Rome	William B Toubman
Samuel Dresner	Ida B. Lipkind	Hans Nordheimer	Jean Waltman
William Godin	Herman Katz	Nathan Scott Rome	Ida F. Wax
Louis Ehrlich	Irving Lipkind	Louis Nordheimer	Harry Weber
Lillian Gold	Joseph J. Katz	Shaynie Rome	Ida Weber
Rose Ehrlich	Max Lipkind	Millie Goldberg Orent	Robert Morris Zwirn
Louis Gold	Eric Kaufman	Eva Rosenblatt	
Shirley Ehrlich	William Lipkind	Max Ovrut	

DONATIONS

In Memory of Debra Bull, sister of Steve Leon

By Carol Gershenson

In Memory of Debra Dresner, sister of Mara Dresner

By Carol Gershenson and Kathi and Eliot Mag

**In Memory of Samuel E. Karff, brother-in-law of
Kathi and Eliot Mag, By Sallyanne and Barry Scott**

TBT AIR CONDITIONER EMERGENCY FUND

Micki and Dennis Bellamy

Ruth Brainin

Cecile and Barry Bronfin

Rabbi Seth Riemer and Barbara Checknoff

Mara Dresner

Gary Evans

Judy and Marty Gold

Lynn and Barry Goldberg

Yoelit Hiebert

Susan James

Kathryn Kenzel

Karen and Bob Klein

Leslie Levine

Kathi and Eliot Mag

Ellen Sue Moses and Mark Gould

Harriet Rosen

Helene Rosenblatt

Sallyanne and Barry Scott

Barbara Wolfe-Smolin and Hugh Smolin

Karen and Gerald Waltman

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 Consultants: Ralph Horowitz, Dave Forrest,

Phil Lohman, Kathi Mag and Gary Evans

Torah Study, Building Rentals, and Webmaster: Deb Hammer

Lorraine's Flowers in driveway



Social Distancing, oy!



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