

Newsletter of Temple Beth Torah  
Wethersfield, CT  
Vol. 17 No. 4

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Riemer
- Adult Education
- Spring Cleaning

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Presidents

Annual Meeting June 10

## Shavuot Message from Rabbi Seth Riemer

As Jewish-Americans, we have a doubly strong commitment to the rule of law. On Shavuot, which occurs this month, beginning on the evening of Tuesday, May 14, we celebrate the gift of Torah (Divine Law) belonging to the entire Jewish people (some say, belonging to humankind as a whole) and handed to us from Mount Sinai. The U.S. Constitution likewise makes clear that this is a nation of laws to be respected and followed by all.

Reflecting on last month's Boston Marathon bombings and their violent aftermath, I am struck by a disturbing contrast: between the majority of Americans, whose daily choices help build a just society through peaceful, law-abiding conduct, and those few reckless lawbreakers, whose cruel mockery of basic principles of social harmony causes such heartbreak and pointless suffering. Even though American homes have in them far too many guns for anyone's good, at least most adults who own those weapons understand how to use them responsibly.

The fact that any reasonably intelligent person can go to a store, buy all the ingredients for a bomb, build it and set it off—causing terrible mayhem and death—is troubling but inescapable in a society that treasures freedom of movement and personal choice above practically all else. However, the peril that comes with this freedom would be far worse if we decided to toss aside—abandon—our commitment to law.

The belief of some that government is too intrusive—and that people know how to make wise decisions affecting their lives without any social mediation or regulation, any guiding principles of law—is foolish, misguided and dangerous. Some think that laws *are* the problem: the reason for all this violence. The constraints of law, they argue, cloud our instinctive good judgment and distort our natural penchant for virtue. They say: if you just leave people alone, they'll always do the right thing.

I think instead that our job on this earth is to work together to create a better world—which is very different from leaving people

alone and assuming it will all work out fine. While working together, we rely on a shared commitment—one both socially interactive and ethically proactive—that is the essence of law at its best.

On Erev Shavuot, May 14, I hope you'll join Barbara and me at 8:00 p.m. at our home (100 Northwood Road, Newington) for a *tikun leyl shavuot*—a Shavuot eve study session in honor of and engaging the themes of Torah. I will have prepared a couple of topics for discussion, and I ask you to let me know if you would like to share what you have been learning about in relation to Jewish texts, traditions and values. The theme I particularly want to emphasize this year is the connection, similarity or overlap between American and Jewish ideas about and experiences of what it means to follow the law.

Rabbi Seth



## Message from the Co-Presidents

Hello Friends,

The last couple of months have been quite busy with many varied events taking place at TBT.

Jan Wahnnon and Ernie Ferrebee shared their joy with all of us when Torah became a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, March 16th. Torah conducted the Shabbat services with complete confidence. Everyone in attendance had a wonderful and joyous time.

Our Israeli Pot Luck supper was a tremendous success! We had 30 guests in attendance for Shabbat Services and dinner. Our two Israeli emissaries, Ino Goldstein and Yuval Malchi were just wonderful. They shared many wonderful facts,

ideas and personal information with us. They discussed the juxtaposition of the Israeli holiday, Israel Memorial Day (Yom HaZikaron), and Israel Independence Day (Yom HaAtzma'ut) which fall one right after the other. Everyone went home with full stomachs and wonderful memories of a delightful evening!

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.

*Spring has sprung, the grass is growing, it's time to get TBT spiffed up after the winter! We plan on having a Sunday Spring Clean-up at TBT on May 19.*

Please check your emails for the time!

Monday June 10<sup>th</sup> is our Annual Membership Meeting. All TBT members in good standing are invited to come. It is a time to meet the new Board members, visit with old friends, and start to wind down for the summer.

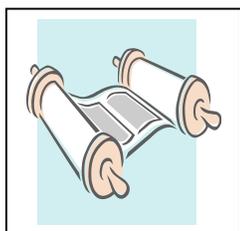
We are hoping to have a Progressive Dinner before the summer. Please check your email for any updates on this exciting event.

Please remember that TBT is only as strong and as vital as its membership. This is not a one-person show. Remember there is strength in numbers and we want your number! Please participate and make your presence known!

TBT NEEDS YOU AND WHATEVER HELP YOU CAN PROVIDE!

Happy sunshine and warm weather!

Shalom,  
Sallyanne and Barry



### Torah Study May 18

Join Rabbi Riemer in a Torah study to read the week's Torah portion and then discuss the story. The next two will be on May 18 and June 15 at 9:30 a.m.

If you would like to sponsor the coffee and pastry, contact Deb Hammer.

