

The Historic United Brothers Synagogue

205 High Street
Bristol, Rhode Island 02809

Religious Leader: Scott A. Tepper
Musical Director & Organist: Patrick Aiken

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401-253-3460
UBS Phone Number

NEWSLETTER

Cheshvan 5774
November 2013

Words From Michael Feldman: President.

WAVING THE FLAGS

You may have noticed that we have a new American flag in the sanctuary. It was donated by Amy and Bob Hirsch and we thank them for it.

But it got me to thinking about why we actually have a flag in such a prominent position flanking the Bimah. We actually have three flags: the American flag, the Israeli flag and the Rhode Island State flag.

We, of course, have the Israeli flag to show our solidarity with the Jewish state and the people of Israel.

But I think the American and Rhode Island flags serve two purposes. First, we live in a country and a state where we've been able to practice our religion freely since the beginning. We are reminded of this yearly as our neighbors in Newport celebrate their letter from George Washington that so eloquently enshrines the principal of freedom of worship. We should never forget how blessed we are that we are able to enjoy the liberty that these flags symbolize.

The second purpose is to remind us that we are part of this country, not separate from it. Our beliefs and values are fundamental to the founding of the nation. The Liberty Bell in Philadelphia quotes Leviticus. Our most iconic symbol, the Statue of Liberty displays the immortal words of Emma Lazarus, a Jewish poet. When Martin Luther King Jr. wished for the time when "justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream" he is quoting the prophet Amos.

The most visceral evidence of how United Brothers Synagogue is woven into the fabric of our community is the fourth flag we display. As you enter our building, on the left, is a Gold Star Flag. Each star represents a person who served in the armed forces. One of the stars is gold, symbolizing a member of UBS who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedoms.

So the next time you visit our building, take a look at our flags and be both thankful to be part of this great country that gives us freedom to worship and be proud of our contribution to it.

Michael

Reflections from Dr. Michael Sheff: Religious and Historical Editor

Thanksgiving and Chanukah

Every few years we are surprised to find Chanukah overlapping with Thanksgiving. That's what happens when you count time in two different ways. Explaining that to children requires them to understand that Chanukah is not the Jewish Xmas even though both are decorated with lights and, importantly, gifts. The candles, oily delicacies, and Chanukah gelt with which we celebrate are the Jewish response to a theological problem, just as Xmas is the Church's response to the custom of the Saturnalia. What do you do when the historical facts contain unpleasant material? The real basis of Chanukah is the fight of Mattathias and his sons to reestablish an orthodox Jewish nation centered on Jerusalem at a time when Greco-Hellenism was becoming the majority opinion. The Maccabees won, established a small Jewish state centered on the temple, and became the Hasmonean dynasty which was to rule for more than 100 years. Sadly, with time the Hasmoneans succumbed to the temptations and corruptions of absolute rule. For the Rabbis the stories of the bloody war and the offenses of their rule made the books of the Maccabees unacceptable to be included in our Bible. Instead we celebrate the God sent miracle of the flask of oil and limit ourselves to praising the heroism of the Maccabee brothers. However, suppose we look for a larger meaning in Chanukah. What if the revolt had failed? 200 years later there would be no Jewish temple to provide a stage for a radical young Rabbi and to employ a Roman Jew from Tarshisha named Saul/Paul. Consequently no Christianity, and probably no Prophet to build Islam. Without the unifying power of these ideologies no great Christian and Muslim states would have arisen. No Spanish empire, no British empire, no Caliphate. No Pilgrims to settle in America. Maybe no europeanized America. No turkey, no potatoes. So when you eat your Thanksgiving dinner with latkes this year, toast Mattathias whose steadfastness for his faith gave you both.

COME CELEBRATE HANUKKAH ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6TH

After services on December 6th, we will be having our latke celebration. Please come and join us for the fun and delicious food. If you would like to contribute a favorite latke dish, please call either Ellen Bensusan (253-3354) or Ronnee Wasserman (254-0863).

Book club: Tuesday, November 12: 7PM :

“The Beauty of Humanity Movement” by Camilla Gibb

This story takes place in Vietnam during the post-war years. A young Vietnamese woman who evacuated with her mother and siblings, returns to Vietnam to find out what happened to her father. In her search, she finds an entire underground movement that her father played a role in.

Plan to join our book club this year!! It's a great time to spend talking and sharing thoughts about the literature that we read. Everyone is welcome.

Our new website

United Brothers has recently upgraded its website, <http://unitedbrotherssynagogue.org>. We hired a professional designer to revamp it and it's now a much more attractive and inviting site. There are a few features we should mention. First, **you can now donate to UBS directly from the site**. Simply click on donations and then click on the big “Donate” button. We can accept all major credit cards and PayPal. A donation is a wonderful way to both honor a person or occasion and it really helps us meet our budget. I've also started a “President's Blog”. It contains a copy of all the articles I've been writing for the newsletter over the last few years. We have two goals for our website. The first is to keep everybody informed about what's happening in our congregation and the second is to attract new members. We welcome any suggestions that can help us improve it.

250 Years Celebration of Touro Synagogue in Newport

Touro Synagogue in Newport celebrated their 250th Anniversary this past summer with a variety of events. During one event, Aliyah Boyle, granddaughter of Arlene and Mel Landesberg of Tiverton, was photographed with the Mayor of Newport, Harry Winthrop, and Ambassador John Loeb, former Ambassador to Denmark. Ali is 12 years old and was in RI, visiting her grandparents for a week. Ali is from Colorado and this was her first time at Touro Synagogue.



