

Newsletter of Temple Beth Torah
Wethersfield, CT
Vol. 16 No. 4

Special Interest Articles:

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Rabbi Seth
Riemer
- School News
- Adult Education

Individual Highlights:

Message from the Co-
Presidents
Golden Book

Passover Message from Rabbi Riemer

When I was a child, at the Passover Seder, my brother and I would take a piece of string and tie it around the side of *kos eliahu*, Elijah's cup, right at the level to which our mother had poured the wine. Our goal was to see whether, after we invited Elijah in, toward the end of the Seder, he would actually take up the invitation, come in and drink. Using the scientific method, we figured that, if the level of wine in the cup dipped below the line where the string was wrapped around, we would know that our wish was granted and the supernatural guest had miraculously entered our home and taken a sip.

It was many years ago, and my memory could be playing me false, but I distinctly remember that one year my brother and I were excited to discover that the wine level had indeed dipped below the line established by our string. This was confirmation of everything we had hoped for! Elijah had shown up and had a swig!

However, on more sober and mature reflection, it occurred to me that another explanation was possible: the water and alcohol in the wine might have started to evaporate. I'm not a chemist, so I don't know if this alternative explanation is the right one, but, supposing it is, then what we have

here is a compelling encounter between science and religion—or, to be more precise, between supernaturalism and rationality. We may apply that theme to other parts of our Jewish experience, including those most directly relevant to the Passover story and message.

Do we take seriously the idea that God performed all those miracles in the way the Torah describes them: are we celebrating, on Pesah, the literal triumph of divine might over human muscle?

Children—such as I was in the anecdote I've described—are easily swept away in exciting speculations about things that grown-ups ordinarily consider impossible, but that the children themselves reverently hold up as amazing yet real possibilities. However, that's not a bad thing: what the grown-ups, in their presumption of superior understanding, don't always realize is that seemingly "impossible things" (to quote Oscar Hammerstein II) "are happening every day."

While I do not believe in the supernatural, or magic in the sense of the existence of something that can defy the laws of physics, I do believe that my understanding of

the natural world and what it holds in store is shamefully limited. I believe that nature, upon close and careful scrutiny, can disclose to the senses an endless stream of actual facts that, nonetheless, a reasonable person might ordinarily dismiss as pure fantasy.

For example, the mere existence of life—let alone the richness of life that we experience in the course of our lives—is astonishing on the face of it. Passover comes as a reminder to the rationalist and skeptic in all of us and teaches us to see with open eyes and appreciate fully just how miraculous (if not supernaturally so, then scientifically so) the convergence of elements and circumstances enabling life to flourish truly are.

When we speak about liberation from bondage to Pharaoh, we are figuratively affirming that a creative order (Seder) exists

outside the bounds of normal, ostensibly rational social restraints (such as those that older people, thinking they know better, try to place on younger ones). We have divine permission to break loose from the shackles of so-called “mature” thinking and reach out to experience the surprising, endless possibilities that those who are in the springtime of their lives can see better.

Where you see a miracle ripening, celebrate that blessing; when the miracle is fully ripe and ready to be plucked from the vine, take hold and taste of God’s bounty.

*Hag Same’ah! Happy
Passover!*

Rabbi Seth

Message from the Co-Presidents

Hello All,

Last month's Blizzard of 2013 was a doozy! Luckily, TBT did not sustain any major damage! Mother Nature was kind in the aftermath, providing us lots of warm, sunny days to melt away the ice and snow!

Our annual Tu B'Shvat was great fun. About 20 people attended! Lots of good fun, food and friends! As usual, Rabbi Seth did an awesome job as leader. Everyone had parts to read. Rabbi Seth gave a running commentary for all to fully understand the significance of each fruit and glass of wine. Hopefully, next year we will have more children attending. As we all know, kids have a way of bringing their own form of excitement to any events they attend!

Torah Study, Shabbat Study Group, and the TBT Book Club are continuing to be enjoyed by all who attend. If you are interested in participating, you can check the dates on the TBT calendar and elsewhere in The Star.

On Friday, February 15th, we celebrated in the baby naming of Grace Forrest. Her parents, Matthew and Sarah, hosted a wonderful Oneg for this special occasion.

This year's Purim Shpiel was great! The older students performed a play that they created: "Greed and Guilt – The Story of Adam and Eve

and Cookies" (Scene 1, ACTION!) Ian and his glee club sang. Thanks to all who attended and came in costume! Purim at TBT ends up being a wild and crazy event!

Jan Wahnnon and Ernie Ferrebee will be hosting our Oneg, Friday, March 15th in honor of Torah's Bat Mitzvah. They invite you to share their joy when Torah, becomes a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, March 16th at 9:30am.

April Book Club will be held Sunday April 7, 10:00am, at the home of Bert and Jeanne Woodcock. The book is, "Jews and Words" by Amos Oz and Fania Oz-Salzberger

We will be having our Israeli Pot Luck Supper on Friday, April 12th with an Israeli emissary in attendance to share their experiences of growing up in Israel. An Israeli emissary will be visiting our Religious School on Sunday, April 21st to further discuss interesting facts about Israeli life.

So much of what we do relies on the energy and enthusiasm of member volunteers. Thank you to all who help to make Temple Beth Torah a vibrant and enjoyable community!

Happy Spring!

