



THE STAR

Purim Celebration Issue

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**TEMPLE BETH TORAH, 130 MAIN STREET
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT**

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Rabbi Alan's word: How is success measured at Temple Beth Torah?

I deem my first year as rabbi of TBT as successful, despite a pandemic, despite weather conditions and despite a terrible war in Ukraine, we still had a successful year.

How do we define success, by the number of attendees, by the level of enthusiasm, by the quality of a given program or event? As always, as an active congregation we ask, “who are we, what are we, and what are our goals?”

My goal is to kindle Jewish passion. Judaism is not theater with “actors” on the bimah and “spectators” in the audience. Judaism is not a spectator sport. It requires that all be players.

Jews must be caring and compassionate yet synagogue ritual without implementation in our lives is meaningless. Consoling a mourner, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, giving tzedakah, are not supplements to Judaism...they are Judaism!

How do we bring God into our lives? God may not be a comfortable subject for many of us, but we must understand that uncertainty and doubt are acceptable emotions for Jews. We are free to ask questions, but we are not free to stop looking for answers.

Prayer is a cornerstone of synagogue life. We must make it meaningful and to be so it must be understood. Attendance at services may initially be considered an obligation to the synagogue but prayer can eventually come to be a source of personal enrichment and connection to God.

Education can accomplish this, and we have had some wonderful discussions in our Torah classes, as well in our other classes. We have discussed what it means to motivate our congregants toward greater observance of Jewish law as the rules and traditions are not suggestions. They are relevant and binding commitments to leading a truly Jewish life.

Lastly, let us be aware and accept the fact that Judaism is a way of life. It is not academic material to be studied and discussed once a month as an intellectual exercise. There is a Jewish way to live, and we have explored how to incorporate it into our lives. Our role is not to make people comfortable with their current Jewish practice, Judaism can become even more meaningful with an increase in their Jewish observance.

TBT needs us all. Together we can accomplish anything and everything! **PROPHETIC WORDS!**

Much thanks to Deb and David and the entire board for their support and to all those members who I have met and gotten to love and appreciate over the past year. Thanks to Philip for his ongoing love of keeping this Star communication open and meaningful; this too is holy work.

A special thank you to my bride, Jody for her 34 years of loving support.

Meantime, God does not go on vacation, so we will have various events throughout the summer. much success to them.

At the Shabbat service, on June 3 at 7:00 PM, we will be celebrating our high school and college graduates at a special Baccalaureate Service.

Mazal tov, Behatzlacha, hebrew for much success in their future endeavors to Lily Hammer and Isaac Lopez.

There are 4 Yizkor Services (Memorial) during the course of the Jewish calendar year: Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, Passover and Shavuot, with Shavuot occurring on Sunday and Monday June 5 and 6, we will observe Yizkor on Monday June 6 at 5:30 PM. This service will be 30 minutes, please attend as we remember your loved ones as community.

My prayers for a happy, healthy, peaceful summer.
Rabbi Alan

Co-Presidents's message

As the summer approaches and we look forward to the warmer and less windy weather, your co-presidents want to acknowledge everyone for their participation in and support of our Temple Beth Torah.

As we try to communicate to you weekly through the TBT Update or through the words and the pictures that Phil so artistically designs for the bi-monthly STAR, the goal remains - to engage our congregation in all things TBT.

Our hybrid Shabbat services have been well received as Rabbi Alan hasn't had to struggle getting a minyan. We are hoping to see many of you here in person. The recent celebration of Israeli Independence Day was well received. TBT was honored to have Emeritus Rabbi Seth join us via Zoom from Israel. Photo later in this Star.

A special baccalaureate service will be held on Friday, June 3rd at 7:00pm. The service will be about one hour filled with recognition of scholastic accomplishments. Whether your child or grandchild is moving on from primary or secondary school, college or graduate school it is a time for celebration.

Before you know it, the High Holidays will be upon us. The ritual committee will be meeting over the summer. Please let us know your interest in joining the group so they can integrate any positive ideas to make this blessed time of year a success.

A huge shout-out to our members , who so generously contributed and successfully reached the goal of the painting fundraiser. Individual acknowledgments will appear in the next Star. The project is on its way to completion and it should be ready for our Sunday, June 12, 2022 outdoor annual meeting to be held at TBT at 5:00 pm. A second shout-out to the Evans family for assuming the duties of weekly bringing out the barrel.

Again, the elves have been busy placing spring flowers in the front planters, trimming various overgrown shrubs, removing the distracting vines that were crawling up the building, stocking needed supplies and simply keeping the facility in decent shape.

The Board of Trustees is continuing its commitment to security. In that regard, it is reviewing additional in-person appropriate training sessions for the congregation. More to come in the following weeks.

As mentioned last fall, Debra and I will continue to do our very best to offer experiences that are meaningful, safe, enjoyable, and that feel inclusive to all.

In the spirit of tikun olam - we wish you good health.

Debra Hammer and David Forrest

Readers....Ellen Sue Moses sent this link of interest for the Star....I don't know if folks can open and view this vimeo....? I was able to open it and it is a documentary about the recollection a son of a Jewish WWII vet and included this text. The link: <https://vimeo.com/198357872?ref=em-share>

Following the Footsteps of My Father text, in case you can't open the vimeo...