### Oneg Friday Night Hosts

Our congregants take turns bringing the snacks and drinks to share after the Friday night services. Suggestions: Challah, tea, grape juice, fruit salad, bite sized snacks – brownies, cupcakes, sliced cake.

May 3 Gold	May 10 Hammer	May 17 Mag
May 24 Schlein	May 31 Klein	
June 7 Reuben	June 14 Zwirn	June 21 Alpert
June 28 Stillman		

**Adult Education**

**May Book Club**

Our next meeting of the TBT book group is scheduled for Sunday May 5. Many thanks to Cecile Bronfin for volunteering to host it at her home. However, please note the TIME CHANGE! It will be held at 7:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Bert at 860-529-7575 (Although you are welcome even if you forget to RSVP). Thanks.

The book we are reading for May is "Lovesong: Becoming a Jew", by Julius Lester. As noted on the book cover, this is a moving account of a major writer's spiritual odyssey from his boyhood as the son of a black preacher in the South to his conversion to Judaism. "Lovesong is the story not only of one man's quest for truth and faith but also of the human heart itself and its quest to find life's significance."

**June Book Club -**

Our June meeting will be Sunday, June 23 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Carol Gershenson. We will be

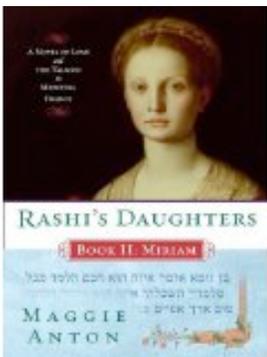
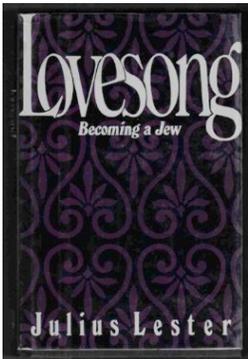
reading "Rashi's Daughters: Book 2, Miriam". This book is the second of a series of novels dealing with women's lives in the Jewish world of 11th century France. We previously read the first book, Joheved, many months ago. Our response to this first book of the series was very positive and thus we look forward to reading Book 2, Miriam...

**TOUR OPPORTUNITY**

The Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford is sponsoring professionally guided tours of Hartford's earliest Jewish history. These tours called "Back to the Old Neighborhoods" are opportunities to learn about the way in which the Hartford Jewish community developed and thrived as follows:

Sunday, May 5, 9:30 am -12:30 pm or 1:30-4:30 pm.

The cost is \$24 for Historical Society members and \$28 for others. Reservations are required on-line at [www.jhsg.org](http://www.jhsg.org) or call 860-727-6170



**School Challah schedule**

We ask the families of the students to take turns bring in challah and juice for a snack break. The students learn to say the blessings for them. We would appreciate if the challah is sliced, and the juice is poured. Thanks.

- |               |                 |                      |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| May 5 Guay    | May 12 Ferrebee | May 19 LaTorra       |
| June 2 Sondik | June 9 Evans    | June 16 Fathers' Day |



## Temple Beth Torah

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### Co-Presidents

Sallyanne and Barry Scott

### Co-Vice Presidents

Kathi and Eliot Mag

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Alice Burstein

### Recording Secretary

Carol Gershenson

### Corresponding Secretary

Rhoda London

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#### Star Newsletter

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

## Kaddish

To help ensure you have a minyan, 10 Jewish adults, when you want to say Kaddish, prayer in memory of a loved one, you may contact Neil Gordon. He is happy to make phone calls on your behalf.

## Mitzvah

If you know of a Temple member who might need some help – a ride or a meal – to help them out for any reason, contact Susan Mahler. She will arrange for members to help members.

## Spring cleaning Sunday May 19

Join us for a day focused on cleaning the kitchen, vacuuming the sanctuary and dusting the library/classrooms. The more the merrier. We do this just once a year, so we would like as many workers as possible. Bring your favorite cleaning supplies. Thanks

## Fundraising while Shopping

Calling all grocery shoppers! We have a great fundraiser throughout the year. We sell gift cards. These are also called shopping cards or scrip. Many stores offer them to develop a loyalty with their shoppers and to benefit non-profit groups in their area.

This year our members bought \$12,400 and Temple Beth Torah earned \$640.

Thank you to the families who bought them this year – Gold, Mag, Jainchill, Reuben, Rome, Bronfin, Rosen and Gershenson.



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**Susan Sackler Reuben**  
*Connecticut Certified Master Gardener*

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860 561 2104 [ssreuben@snet.net](mailto:ssreuben@snet.net)

## Annual Meeting Monday June 10, 7:30 pm

We invite all Temple members in good standing to join us at the annual meeting. The slate of officers will be presented.

**TEMPLE BETH TORAH**  
130 Main Street  
Wethersfield, CT 06109