Sallyanne and Barry



GOLDEN BOOK

In Loving Memory of
THE CHILDREN AND STAFF OF
SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL, NEWTOWN, CT
By Charles J. Alpert and Lillian Alpert

In Loving Memory of
JOHN C. NARKON
By Charles J. Alpert and Lillian Alpert

In Loving Memory of
JUDI A. SAFRAN
By Charles J. Alpert and Lillian Alpert

In Remembrance of the Yahrzeit of
AL ELLENBERG
By Marlene Ellenberg

Adult Education in 2013

1) **Torah Study Sessions.** We meet once a month to discuss the weekly Torah portion. Our discussions are always lively and fun. We draw freely upon a wide range of subjects connecting Jewish scholarship (offered by Rabbi Seth) to comparative religion, social theory and the personal experiences of the participants. We have coffee, bagels, and other refreshments. Please come and join us at TBT in the Social Hall on the following dates:

Saturday, March 23, 2013 at 9:30 AM

Saturday, April 20, 2013 at 9:30 AM

Saturday, May 18, 2013 at 9:30 AM

Saturday, June 15, 2013 at 9:30 AM

2) **TBT Book Club.** We are continuing our exploration of the Jewish experience through literature and lively discussions. Our next meeting will be held Sunday, April 7, 2013 at 10:00 am. Contact Bert and Jeanne Woodcock.

Next order of Shopping gift cards

We will be ordering Stop and Shop and Big Y gift cards soon. Big Y will give the Temple a 6% discount during April, compared to their usual 2%. The cards are easy to use and you get the full amount. For example you pay \$200, get a \$200 gift card, and the Temple gets \$12. It won't slow you down at the store and the Temple makes a tidy sum, \$447.50 from the November order. Send your request along with your check, payable to the Temple, to Susan Reuben

Yartzeit reminder

If you would like to be reminded of the date of your family member's yartzeit, send a note or email to Barry Schlein. Include your name and address, your family member's name, relationship to you and date of death. Indicate if you would like to be reminded based on the English date or Hebrew date.

Temple Beth Torah

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Rabbi Seth Riemer
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sethriemer@aol.com

Co-Presidents:

Sallyanne and Barry Scott

Co-Vice Presidents:

Kathi and Eliot Mag

Treasurer:

Alice Burstein

Recording Secretary:

Carol Gershenson

Corresponding Secretary:

Rhoda London

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Mira Schlein, Barry Schlein,
Nancy Stillman

Committees:

Memorial Park

Harold Nevins, Marlene Ellenberg

Building

Susan Mahler, Dean Kavalkovich,
Bert Woodcock

Publicity

Susan James, Neil Gordon

TBTeens

Jan Wahnnon &
Josh Ferrebee

Education

Cecile Bronfin, Bert and Jeanne
Woodcock

Membership

Karen Klein

Star Editor

Susan Sackler Reuben

Website

Deb Hammer, Sam Hammer

Ways and Means

Judy Gold, Andie Goldberg, Neil
Gordon, Mira Schlein, Rhoda
London

High Holidays

Cecile Bronfin, Barry Schlein, Mira
Schlein, Kathi Mag, Carol
Gershenson, Sallyanne and Barry
Scott

Mitzvah

Susan Mahler

TempleBethTorahWethersfield.org

School News

School Calendar and
Challah schedule

March 3 – Evans
March 10 – Poland
March 17 – Guay
March 24 – Ferrebee

April 7 – Sondik
April 21 – Evans
April 28 – Poland

May 5 – Guay
May 12 – Ferrebee
May 19 – Latorra

June 2 – Sondik
June 9 – Evans
June 16 – last class

Oneg Schedule

All of the members will be given an assigned date to sponsor the Oneg following Friday night services. Check our website

www.templebethtorahwethersfield.org

to see when your date is. If the date conflicts with your schedule, you can swap dates with someone else. Thank you, everyone for your cooperation.

Board Meetings

The board meetings are scheduled for March 11, April 8, and May 13. The annual meeting is on June 10. The meetings are all at 7:30 pm and are open to Temple members in good standing.

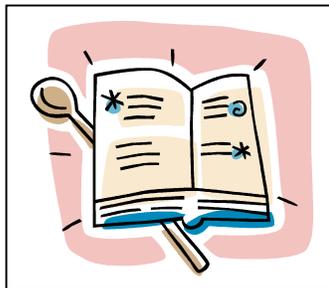
Israeli Pot Luck Supper

Friday, April 12, 7:15 pm

	<p>Maureen Horowitz, ABR, GRI REALTOR®</p>	 <p>Garden Design by Susan</p>
	<p>(860) 205-9678 Cell, (860) 722-3063 VM (860) 563-1010 Office, (860) 563-4303 Fax maureen.horowitz@cbmoves.com</p>	
	  	
	<p>RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE 1331 Silas Deane Highway Wethersfield, CT 06109</p>	 
<p><small>Owned And Operated By NKT Incorporated.</small></p>	<p>ColdwellBankerMoves.com</p>	<p>Susan Sackler Reuben Connecticut Certified Master Gardener</p>
		<p>25 Howland Road West Hartford, CT 06107 860 561 2104 ssreuben@snet.net</p>

Do you have YOUR copy of the TBT cookbook yet?

Temple Beth Torah has its own cookbook, "Our Family Favorites", filled with the best recipes of our members. There are classics like chicken soup, lukchen kugel and mandelbread as well as harvest loaf and eastern European potato latkes. Passover is coming in April and there is a whole section of Passover recipes. Passover broccoli soufflé, Passover farfel pudding and Passover apple squares are just a few of the tasty recipes. This book is very reasonably priced at \$12, with discounts for larger orders. Contact Deb Hammer to purchase yours.



TEMPLE BETH TORAH
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