

Newsletter of Temple Beth Torah  
Wethersfield, CT  
Vol. 13 No. 6

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- Gift Cards
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## Message from Rabbi Seth Riemer

Dear Friends at TBT,

As your plans for summer relaxation and vacation take shape, please reserve at least a little time to dip your toes—or even dive—into the bracing waters of the sea.

I'm actually talking about two seas.

First, that salty, oceanic mass which covers most of the earth's surface. Most summers, I find a way to get to the shore—at least for a day or so—with my family. (I've visited freshwater lakes, too, but I prefer the ocean's roar and the chance to body surf.) A favorite spot is North Carolina's Outer Banks (e.g., Ocracoke Island), but in recent years I've also been a temporary beach bum on Martha's Vineyard, at spots in NJ, and in Israel.

There's a special Jewish blessing one says upon seeing an ocean, sea or great lake. It goes: *Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleh ha'olam she'asah et hayam hagadol* / "Blessed are you, Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who made the great sea." When you take your swimming suits, pail and shovel, flip-flops, snacks, beach chairs, umbrella and sunscreen with you to the beach this summer, be sure to bring along this blessing, too, and recite it when you get your first new glimpse of God's magnificent water-creation.

There's another sense in which Jewish tradition evokes the sea. We speak of *yam talmud* / "the sea of learning." Our rabbis used this metaphor to depict Torah as a vast ocean of endless possibilities for revelation of truth, wisdom and spiritual insight. The blessing for Torah study is: *Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleh ha'olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu la'asok bedivrey torah* / "Blessed are you Eternal our God, sovereign of the universe, who has made us holy with God's mitzvot and commanded us to busy ourselves with words of Torah."

Every day I make sure to study a few verses from the Torah, and that ongoing involvement with our holy texts strengthens me in my religious commitment and Jewish awareness. "Torah" can be taken very broadly to mean not just the Five Books of Moses and the rest of Hebrew Scripture, Talmud and midrash, but any text and/or learning experience that helps us connect meaningfully with Jewish values. I hope that, with our summer hiatus from services, you'll take some time during July and August to pray and study on your own. It can only do us all good to stay in touch with our sources.

Which reminds me of something that the two seas—*yam hagadol* / "the great sea" and *yam talmud* / "the sea

of holy learning” have in common: both are *sources of life*. Life as we know it literally and physically arose from primordial oceans. And *talmud torah* / “Torah study” is the source of Jewish civilization’s beliefs, moral code and cultural traditions. We talk of God, who gave us Torah, as *mekor mayim hayim* / “the fountain of living waters” (Jeremiah 2:13), and the Torah itself as *etz hayim* / “a tree of life.”

To double your summer vacation pleasure, make sure not only to return to the ocean/sea/lake and to do some Jewish reading, but do them together. Okay, so let me be the noodge who reminds you not to

forget to take with you on your beach vacation—along with swimming suits, pail and shovel, flip-flops, snacks, beach chairs, umbrella, sunscreen and ocean/sea/lake blessing—a copy of our Jewish Bible, a favorite Jewish writer’s stories, or some other reading material that focuses on Jewish history, culture and politics. That way, you can swim in both oceans at the same time.

Happy summer—catch you on the other end!

Rabbi Seth



## Message from the Co-Presidents

Dear friends,

Hopefully, by the time you read this, all of our soggy weather will be behind us and summer will have kicked in. Although TBT is on “summer hiatus” for services, there will be plenty of activity and planning happening.

Judy and Andie are organizing a “Stuff-a-Bag” Rummage and Tag Sale to be held on Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>. More details on this fundraiser appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

Members of the Board, committees, and the Rabbi will be meeting over the summer to map out an integrated plan for enriching services, adult education, our Sunday school, and much more. The High Holidays come early this year, and several social and fundraising events are in the works. It’s shaping up to be an active and energizing fall season!

Several motions were passed in the course of our Annual Meeting held on June 15<sup>th</sup>. First, the Board determined that it was necessary to

make a modest adjustment to the annual dues: family membership dues will be \$950; single membership dues will be \$600. We will hold Sunday school fees at their present level of \$225 for the first child in a family, and \$200 for each additional child. The b'nai mitzvah preparation fee remains unchanged at \$350 per student.

Our financial reality is that, even with the dues increase (kept as small as possible, with sensitivity to a stressed economy), we need to find other sources of income to provide a little cushion in our budget for the unexpected costs associated with maintaining a historic building. To that end, we are planning several fundraisers that target income coming from people beyond our membership. Additionally, if there is a member in our midst that has the time and willingness to pursue possible grant funding, we'd love to talk with you. Another means for increasing income is *increasing membership*. We've got a terrific Rabbi, a charming Temple, and an eclectic congregation that is very welcoming, interested in learning, casual and creative, and we're still a bargain ~ so TALK us

up at every opportunity! Another Board decision was to cut expenses and "go green" by providing The STAR online for all future editions (the photos are really better in color!). Of course, exception will be made for those few members who do not have Internet access.

