

# The Kibbitzer

**Congregation Beth Shalom of Brandon**

706 Bryan Road, Brandon, FL 33511

Phone (813) 681-6547

[www.BethShalom-Brandon.org](http://www.BethShalom-Brandon.org)

December 2022 Volume 33 Issue 7



## Hanukkah

By Sasha Ginsberg

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## From the Rabbi's desk...



On December 18<sup>th</sup>, we get ready to bring the light of winter here in sunny Florida by lighting our Menorah or Chanukiah. This is truly a holiday of religious freedom. This is also a Holiday that symbolizes the strength of the Jewish people's spirit. As we place the menorah by the window, except if we live in an anti-Semitic neighborhood, we will light the candles for eight nights. We light the Menorah candles following sunset, however, except on Friday, when we celebrate Shabbat. We light the candles before Shabbat, so we are not in any violation of creating light. On Saturday, we kindle the lights of Chanukah after Havdalah, which ushers out Shabbat.

Chanukah candles should remain lit for at least one hour and a half. As we gather all the family members around, we light the first light which is our Shamash or leader candle. Shamash means “helper” in Hebrew. Its role is to stand by ready to reignite the flame of any extinguished light. We then recite the blessings, as we light the Chanukah Candles from left to right. The leader candle is then placed the farthest away from the other candles, back in its designated place.

On the first night, we say three blessings: Shehecheyanu, Blessing Over The Chanukah Candles, and Blessing For Chanukah. Traditionally, the Shehecheyanu, which is the prayer thanking God for bringing us to this moment, is recited only the first night.

Have a Very Happy Chanukah,

Rabbi Lefkowitz



(Credit: bing.com)

In 2014 in West Hartford (Connecticut, USA) a riot of colour went on display at the **Mandell Jewish Community Center's Chase Family Gallery** when a show of quilts titled **Connecting Threads** were exhibited. The quilts had been made and displayed in a celebration of Jewish industry and artistry, under the organisation of **Diane Kruger Cohen**. Above is the glorious **Hanukkah menorah** from one of the quilts.(courant.com)



# The President's Corner



Shalom Everybody



Steve Billor

So, I am writing this article from my hotel room in Munich, Germany, after watching our Tampa Bay Buccaneers beat the Seattle Seahawks. I missed our Veterans Shabbat service/dinner that weekend as well. But I will be back to Synagogue the following Friday.

My thought process for that last paragraph was that we all have things that we want and/or need to do. We also need down time, personal time, vacation time, family time and for some of us, work time. But we must try and stay attached to our Jewish Family at Congregation Beth Shalom. We have so many different ways to be involved at Beth Shalom. Our activities are very diverse. There is the Book Club, Dinner with the Tribe, study sessions with our Rabbi, Shabbat services and many others. We welcome you to as many activities that you can attend.

I am keeping this article short this month, as I have had a long day vacationing. I hope and pray you all remain healthy and well.

As always, Todah Rabah (Thank you very much) for being a part of the Beth Shalom Family and your time in reading this article.

Steve Billor



# CBS Business

## Shabbat Services

**Meeting ID: 897 3400 8923**  
**Password: 770549**

Our Shabbat services will take place Friday Nights at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary as well as online. Our livestream feed is available on Zoom and Facebook. For outdoor services, the Zoom link will not work, so please sign in to Facebook. Join us in the celebration of Shabbat and you are welcome to like, comment, and share.

We established a new Zoom link. You will be able to login from our weekly eNews. The process has not changed, just the link. For your information here is the new link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89734008923?pwd=WEtGZXN1UVVNM0lCa3BoTzJyZUc0UT09>

We are glad that you enjoy our shabbat services and hope to see you on the Zoom screen this Friday.

**Facebook** Information for Shabbat Service:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BethShalomBrandon/>



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To reserve your place in the next issue, e-mail John Zelatis at

[jjzelatis@zomesa.com](mailto:jjzelatis@zomesa.com) or call the

CBS office at

813-681-6547.

## CBS Office Hours

The administrative office is currently open by appointment only. Someone can be reached at [cbs-brandon@outlook.com] and 813-681-6547 or you may contact Rabbi Lefkowitz directly at 407-222-6393 or [rlefkowi@bellsouth.net](mailto:rlefkowi@bellsouth.net). Rabbi Lefkowitz will be available for in person meetings on Fridays. Call him at 407-222-6393 to schedule an appointment.



Although our hours are limited, we are always here for you. Do not hesitate to reach out with any needs, concerns or questions.



