

Newsletter of Temple Beth Torah  
Wethersfield, CT  
Vol. 19 No. 4

## Purim Message from Rabbi Seth Riemer

### Highlights:

Purim March 23

Torah Study March 12  
and April 9

My Apple laptop's dictionary defines xenophobia as "intense or irrational dislike or fear of people from other countries." How should the hapless and helpless targets of such xenophobic scrutiny respond? That is the subject of the book of Esther, which forms the basis for our festival of Purim.

Toward the end of the story, after King Ahashverosh has—in his foolishness, without realizing what he was doing—granted the wicked Haman *carte blanche* to annihilate the Jews, the King learns from his beloved Queen Esther that she herself is a Jew. She asks him for help against the edict he naively authorized. Although a royal decree cannot be annulled, he does give the Jews permission to defend themselves against their would-be murderers, and so the text states:

"The King has permitted the Jews...to assemble and fight for their lives: to destroy, massacre and exterminate" anyone who would dare lift a finger against them (8:11 / this and the following translation adapted from JPS version). And so it comes to pass: "Throughout the provinces of King Ahashverosh, the Jews mustered in their cities to attack those who sought their hurt, and no one could withstand them, for the fear of them

had fallen upon all the peoples (9:2).

Consider what that scenario would mean for present-day America. Imagine what would happen if the entire African American community (whose ancestors were, like Mordecai and his fellow Jews, exiled to a foreign land against their will) rose up and fought back against their oppressors. Think what it would mean for the Latino immigrant population (which is, like the Jews in ancient Persia, a minority reviled and threatened by modern-day Hamans) to unite and go on the counterattack! The word for that would be "insurrection," and the government and respectable citizens of this country would look none too kindly on such aggressive behavior. Yet, that is exactly what the Bible, in our festival's guiding narrative, is proposing.

I am not advocating violent revolution as a solution to the problems of oppressed minorities. However, let no one pretend that Jewish religious ritual, as manifest in this festival of Purim, is doing anything other than advancing (however indirectly, through the devices of satire and the appearance of silliness) a militant political agenda: to teach the downtrodden that they have a God-given right to challenge injustice and defy persecution carried out by the

agency of the state itself.

And make no mistake: this festival, although presented as juvenile, is hardly kids' stuff. Confronting the bigotry of xenophobes through laughter and childish pranks is only a first step. The next step is to hang Haman on the gallows he has prepared for Mordecai.

Please come to do that at TBT on Erev Purim, **Wednesday, March 23, 7:00 p.m.** I look forward to making revolution with you.

Rabbi Seth

## From Your Executive Committee

We can report that TBT is solvent and operations are sound. Invoices for Temple dues have recently been emailed to all Congregants, and we would appreciate your on-time payments for us to be able to continue to meet our financial obligations.

We welcome Karen Klein as our new Corresponding Secretary who has taken on the important task of recording and acknowledging incoming donations from members and others. A special Thank You to Kathi Mag, who took on the task after the retirement of longtime member, Rhoda London. Rhoda handled this task for over twenty years and we are appreciative of her service and dedication to the TBT community.

We are presently planning a Spring luncheon to honor long-time TBT member Harold Nevins. A former president in the early years of our Congregation, Harold was the long-time chair of the Cemetery Committee, a position he held until retiring just two years ago. Active in all facets of the TBT Community, Harold has assisted Phil Lohman and Ralph Horowitz in placing "Moses" and "Fiddler" on the roof for special events. Most every year, he has

helped construct the Sukkah, and he was generous in providing rugs and flooring as necessary through his business connections in the industry. As a member of the Temple leadership, Harold was often called upon to chant the Haftarah portion during the High Holidays. As one congregant teased: "this is Harold's annual Bar Mitzvah!" We will have more information about the planned luncheon party as it becomes available.

Feedback from groups renting our social hall has been positive regarding our recent floor re-finishing project. We remind all of our members to help preserve that "new floor" feel by removing their boots and carefully wiping their shoes on the new carpets at the entrance to the Hall. And, if setting up tables and chairs, to be careful not to drag them across the floor.

Due to the poor condition of the Temple's old gutters and downspouts, we are currently taking quotes from professional tradespersons to replace them with new, all-weather aluminum ones with a leafguard system.

Eliot Mag, for the Executive Committee

**GOLDEN BOOK**

Some donation acknowledgements were delayed when they got temporarily lost on the computer. Our apologies for the delay.