A final note for this edition ~ we plan to get a brief membership survey out via the email blast network this summer. Your input will help the Board and committees to plan the upcoming TBT year in a way that will be responsive to the desires of our community. Please do take a few thoughtful minutes to complete the survey when it comes your way.

Wishing you an enjoyable summer season,  
Deb and Joe

### Dear Friends,

We welcome all of you to join us for a Shabbat service followed by a special Oneg Shabbat on Friday, September 11th as we celebrate our son, Max, becoming a Bar Mitzvah. He will have been called to the Torah on Saturday, August 29th. We look forward to seeing you!

*Mark and Marguerite Alpert*

## Temple Beth Torah

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### Co-Presidents:

Deb & Joe Hammer

### Co-Vice Presidents:

Judy & Marty Gold

### Treasurer:

Barry Schlein

### Recording Secretary:

Carol Gershenson

### Corresponding Secretary:

Rhoda London

### Trustees

Mira Schlein  
Andie Goldberg  
Barry Goldberg

### Memorial Park

Harold Nevins  
**Building Committee**  
Phil Lohman, Ralph  
Horowitz

### Men's Club

Bruce Kaplan

### Publicity

Lori Koplin

### TBTeens

Jan Wahnnon &  
Josh Ferrebee

### Star Editor:

Susan Sackler Reuben

### Webmaster:

Leonard Slutsky

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[templebethtorahwethersfield.org](http://templebethtorahwethersfield.org)

## Officers and Committee Chairs 2009-2010

Our nominating committee presented the slate of officers for the coming year at the annual meeting in June. Many of the nominees currently hold the position. They were unanimously voted into office for another year.

Co-Presidents - Deb and Joe Hammer  
 Co – Vice Presidents - Judy and Marty Gold  
 Treasurer - Barry Schlein  
 Corresponding Secretary - Rhoda London  
 Recording Secretary - Carol Gershenson  
 Trustees - Mira Schlein, Andie Goldberg, Barry Goldberg

High Holiday Committee - Barbara and Bruce Kaplan, Mira and Barry Schein, Harold Nevins, Cecile Bronfin, Ernie Ferrebee, Fred London, Kathy Mag

Building Committee - Phil Lohman, Ralph Horowitz

Membership Committee - open

Tree of Life - Deb Ellenberg Gray

Ways and Means Committee - open

Landscaping Committee and Star Editor - Susan Sackler Reuben

Webmaster - Leonard Slutsky

Publicity – Lori Koplín

Board of Education – Cecile Bronfin, Rabbi Seth Riemer, Marguerite Alpert, Fred Cohan, Deb Trueax

Memorial Park – Harold Nevins

Liaison to the Sisterhood - tbd

Men's Club – Bruce Kaplan

TBTeens – Jan Wahnón, Josh Ferrebee

Several committees could use additional members, especially Memorial Park, Membership, Ways and Means. Contact the Hammers if you are interested.

### Sisterhood

The annual Sisterhood planning meeting will be held in August, for the 2009-2010 year. The current officers and members will be inviting all TBT women who are interested in fun, camaraderie, outreach and planning a few exciting programs, to come see what we are about!

Elections for the coming year will also be held at this time. The date, time and place for this meeting will be forthcoming via email as summer wanes, due to the varied summer schedules we all keep. Do keep a watch for it as we hope to see lots of you there with your ideas, energy and friendship!

## Star Goes All Electronic in September 2009

For several years, our newsletter has been available on the Temple's website:

[www.TempleBethTorahWethersfield.org](http://www.TempleBethTorahWethersfield.org)

We were also making paper copies and mailing it to most members and to some non-members. We have decided to have our newsletter go

electronic as a cost saver and to be more 'green'. We will send out an email to all to let everyone know when we have put it out on the website. If you receive the paper newsletter now but do not receive the group emails from the Temple, send your email address through the 'contact us' part of the website.

### TBT joins area synagogues in Chai Mitzvah Pilot

A new, national, Jewish adult education program will be piloted in the Greater Hartford area. Called Chai Mitzvah, the program will encourage Jewish adults to pursue adult learning throughout their lives but in particular at ages 31, 49, 67 and 83. While adult education is valuable throughout a person's life, the program has selected these ages because they correspond to the time of typical life changing events – starting a family, mid career, retirement and senior years.