### SHARE A MAZEL TOV!

Do you have a family member, friend, spouse or congregant you would like to wish Mazel Tov to in our Kibbitzer? You can send an email to [the-kibbitzer@hotmail.com](mailto:the-kibbitzer@hotmail.com) with their name and accomplishment, engagement or birth. It's important during these times to see the good in



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***The Kibbitzer***

Volume 33, Issue 7

Published Monthly by

Congregation Beth Shalom

706 Bryan Road

Brandon, FL 33511

Phone 813-681-6547

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TheKibbitzer@hotmail.com

For current news and events

see the congregation's website:

<http://www.bethshalom-brandon.org>

\*\*\*\*\*

**Congregation Contacts**

813-681-6547 • CBS-brandon@outlook.com

**Office hours:**

By appointment.

Voicemails and emails will be monitored daily.

Office is closed on holidays

**Weekly Email Blast submissions****MEMBERSHIP**

*Becoming a partner in our congregation offers an opportunity for enduring friendships and a personal spiritual journey. A place in our Jewish community.*

*Members also have free access to many of our educational and entertainment events.*

# Candle Lighting Times

Friday, December 2	5:11 PM
Friday, December 9	5:12 PM
Friday, December 16	5:15 PM
Friday, December 23	5:18 PM
Friday, December 30	5:22 PM



## Oneg Schedule

### December Sponsors

*There can be no joy without food and drink.*

Talmud, Mo'ed Katan

December 2	Robert Reisfield	In celebration of successful eye surgery
December 9	Neil Spindel	In honor of his Dad's visit
December 16	April Katz Newport	In honor of Connor and Jamie's 14th birthday
December 23	Julie Shienbaum	Temple Mitzvah
December 30	Petie Maguire	In honor of Max's 5th birthday

**If you'd like to sponsor an oneg, please call  
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# Library News



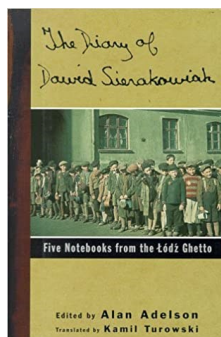
We have a new addition to our library. It is a Book Sale Corner where you may purchase a book from our library for only \$1.00. These are books for which we have multiple copies. Please drop your purchase donation in the tzedakah box near the sanctuary entrance or the Food Bank donation box. Whenever the temple is open you are welcome to visit our library and borrow a book. There is a black sign-out book and a return basket for when you want to bring it back.

Happy Reading



## Books, Books, and Books

**The Diary of Dawid Sierakowak**  
Edited by Alan Adelson



**When the Angels Left the Old Country**  
By Sacha Lamb



In working on my genealogy, I've been reading many books about the Lodz Ghetto since many of my family members ended up being transported there. This personal diary adds insight to the non-fiction books I've read. The book synopsis comes from Amazon.

"After the liberation of the Lodz Ghetto, Dawid Sierakowak's notebooks were found stacked on a cookstove, ready to be burned for heat. Young Sierakowak was one of more than 60,000 Jews who perished in that notorious urban slave camp, a man-made hell which was the longest surviving concentration of Jews in Nazi Europe. The diary comprises a remarkable legacy left to humanity by its teenage author. It is one of the most fastidiously detailed accounts ever rendered of modern life in human bondage. The luxury of life was never returned to David, but a new awareness of its richness can be our reward for reading the diary of this brilliantly and brutally deprived young human being."

A sweeping, engrossing tale that follows two mystical creatures, an angel and a demon, as they journey to America from their small shtetl in the early twentieth century.

This novel by Sacha Lamb is both an action-packed adventure filled with dybbuks, mystery, and murder, and also a sweet story of two beings discovering their place in each other's lives. It is simultaneously a story of a woman who is trying to figure out her identity, and of the lengths we will go to make sure our friends, family, and community thrive in a hostile world. *When the Angels Left the Old Country* is a phenomenal story that explores gender identity and sexual orientation while showcasing the power of community and the journey one must take to truly know oneself.



# Men's Club



**Myron Feldman**

## Tuesday, December 13th 7:00 PM

Bring the family to Glory Days where we will eat, drink, and be merry and cheer on the Lightning. "Glory Days Grill is a full-service, sports themed family restaurant known for its commitment to quality food, supporting a variety of local sports groups and their community involvement. Every restaurant brings together award-winning menus accompanied by numerous large screen televisions tuned for a variety of sports and entertainment." Tuesday's special is Nachos.



