

*Newsletter of Temple Beth Torah  
Wethersfield, CT  
Vol. 18 No. 4*

## Shavuot Message from Rabbi Seth Riemer

Yom Ha'atzma'ut, Israel Independence Day, which occurs on May 6 this year, has much in common with our July 4 celebration of U.S. independence. Both nations were forged through war, and the birth of each exacted great sacrifice in human courage and lives lost. Likewise, in both cases, from this formative experience emerged a social legacy that is morally ambiguous.

American independence came at the expense of indigenous American peoples, whose survival needs and legitimate concerns were harshly ignored in the nation-building process that occurred through and following the war with Britain. In fact, our Declaration of Independence caricatures Native Americans (referred to as "merciless Indian savages") as menacing pawns of a wicked British king. Likewise, the political compromise that brought this nation into being in 1776 involved removing, from Jefferson's Declaration draft, language criticizing the British empire for its role in the slave trade, and the nation's founders maintained the hypocritical stance of championing human liberty while upholding the institution of slavery.

Israeli independence was problematic although to a lesser

extent. While the Zionist project was not genocidal (as the American project had been!), Jewish refugees' political interests ran directly counter to Arab Palestinians', and in the war that Arab nations launched against Israel in revenge for its determination to come into existence, many Arabs living in the new-born state were forced—by the Israeli army—to leave their homes. Israel's enduring two-tier political-economic-social construction—one level favoring Jews, the other limiting Arab rights—contradicts the pluralistic, idealistic rhetoric we find in Israel's Declaration of Independence, which states that the Jewish state "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex."

Despite these flaws, citizens of both nations have reason to be justly proud of their founders' achievements. A world without the United States of America and the State of Israel would be much the poorer in vision and spirit. Lovers of Zion and America should be the first to acknowledge wrongs committed in the name of the nation, its heritage and its people; in reaching for the light, we cannot escape shadows. However, it is better to judge a society by the degree of its humane ambitions than by its failure to always live up to them; human

### **Highlights:**

Torah Study  
May 17

Blackledgemusic  
concert May 18

Book Club  
May 20

Annual meeting  
June 9

perfection is unattainable, but the striving toward it is meaningful and worthwhile.

The U.S. thus remains—as it has always been, and as the Statue of Liberty embodies—a beacon of hope for those in search of freedom, justice and prosperity. The State of Israel, too, represents something of infinite value: the divinely blessed ability of our downtrodden people to rise again.

*A prelude to Yom Ha'atzma'ut will take place at TBT on Shabbat eve, Friday, May 2, beginning with a 6:30 p.m. service, followed by an Israeli pot luck Shabbat dinner. We will be honored by the presence of our community's Israeli youth emissaries, Shaked and Aviya, who will speak about the holiday.*

Rabbi Seth

## Message from the Co-Presidents

Hello All,

Spring has finally arrived at TBT! The flowers are in bloom all over the yard and everything is finally green!

Our Megillah reading and Purim Roast, held on March 16th were awesome. We had close to 30 guests in attendance. Of course, Susan and Jonathan Reuben, Carol Gershenson, Nancy Stillman, Deb Hammer and Rabbi Seth did a fabulous job on the parody part of the festivities. The Religious School students were "hot" with their Roast of the Purim story cast of characters. Lunch was luscious. Thanks to all who gave their time and culinary efforts to make for a special day! Thanks to all who helped us in our raucous celebration! Can't wait till next year!

Book Club and Torah Study lively discussions continue to be enjoyed by all. Attendance at both events has been very good. Let's keep reading and learning!

Please note the **change of date** for our next Torah study. We will meet, Saturday, May 17th at 9:30 am. Please join us for an interesting and informative morning. Bagels, lox, coffee etc, for all! Check it out! Please take a moment to email Deb at [dlh88@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dlh88@sbcglobal.net) if you plan to attend, so we can plan refreshments accordingly. Thanks!

The TBT Book club will be at 4:30pm, Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, at the home of Carol Gershenson, 2222 Harborview Drive, Rocky Hill. The book is "Brothers Emanuel" by Ezekiel J. Emanuel. As described in the publisher's summary, this biography presents the dynamic



Emanuel family and cites their achievements in medicine, politics, and Hollywood. It traces the remarkable careers of the White House health advisor and his brothers, offering insight into their family history, unique upbringing, and social atmosphere that influenced their lives. Please RSVP to Bert Woodcock at 860-529-7575 and feel free to call Bert if you have any questions or need directions.