The program is fairly flexible in allowing the student to decide what topic to study, but it sets some guidelines – study a Jewish topic of interest, learn a Jewish ritual, perform a social action and celebrate the completion of the course of study. Besides self-directed study or classroom study, there will be a monthly class for each cohort. Study at our synagogue and others will be available. The program will have its official start after the High Holidays. Audrey Lichter is the director, [alichter@snet.net](mailto:alichter@snet.net)

### Challah Workshop

Join Ellen Moses and Marguerite Alpert for a **Challah Workshop on Tuesday, September 8, 2009, 7- 8:30 p.m.** Men, women and children are encouraged to join in the fun. Please bring your challah recipes and an apron if you want. Also, bring a cookie sheet for baking your bread. Bring your stories to tell as we braid and bake! There is a suggested donation of \$5.00 for materials. If you would like to join us, please email Marguerite at [margalpert@snet.net](mailto:margalpert@snet.net). We look forward to seeing you then!



### Rummage/Tag Sale

Sunday August 23 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Clean out your closets and donate your gently used clothes and accessories.

We will sell bags of clothes for a set price and need lots of clothes so this fundraiser is successful  
Furniture and Household items are welcome.

Judy and Andie can pick up your donations, call 521-0334 for more information. Lots of sales helpers will be needed that day.

### No Cost Fundraiser: Store Gift Cards

Attention all shoppers. Help our Temple Fundraiser. Buy gift cards to use like money when you shop.

Example: Face Value: \$100; Cost to You: \$100

If you spend \$100 per week at the grocery store, for 8 months, we can earn 4% which equals \$120. If 30 members do this, we can earn \$3600. Cost to our members → \$0.

Most popular cards:

Stop and Shop, Stew Leonard's, Waldbaum's, Dunkin Donuts, Home Depot, Sam's Club, Claire's, Crown, Barnes and Noble, Mobil, TJ Maxx

Our next card order will be placed in early August. Check the card vendor's website to see the extensive list of stores that we can choose from - [www.glscrip.com](http://www.glscrip.com) Plan for a month at a time, including birthday gifts.

I would like to order store cards

Name \_\_\_\_\_ phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Store: \_\_\_\_\_

Denomination: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Value \_\_\_\_\_

Write check to: Temple Beth Torah

Mail to: Susan Sackler Reuben 25 Howland Road, W. Hartford, CT 06107. We'll arrange for delivery. Attach extra paper for other orders.



## Golden Book

In Memory of

AL ELLENBERG  
by Dorothy Daley

HELENA KAVALIER  
By Dorothy Daley

HARRIET LEON  
by the Congregation of  
Temple Beth Torah

FELICIA SHPALL  
by Dorothy Daley

Wishing a Speedy Recovery and  
Continued Good Health To  
BARRY SCOTT  
By The Hammer Family

In Thankfulness For The  
Successful Outcome of The  
Operation on  
JEFFREY NORKIN  
By Frank & Ina London

To The Bromberg Family on The  
Occasion of DANIELLE  
Becoming A Bat Mitzvah  
By The Hammer Family

In Appreciation For The New  
Temple Sign Donated  
By MARTY AND JUDY GOLD  
by Mira & Barry Schlein

In Honor of the Birth of Grandson,  
JONAH KANTOR LONDON  
To Rhoda & Fred London  
By Judy & Marty Gold  
By Mira & Barry Schlein

Mazel Tov to SAM HAMMER  
on Becoming a Bar Mitzvah  
By Mark, Marguerite, Max & Grace  
Alpert

Mazel Tov To DANIELLE BROMBERG  
on Becoming a Bat Mitzvah  
By Mark, Marguerite, Max & Grace  
Alpert

Mazel Tov To Our Son and Brother  
MAX JOSEPH ALPERT  
on His Upcoming Bar Mitzvah  
Love, Mom, Dad & Grace

PRAYER BOOK FUND

In Memory of  
REVA SCHNEPS  
by Cy Levine

Thanking PHIL LOHMAN  
For All His Help  
By Judy & Marty Gold

In Memory of  
ROCHELLE HORENSTEIN  
By Irene & Richard Lagan

HARRIET LEON  
By The Hammer Family

In Honor of Birth of Grandson  
JONAH KANTOR LONDON  
By Rhoda & Fred London  
By Rita & Harold Nevins

Mazel Tov on the Marriage of SARAH  
and MATTHEW FORREST  
By The Hammer Family

## Annual High Holiday Greetings Cards

We will be sending out Phil Lohman's beautiful greeting cards in time for High Holidays. Deb Ellenberg Gray will be checking with all members to see how you would like to list your family.

**Levine, Gottfried  
& Somberg, LLC**



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