December 1944 – The Ardennes, The Battle of the Bulge – The 106th Infantry Division landed in France some ninety days after D-Day. The division, which consisted of the 422nd, 423rd, and 424th Regiments, began an arduous journey by truck across France and Belgium. The winter of 1944 was brutal – it was cold and wet. The 106th Division reached the Schnee Eifel area in eastern Belgium near the German border by December 10, 1944, and took up their positions, with the 422nd Regiment taking up a forward position. On December 16, 1944, the 422nd was attacked by the Germans as part of their counter offensive, which became known as the Battle of the Bulge. The Regiment was quickly cut off and surrounded. In the afternoon of December 19, 1944, Colonel Deacheneaux, Commander of the 422nd Regiment, decided to surrender. Parts of the Regiment, including Headquarters Company, in which Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds served, were captured by the Germans later that day.

The Germans captured more than 20,000 GIs during the Battle of the Bulge. The men of the 422nd Regiment were marched some fifty kilometers to Gerolstein, Germany where they were loaded into box cars, 60 to 70 men per car, with virtually no food or water. They spent four days and nights traveling to Stalag IXB in Bad Orb, Germany, arriving on Christmas Day. After several weeks in Bad Orb, the American POWs were divided into three groups – officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and enlisted men. The NCOs were taken to Stalag IXA in Ziegenhain. There were 1,292 men in this group.

The highest ranking NCO was Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds from Knoxville, Tennessee. Upon their arrival in Ziegenhain, the commandant of Stalag IXA, Major Siegmann, ordered all Jewish POWs to present themselves the next morning. Master Sgt. Edmonds ordered all 1,292 American POWs to stand in formation outside of their barracks.

The next day, when Major Siegmann saw that all 1,292 GIs were standing in front of their barracks, enraged he turned to Edmonds and demanded: “They cannot all be Jews!” To this, Master Sgt. Edmonds said, “We are all Jews here.” Siegmann immediately drew his pistol and pressed it into Edmonds’s forehead. Roddie Edmonds did not back down and replied: “According to the Geneva Convention, we only have to give our name, rank and serial number. If you shoot me, you will have to shoot all of us, and when we win this war you will be tried for war crimes.” Siegmann turned around and left. There were 200 Jewish GIs among the 1,292 American POWs. This act by Master Sgt. Edmonds saved the lives of these 200 Jewish GIs.

Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds died in 1985. He was the fifth American to be recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations.

On Monday, November 28, 2016, The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) honored Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds with the Yehi Or Award – “Let There Be Light” and recognized Jewish GIs saved by Master Sgt. Edmonds.

Purim Celebration was a great hit!



The names of these three young people who came to the Purim party are: Sara, Christina, and Becca. (Sara is the grad student who interviewed Wayne, Deb Ehrlich, and Janet.)



More Purim pix



So great, had to run it again...Cecile and Hamantaschen from year past!
Hi Ceil!



This report comes from Janet on Yoelit's Belly Dancing Workshop

Our very own Yoelit, aka Delilah, presented a bellydance workshop on Sunday, May 1, attended by seven lovely ladies. Yoelit provided insight into the history and evolution of bellydance and brought some of her costumes and props for a show 'n' tell. This was followed by a half hour of warm up and dance steps, giving participants a chance to release their inner bellydance divas. The last part of the workshop featured Yoelit performing one of her newest choreographies. A great time was had by all!

There was some discussion at the workshop about establishing an on-going class that would be held in the TBT program hall, if interested, let Yoelit know.

Dear TBT congregation,

Our one and a half hour class last Sunday with the belly dancing master, Yoelit, was simply too short a time spent together. We had fun learning the history of belly dancing, the music variations from different lands, the use and importance of props like veils and hand cymbals. Additionally, the grape-vine step, the proper way to shimmy, and our hip moves to awesome, can't-sit-still to Middle Eastern music fed and nourished our younger souls. We danced, laughter, and wanted more.

Thank you so much Yoelit!!!

(From The TBT Belly Dancers)



Photo by Joe Rosenblatt

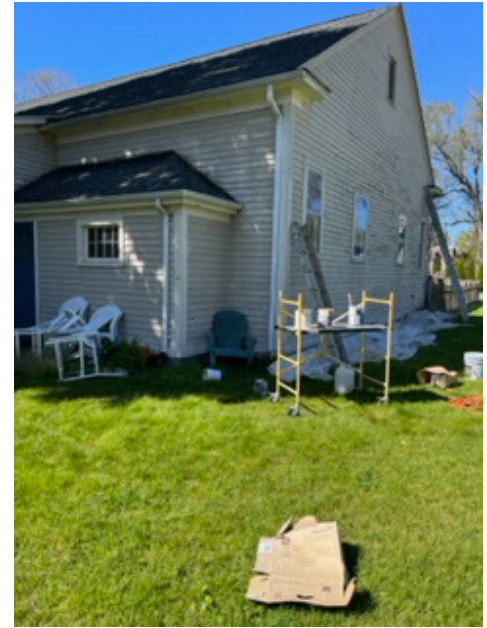
Israeli conversation

On Sunday May 8th, in honor of this years 74th anniversary of Israeli Independence Day. We has a zoom conversation with people who are living in Israel including Rabbi Emeritus Seth of TBT and Lenny Ravich, a celebrated humorist, lower left, an acquaintance of Rabbi Alan. You could look him up.



Painting progress

Completion of the painting of the remaining half of TBT is underway with painter Dominic at the helm.



South wall
looking
fresh.

Thanks to all folks who contributed for this painting project.

TBT's long-time friend, AZ Soforenko sent along these family snaps to Sallyanne to share with TBT.



AZ and Ev in Jerusalem as a consultant to Israeli government...A great experience!

Rabbi: Alan Lefkowitz

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