

Newsletter of Temple Beth Torah
Wethersfield, CT
Vol. 14 No. 2

Special Interest Articles:

- Message from
Rabbi Seth
Riemer

- Book and
Brunch

Choruses to
sing Dec 4

Individual Highlights:

Message from the Co-	
Presidents	2
Calendar	7
Golden Book	6

Message from Rabbi Seth Riemer

Dear Friends,

Do you sometimes feel that you, as a TBT member, are not in the thick of things, Jewishly - speaking, but are, instead, very much on the fringe—living at the edges of the Jewish universe?

I feel that way often. Our temple is small, our numbers few, bar and bat mitzvahs and other celebrations occasional, ritual activities modest in scope, organization relatively *ad hoc*.

However, being in this position has advantages, too. It lets us live, so to speak, “on the edge.”

It lets us be unconventional where others follow the denominational line. It invites us to try out very creative ideas a bigger synagogue organization might steer clear of for fear of offending this and that constituency in its enormous membership base. We’re free to be ourselves.

An example of something we should try: At our *Shemini Atzeret* service

this year, I invited people to think up new rituals that we might come up with to make that very old festival engaging for us here and now. What’s interesting about *Shemini Atzeret* is that, although it is one of our Torah-rooted holidays, the Torah says next to nothing about what our ancestors were expected to do on it (other than sacrifice animals, a custom I don’t see many people clamoring to revive).

Its lack of specific holiday content gives us an opening to create something original and fun. Our Rabbis tried their hand at filling that void, but (except, perhaps, for the recitation of *yizkor* and the festival’s day two *Simhat Torah* party—by the way, for this year’s party we sat around a table at the temple and had ice cream and drinks) their formula no longer quite works for most of us, so it’s time to significantly revise and update the blueprint.

And, lo and behold, at my

suggestion, several members—ranging age-wise from a senior citizen to a 12 year old—offered great, out-of-the-box suggestions, which, I hope, we’ll act on next year. We don’t have the administrative infrastructure and financial base to ensure that things we want to happen will, but we have creative, fun-loving people who have shown, over 5+ decades, that they can make it happen if it’s worthwhile.

It’s not just TBT, but the whole Jewish religion, that operates on the margins, at the edges of “regular” society. Judaism is a kind of fringe movement. Jews are few in number. They constantly have to improvise to survive. And Jewish people are always experimenting with new, untested, risky ideas:

Our ancestors, instead of practicing child sacrifice, tried something outrageously different (namely, to affirm life above all). Instead of worshiping idols, they

started the weird practice of worshipping an unseen God. Instead of forever imitating the warlike behavior of their neighbors, they started talking about making *shalom* / peace and praying obsessively for it. A Jew came up with the wild idea of a curved “space-time” continuum. The list of daring visions and innovations—from ancient times till the present—goes on and is practically endless.

So we at TBT are living at the edge of edge. On the edge is where we need to remain—*lesimḥah*: WITH JOY! We’re the outermost point of the proverbial Jewish fringes (like those that adorn your *tallit* / prayer shawl!). I’m proud to be part of that fragile strand, standing there with you. This vulnerability is our strength if we let it be.

Love,
Rahhi Seth

Message from the Co-Presidents

Dear friends,

We gave the following musical Appeal Speech on Erev Yom Kippur. We are reprinting the text of the Speech for two reasons:

1. Not to brag, but we got pretty good reviews and, if you weren’t there, we didn’t want you to miss out on the fun and the very important message. You’ll have to use your imaginations to recreate the singing part!
2. A return envelope was inadvertently omitted from the Appeal letter sent to your homes, and several people noted that they were unsure of where to send a donation. To clarify, please send your donation made payable to “TBT” to Barry Schlein, 263 Hartford Ave., Wethersfield, CT 06109. Donations of any amount are greatly appreciated.

The Speech:

So, it’s Appeal time once again, our third time up here as co-presidents. How can we deliver the same message, yet keep it lively and interesting so that you don’t start to

nod off and miss it?! Of course! With the recent resurgence of The Beatles’ popularity, why not intersperse our message with a (somewhat tacky) Beatles medley?!

This year, as always, our financial need is very real. Each dollar is important. Every donation – whether through this Appeal, through Membership, through United Way, or through participation in our fundraisers – **counts**.