**IN HONOR OF**

Ralph, Maureen and Hannah Horowitz  
By Ralph's brother, Sidney Horowitz

**CONTRIBUTION TO GOLDEN BOOK**

By Hillary and David Silver

By Barry Goldberg

By James Tauber

By Harris D. Leinwand

'For Magic Hallah'

By Susan V. James

**BUILDING FUND**

By Barry and Sallyanne Scott

By AZ Soforenko

**MEMORIAL PARK DONATION**

By Rachel H. Levine

By H.S. Mark and L.L. Mark

By Sarah Louis Michaels

By Ira and Sally Henowitz

**IN MEMORY OF MOTHER, YETTA**

Bromberg and Uncle Paul L. Gipstein

By Stephen B. Bromberg

**IN MEMORY OF TILLIE SITCOVSKY**

By Rhoda and Fred London

By Deb and Joe Hammer

**IN MEMORY OF NAOMI HAMMER**

Rhoda and Fred London

Rita and Harold Nevins

Elizabeth and Michael Barton

Paula and Roy Schwartz

Lisa and Mark Nicoletti

**HELPING HANDS FUND**

Anonymous (7)

**IN MEMORY OF RUBY RIEMER**

Sallyanne and Barry Scott

Rhoda and Fred London

Kathi and Eliot Mag

Ruth Brainin

Cecile and Barry Bronfin

Karen and Gerald Waltman

Alice Burstein

Harriet and Leo Rosen

Rabbi Caryn Broitman

Ellen Sue Moses and Mark Gould

Karen and Bob Klein

Debra and Joe Hammer

**IN MEMORY OF DAVID H.**

GOLDBERG (Rhoda London's

Father, on his yartzeit)

Rhoda and Fred London

**WISHING SALLYANNE SCOTT A**

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Rhoda and Fred London

Kathi and Eliot Mag

Deb and Joe Hammer

Karen and Bob Klein

**WISHING LEO ROSEN A SPEEDY**

RECOVERY

Kathi and Eliot Mag

**IN MEMORY OF AESTHETA**

WAHNON

Cecile and Barry Bronfin

Donations to TBT can be sent to:

Barry Goldberg

78 Highview Drive

Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Donations can be directed to the Torah Repair Fund, Helping Hands, Building Fund or as a general donation. Please include a note saying who the donation is in honor or memory of and who to send acknowledgement to.

## **Leonard Nimoy's Mameloshn: A Yiddish Story**

The Yiddish Book Center has interviews with people of interest on their webpage. This link brings up their interview with the late Leonard Nimoy as he talks about his family, Jewish immigrants from Russia, and his childhood in Boston in a Yiddish speaking part of Boston.

<http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/collections/oral-histories/excerpts/woh-ex-0002347/leonard-nimoy-s-mameloshn-yiddish-story>

## **Purim Megilah Reading Wed. March 23 at 7 pm**

## **Tribute Event for Harold Nevins scheduled for April 3**

Hold the date and join us to celebrate and thank Harold for his many years of supporting Temple Beth Torah. Details will be coming.

## **Rabbi Seth plans to do teaching in his mother's memory**

Rabbi Seth's mother, Ruby Riemer, was a poet, who inspired his love of language, literature, philosophy and spirituality. To honor her memory, he will invite participants to join with him in studying selections from the Torah, Jewish liturgy and Rabbinic literature. The group will explore, within that material, the relation between poetic expression and religious content. The date, still to be determined, will mark the conclusion of his Sheloshim observance (initial 30-day period of mourning) and come fairly soon afterwards. Stay tuned for more details.

## **Torah Study**

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 Temple Beth Torah at 9:30 am in the Social Hall on the following dates:

March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11

**Temple Beth Torah**

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Rabbi Seth Riemer  
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**Executive Committee:**  
Sallyanne and Barry Scott,  
Kathi and Eliot Mag, and Karen  
Klein

**Treasurer:**  
Barry Goldberg

**Recording Secretary:**  
Carol Gershenson

**Corresponding Secretary:**  
Karen Klein

**Trustees**  
Ellen Sue Moses and Mark  
Gould

**Committee**  
**Memorial Park**

Barry Goldberg  
**Building**

Kathi Mag, Leonard Lev,  
Gary Evans

**Publicity**  
Debra Ehrlich

**Education**  
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**Membership**  
Karen Klein

**Star Editor**  
Susan Sackler Reuben

**Torah Study, Building Rental and**  
**Webmaster**

Deb Hammer

**Ways and Means**  
Judy Gold

**High Holidays**  
Cecile Bronfin, Kathi and Eliot  
Mag, Carol Gershenson, Fred  
London, Sallyanne and Barry Scott,  
Rabbi Seth Riemer and Barbara  
Checknoff

**Nominations**  
Cecile Bronfin

**Artist-in-Residence**  
Phil Lohman with Ralph Horowitz

TempleBethTorahWethersfield.org

**School Calendar and  
Challah Schedule**

March	6	Lev
	13	Rose
	20	Rice
April	3	Evans
	24	Sondik
May	1	Lev
	15	Rose
	22	Rice
June	5	Sondik
	12	Lev
	19	Rose

**Oneg Schedule**

All of the members have been given an assigned date to sponsor the Oneg reception following Friday night services. Check our website [www.templebethtorahwethersfield.org](http://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 for your cooperation.

**Board Meetings**

The board meetings are scheduled for Mondays at 7 pm  
March 14,  
April 11,  
May 9

The annual meeting is June 13 at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are open to Temple members in good standing.



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**Andie Goldberg's Family sponsored an Oneg and donated a challah cover**

Pictured is Cynthia Reynolds, a friend of Andie's for 60 years. In memory of Andie, Cynthia and Andie's family donated the challah cover to the Temple. Barry Goldberg and family sponsored an Oneg in Andie's memory.

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