Ali Boyle and Harry Winthrop
Mayor of Newport, RI.



Ali Boyle and Ambassador John Loeb

STAY TUNED FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENTS:

Dates to be decided:

Mah jong lessons
Wine tasting
Games night
Community Book Swap
More to come!!

GIFTS OF CARING AND SHARING.

“One who donates much charity becomes the richer for it.”

UNITED BROTHERS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING SUPPORT *GIFTS OF CARING AND SHARING*

MEMORIAL FUND

Katherine Waite in memory of Kaye Godfrey
Alfred and Lorraine Benjamin in memory of Rose Benjamin
Marvin Glickman in memory of Ruth Glickman
Leonard and Goldie Cohen in memory of Robert Joel Cohen

GENERAL FUND (budget contribution)

David and Donna Kelman
Jonathan and Carol Feinstein
Howard and Karen Kestenberg
Mel and Arlene Landesberg
Paul and Rona Bishins
Andrew Teitz

GET WELL WISHES TO

Erik Skoug and Pat McLaughlin

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Dr. Jan and Mrs. Diane (De) Feldman

CONDOLENCES TO

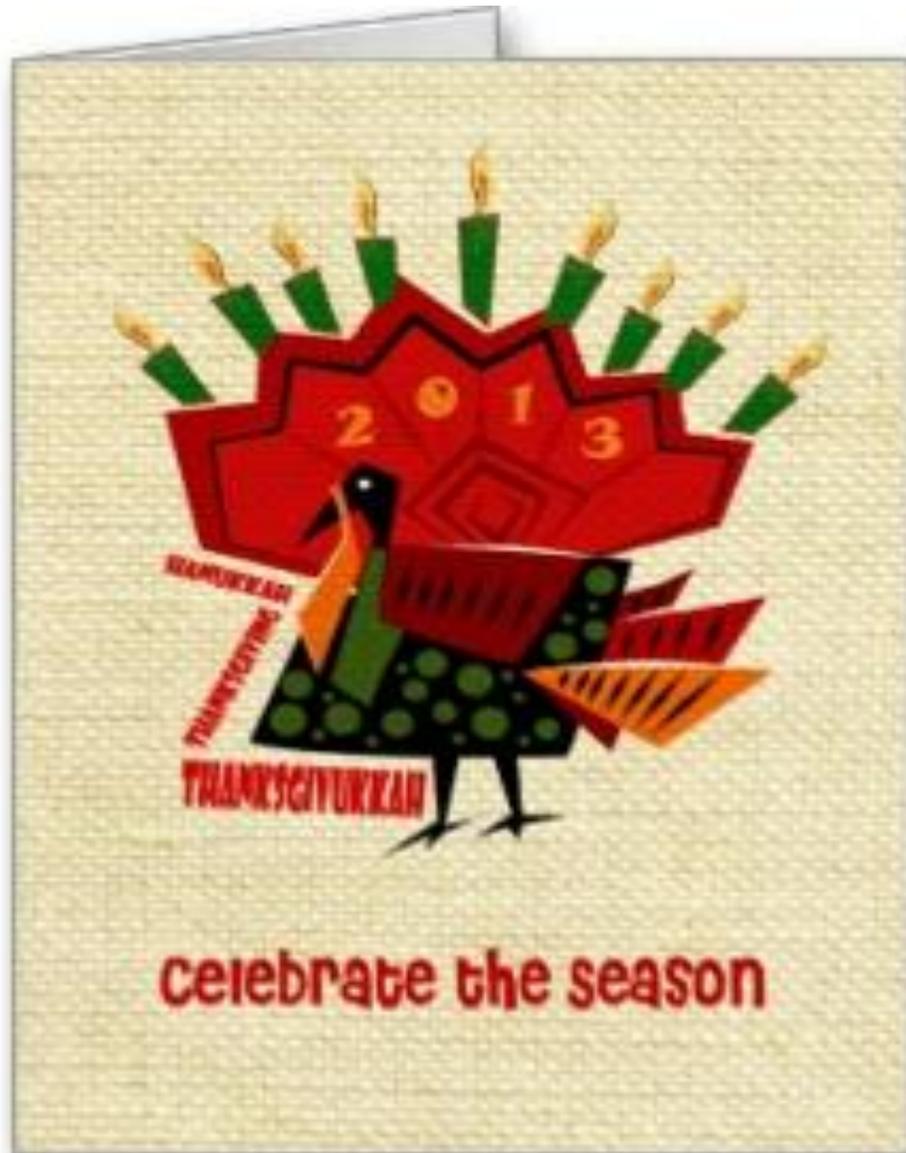
Richard Abrams on the loss of his mother, Pearl Abrams

THANK YOU - To the sponsor of our most recent Shabbat Oneg:

October: Joan Glickman, in honor of her husband's birthday

To: Ronnee Wasserman, Amy Hirsch and Carol Louison for all their hard work in organizing our wonderful Yom Kippur breakfast, a very special and traditional conclusion to our High Holidays services.

To: Michael Sheff, Steve Krohn, Barry Schruft and Herb Sackett, members of the High Holiday Committee for their efforts in organizing the Aliyot and the many details that make our services run so smoothly. Thanks also to Mim Rosenberg for all her efforts in producing our annual Yizkhor Booklet



**Have a wonderful Thanksgiving and Hanukah!!
(Thanksgivukkah!!)**