Hey Jews (sung to the tune of “Hey Jude”)

Hey Jews,
We need your dues
To take an old shul
And make it better.
Remember to give from your heart
Then we can start
To make it better....

Temple Beth Torah, a historic building, never fails to surprise us with quirky building maintenance issues. It is also in need of accessibility updates. All of these projects have both a “human time” and monetary cost, and your help is needed. We’ve made great strides to date – fixing up the front vestry, painting, our new sign out front, and

repairs to the front stairs – yet there is so much more to do.

TBT (sung to the tune of “Penny Lane”)

On Old Main Street there is a Temple near the Jewelry Store
A Jewish haven in a very Yankee town

The vestry ceiling had fallen down

In the pouring rain

Very strange.

TBT, you’re in our hearts, and in our minds

Here beneath the blue

Wethersfield skies

Our sukkah’s out in back....

This year, our Appeal is not only of the monetary variety; it is a Human Appeal. We need more members involved, to the extent that you can give of your time. We’ve got such a special treasure here, and we need to sustain it, **as a community**, to keep it viable. We’ve got a wonderful Rabbi and friend in Seth, a terrific teacher and friend in Barbara,

and a small core of very actively involved “doers,” who carry a lot of the load. With more members of the community pitching in, the load is lighter for all and there’s the added bonus of the feel-good factor. You’ll be glad you pitched in.

Eight Days a Week (sung to the tune of – you guessed it!)

It’s time to get involved in your favorite synagogue.

We need your enthusiasm – don’t be a bump on a log.

Join in, volunteer

Help make this a great year.

There’s always work to be done

But we can make it fun!

Eight days a week

So which one would be

Shabbat?!

Eight days a week

Let’s show how much we really care....!

May your fast be easy and your year ahead be sweet.

Deb and Joe

TBTEENS and TBTWEENS*

(ages 7 and up)

are going Laser tagging!

Date: November 15, 2009

Where: **LASER QUEST NEWINGTON**

3005 Berlin Turnpike
Newington, CT

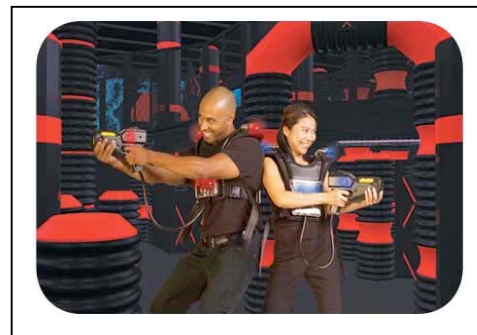
Drop off Time: 4 PM

\$17.00 plus tax for 2 games

RSVP: Josh 202-6478 ASAP

*Children between the ages of 7-10

need adult supervision or an older sibling with them.



Join us at Temple Beth Torah for A Book and Brunch

It's a real treat to actually have the author at a book discussion event!

Join us to meet **author Michelle Cameron**
discuss her recently released book **The Fruit of Her Hands**

Sunday, November 8th at 11:30am

RSVP Marguerite Alpert (860-563-1096) to attend. Bring your book on November 8th to have it signed by the author!



Book and a delicious Brunch: \$30
Book only: \$20 (\$5 less than cover price!)
Brunch only: \$10

From Ms. Cameron's website: Based on the life of the author's thirteenth century ancestor, Meir ben Baruch of Rothenberg, a renowned Jewish scholar of medieval Europe, this is the richly dramatic fictional story of Rabbi Meir's wife, Shira, a devout but rebellious woman who preserves her religious traditions as she and her family witness the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe.

Vividly bringing to life a period rarely covered in historical fiction, this multi-generational novel will appeal to readers who enjoy Maggie Anton's Rashi's Daughters, Brenda Rickman Vantrease's The Illuminator and Geraldine Brooks's People of the Book.

Lynn Levine Remembrance Dance, Nov. 22

Always on Sunday International Folk Dancers will be holding a special dance party on Sunday evening November 22 to remember one of our founders, Lynn Levine.

The event will feature live music by *Hijaz*, an international folk dance band. Lynn taught international folk dance with a talent and passion that she passed along to several generations of folk dancers. The Remembrance Dance will feature many of Lynn's favorite dances, and will include a fund raiser in her memory to support live music events and the dance workshops that will continue the teaching she began.