Monday June 9<sup>th</sup> is our Annual Membership Meeting. All TBT members in good standing are invited to come. There will be several changes to the Board for the 2014-2015 year. Please come and find out what they are! As always, this is a time to meet your Board members, visit with old friends, and start to wind down for the summer.

Helene Rosenblatt's Blackledgemusic, Inc and Element Saxophone Quartet will present "Memories" a concert on May 18, 2014 at TBT. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for seniors, and \$5 for children under 16. A portion of the proceeds will go to the Temple maintenance fund. A reception with refreshments will follow.

On Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am, Moshe and Tracey Sondik will be celebrating the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Jacob. The Sondik family has invited the entire congregation to share in their simcha and is planning a lovely oneg lunch for all. Please let me know if you plan to attend so Moshe and Tracey can plan accordingly.

Happy sunshine and warm weather!

Shalom,

Sallyanne and Barry

## Friday Night Oneg Hosts

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

May 2 Israeli Pot Luck  
May 23 Cohan

May 9 Stillman  
May 30 Klein

May 16 Hammer

June 6 Latorra  
June 27 Sondik

June 13 Mag

June 20 Scott

## Raise the Roof Gala May 10

Dear TBT Community,  
 Our Raise the Roof Gala is Saturday, May 10th. All who have participated at the *Bronze* level and above are invited to attend.

\$5,000-\$10,000	<i>Platinum</i>	Evelyn and AZ Soforenko
\$1,000-\$4,999	<i>Gold</i>	Cecile and Barry Bronfin Judy and Marty Gold Harriet and Leo Rosen
\$500-\$999	<i>Silver</i>	Kathi and Eliot Mag Ellen Sue Moses and Mark Gould Helene Rosenblatt James Tauber, MD
\$250-\$499	<i>Bronze</i>	Carol Ann Gershenson Andie and Barry Goldberg Marlene and Lou Grower Debra and Joe Hammer Maureen and Ralph Horowitz Karen and Bob Klein Geraldeen and Phil Lohman Rhoda and Fred London Rita and Harold Nevins Susan and Jonathan Reuben Sallyanne and Barry Scott Karen and Gerald Waltman



It is not too late to attend as our fundraising is ongoing. Please search your piggy banks, empty your pockets, check under the couch cushions, and send whatever you can to TBT as soon as possible.

The generosity of our contributors has been overwhelming. We thank you again for your continued generosity and support of Temple Beth Torah.

Shalom,

## 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 4 Lev

May 11 Poland

May 18 Guay

June 1 Latorra

June 8 Sondik

June 15 Evans

## Temple Beth Torah

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#### Grounds

Kathi Mag

#### Nominations

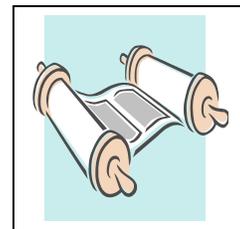
Cecile Bronfin

TempleBethTorahWethersfield.org

## Torah Study May 17

Join Rabbi Riemer at Torah Study to read the week's Torah portion and then discuss the story. The next two will be on May 17 and June 15 at 9:30 a.m.

RSVP to Deb Hammer for a headcount for refreshments. Sponsors are welcome.



## Golden Book

In Memory of  
MARILYN "Mimi" FRANKEL  
By Michelle & Bill Cyr

Yartzeit of  
REBECCA ELLENBERG  
By Marlene Ellenberg

In memory of  
JOAN BERG  
By Ruthi Roche  
By Jennifer Dobkin  
By Susan and Dale Schwartz  
By Deb and Joe Hammer

### PRAYERBOOK FUND

In Memory of  
JOAN BERG  
By Marlene Ellenberg

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

In Appreciation of RABBI SETH'S Kindness  
By Rhoda London

On behalf of Temple Beth Torah, we would like to express our heartfelt condolences to Helene Rosenblatt on the loss of her Beloved Mother, JANICE PATRICIA LEVINE ROSENBLATT. May she rest in peace.



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## Book Club May 20

We will be reading "Brothers Emanuel" by Ezekiel J. Emanuel. As described in the publisher's summary, this biography presents the dynamic Emanuel family and cites their achievements in medicine, politics, and Hollywood. It traces the remarkable careers of the White House health advisor and his brothers, offering insight into their family history, unique upbringing, and social atmosphere that influenced their lives.

We will meet at Carol Gershenson's house at 4:30 on Tuesday, May 20. Please RSVP to Bert Woodcock at 860-529-7575 and feel free to call him if you have any questions or need directions. Looking forward to seeing you then.

## Annual Meeting Monday June 9, 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.

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