All are invited to attend. No partner is needed. Come and dance or just enjoy the music and company. Cost is \$12.

Sunday, November 22 from 7-10 [p.m.at](http://www.alwaysonsunday.us) the Masonic Hall, 11 South Main Street, West Hartford. See www.alwaysonsunday.us for more information.

Choristers of Simsbury Light Opera and The Greater Meriden Community Chorus

will be performing Shabbat songs
during Friday night services
at Temple Beth Torah
December 4 at 7:30 p.m.



The combined group, 50 singers strong, will perform well known Shabbat songs. Come to hear these wonderful singers. We are so pleased to have been selected to hear them perform.

The Choristers are The Simsbury Light Opera Company, SLOCO's, concert chorus singers, performing throughout the area at churches, synagogues, senior centers and other venues. The Choristers was formed following the tragedies that occurred on September 11, 2001. Drawn together by such a terrible loss, they all felt motivated to help bring joy into their communities during the holiday season.

The Greater Meriden Community Chorus, under the direction of Nancy V. Stewart, is enjoying its eleventh anniversary season. GMCC is a unique choral group. Although they love stand-alone concerts, they have made it their mission to work with many other choral groups, instrumentalists, orchestras and guest conductors thus increasing their musicality and fostering a spirit of community with fellow musicians.

Chanukah Party Dec. 18

Join as we celebrate the Festival of Lights. Spin some dreidels, eat some latkes and gelt, and sing a song or two. Come Friday at 6:00 pm. We will have a short service and then food and fun. Details to follow.

Challah Workshop

THANK YOU to Ellen Moses and Marguerite Alpert for conducting a Challah Workshop. The happy bakers who attended got a chance to make bread from scratch, sample some that evening and take a loaf home to bake. Very delicious.



Temple Beth Torah

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Deb & Joe Hammer

Co-Vice Presidents:

Judy & Marty Gold

Treasurer:

Barry Schlein

Recording Secretary:

Carol Gershenson

Corresponding Secretary:

Rhoda London

Mira Schlein – Trustee
Barry Goldberg – Trustee
Andie Goldberg - Trustee

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Deb Ellenberg Gray – **Ways
and Means**

Bruce Kaplan – **Mens' Club**

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Horowitz – **Building**

Susan Sackler Reuben –
Landscape

Lori Koplin – **Publicity**

Harold Nevins –

Memorial Park

Barbara & Bruce Kaplan -

High Holidays

Star Editor:

Susan Sackler Reuben

Webmaster:

Leonard Slutsky

We're on the Web!

See us at:

templebethtorahwethersfield.org

Golden Book

In Memory of
ANN GOLDBERG

By The Congregation of Temple Beth
Torah

By Cecile & Barry Bronfin and Family

By Ina & Frank London

By Rhoda & Fred London

By Rita & Harold Nevins

By L.W. Button & Son

By Sydney W. Elkin & Janice B.
Elkin

By The Hammer Family

By Adele Henowitz

By Amy Holms

By Dr. Ronald & Beverly Nadler

By Joyce Cohn and Barbara & Bob
Nathanson

By Rocky Hill Democratic Town
Committee

By Mira & Barry Schlein

By Tillie Sitcovsky

Son, LEE on His Yahrzeit

By Dorothy Daley

Cousin, MIRIAM TOUBMAN

By Dorothy Daley

GLORIA LEVINE

By Linda & John Linton

By Mae & Fred Kaprove

To BARBARA & BRUCE KAPLAN
and The Entire High Holiday
Committee

Thank You for Organizing Our
Services So Beautifully

By The Hammer Family

To RABBI SETH RIEMER and
BARBARA CHECKNOFF

Thank You for Your
Outstanding Leadership
Throughout our High Holiday
Services

By The Hammer Family

Wishing a Speedy and
Complete Recovery to
JONATHAN REUBEN

By The Hammer Family

In Honor of Grandson
RORY McHENRY'S 13TH
Birthday

By Martin & Ellen Abrams

In Honor of

MAX ALPERT'S Bar Mitzvah

By Mira & Barry Schlein

DR. BARRY BRONFIN'S

70TH Birthday

By Peggy & Alan Mendelson

CECILE BRONFIN

In Appreciation of Her Hebrew
Teaching

By Peggy & Alan Mendelson

Prayer Book Fund

In Memory of
GLORIA LEVINE

By Cy Levine

Mazel Tov

Congratulations to Jennifer Zwirn, daughter of Gloria and Stan
Zwirn, on her engagement to Jeff Yolle of Indiana.

Calendar

NOVEMBER

1 – School 9 – 11 am

8 – School 9 – 11 am

8 – Book and Brunch with author Michelle Cameron 11:30 a.m.

15 – School 9 – 11 a.m.

15 – TBTeens and TBTweens – Laser Tag 4 pm

DECEMBER

4 – Erev Shabbat service with Simsbury Light Opera Chorus and Meriden Community Chorus performing. 7:30 pm

6 – School - Young Israeli Emissaries 9 – 11 a.m.

13 – School 9 – 11 a.m.

18 Chanukah Party 6:00 p.m.

20 – School 9 – 11 a.m.

Wish List

If you have an unwanted, good-sized TV in good working order that you'd like to donate, we'd be happy to take it. Contact Deb.

Gift Wrapping Fundraiser Dec. 22

We have gotten a great day in the calendar for gift wrapping at Borders Books and Music just past Westfarms Mall. The store supplies the paper and the location right next to the door. We supply people who can wrap books and get all of the tips that day. Sign up with Judy to wrap for a 2 hour shift. We schedule two or more people each shift so you'll have company and hopefully you'll be very busy. It has potential to be a great fundraiser especially on that date.

Shabbat Onegs

Thank you to the following folks who have recently or will soon sponsor Shabbat Onegs (refreshments after services) or Torah Study coffee plus:

Checknoff/Riemer, Brombergs, Alperets, Scotts, Rosenblatt, Cook/Kane/Smith, James, Bronfin and Hammers (hope we didn't overlook anyone)! To get on the calendar, please sign up on the TBT kitchen door or drop an email to Deb (dlh88@sbcglobal.net).

Ride Needed

A Wethersfield resident is interested in attending our services. He lives on Nott St. near the intersection of Ridge Rd., and requires assistance with transportation. He walks with a cane but does not need any physical assistance -- just a ride. I am looking for any volunteers that would be willing to provide transportation, either on a regular basis or once in a while. Please let Deb Hammer know as soon as possible.

New Website Calendar Format

Check out the new format for our calendar of services and events! Follow this link <http://templebethtorahwethersfield.org/home/calendar> or cut and paste it into your browser. The calendar will appear in a list-style view. Click the tabs in the upper right-hand corner of the calendar for the "Month" or "Week" view. Click on any event to see the full description/details.

Lawrence Kushner to speak in Chester

Author, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, will be the scholar in residence at Congregation Beth Shalom Rodfe Zedek in Chester. On Saturday, Nov. 14 at noon, he will be speaking on the topic "Study from the Zohar – the Foundational Text of the Kabbalah. He will also be speaking at 7:30 pm. "Kabbalah, a Love Story: Tales of Religious Mystery." The evening program is also Havdalah and Dessert. For more information call 526-
2070

Calling all Stew Leonard Shoppers

Between November 15 and January 15, Stew Leonard's is offering non-profit groups, like Temple Beth Torah, the chance to earn 10% for selling Stew Leonard shopping cards. This is a great way for the Temple to earn some money and for you to enjoy your Stew Leonard shopping experience.

There is a minimum purchase of \$1000 and we have reached the minimum. Our **goal** is to sell \$3000 in Stew Leonard cards. That would be \$300 in profit! Send your check to Susan Reuben with a note saying what denomination you'd like - \$50, \$100 or \$200. Remember you pay the face value and there is no extra charge to you. We will place the first order on Nov. 16. We will place a second order Dec 15 or as soon as we have another \$1000 in checks.

For all of the other shopping you do – grocery, gasoline, pharmacy, etc. we will be ordering a new batch of cards Nov. 6. Our top selling gift card is Stop and Shop but loads of others are available at www.glsc.com. We are still offering a free Stew Leonard's cookbook to shoppers who spend at least \$500 on any gift cards in the current Jewish calendar year, while supplies last. Harriet Rosen will be getting one. Contact Susan Reuben to purchase your cards.



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Garden Design by Susan

Susan Sackler Reuben
Connecticut Certified Master Gardener

25 Howland Road West Hartford, CT 06107
860 561 2104 ssreuben@snet.net

See you in Shul.

:)

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