**Glory Days**  
**11310 Causeway Blvd**  
**Brandon, FL 33511**  
**813/654-5454**



# Food Bank

Our food distribution on November 20<sup>th</sup> marks a milestone – the completion of a monthly service to 40 families during the past year, an anniversary of which we can all be proud. Our committee will take a break from our own food bank in December and instead will assist others in the local area. We ask CBS members to consider joining us in volunteering at other places in December such as Seeds of Hope, Portamento of Hope, Tampa Jewish Family Services, Metropolitan Ministries Tampa and Feeding Tampa Bay. These and other agencies can always use additional help, especially during the winter holiday season.



Our next food bank will be January 15<sup>th</sup>. As you complete your food shopping this month, please consider picking up a can, box or bag of extra non-perishable food or personal hygiene or cleaning products and bringing these to the synagogue for our next distribution. As we prepare for the December holidays, let us remember that while Hanukkah was not originally a gift-giving occasion, Jews are encouraged to consider the needs of those less fortunate than us during this holiday. Accordingly, one of the eight days of Hanukkah should be a time for us to give to other families if we can.

This is also an ideal time to check our closets for clothes we no longer wear and toys our children no longer use. Meral Ginsberg would be happy to arrange for pick-up of any items you would like to donate to others and arrange for them to be distributed to appropriate charities. Please contact her at 813-690-5713 or [meralgins@gmail.com](mailto:meralgins@gmail.com). Thank you for participating in this mitzvah!

# Building & Grounds



Gabe Lifschitz

Based on the information I received at the October Board meeting, I propose completing items in the Building and Grounds report as outlined below. This is a proposed draft and open for comment, so please feel free to add thoughts, change, and modify dates, times, scope, and what to bring. The communication plan is ask for volunteers using eblast, the Kibbitzer if the timeline allows, and Shabbat services.

1. Dates: December 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> , both are Sundays from 10:00 AM until noon.

2. Scope:

- a. Clean the front CBS sign
- b. Remove the twigs and leaf debris from the south gutter
- c. Clear debris of stormwater grates - west side of the parking lot
- d. Trim bushes around the building
- e. Wash the blue canopy
- f. Remove leaf and branch debris from the open space across the double glass doors - may contact boy scout for community hours
- g. Reattach fence sections where needed
- h. Added Item to do as a group: Remove the fallen tree that straddles 521 and 523 S Larry Cir (Dan and Ashleigh's house)
- i. What to bring:
- j. Landscaping gloves
- k. Shovels
- l. Hoes
- m. Rakes
- n. Bush clippers
- o. Garbage bags, 42-gallon
- p. Beverages and bagels

Who: Everyone, we can make this a shared fun event

Thank you so much

Gabe



# Our Congregation

## Yahrzeits



12/5	Joel	Zazulia	Brother	Of	Iylene	Miller
12/6	Annette	Feldman	Mother	Of	Stephen	Feldman
12/8	Theodore	Sernovitz	Father	Of	Neil	Sernovitz
12/9	Douglas	Miller	Brother	Of	Eric	Miller
12/9	Geoffrey	Miller	Brother	Of	Eric	Miller
12/11	Al	Smith	Father	Of	Caren	Magdovitz
12/18	Elaine	Freedman	Mother	Of	Randy	Freedman
12/19	Jenny	Siegel	Grandmother	Of	Eric	Miller
12/25	Rita	Weiss	Mother	Of	Alan	Weiss
12/29	Virginia	Finke	Mother	Of	Mark	Finke
12/31	Myra	Libman-Silverman	Sister	Of	Linda	Guincho

## Birthdays

12/3	Seema	Sernovitz
12/8	Harvey	Sernovitz
12/11	Judith	Pliner
12/18	Connor & Jamie	Newport
12/29	Mark	Finke
12/31	Gabe	Sernovitz

## Anniversaries

12/21	Lynn and Larry Kaler
12/31	Randy and Danita Freedman





# Jewish Arts & Culture mini-fest

## Film



**Wednesday,  
December 14  
7:30 PM**

Bryan Glazer Family  
JCC Tampa



**Sunday,  
December 18  
3:00 PM**

Bryan Glazer Family  
JCC Tampa

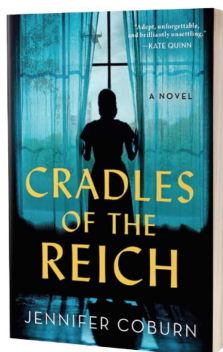


**Sunday,  
December 18  
1:00 PM**

Bryan Glazer Family  
JCC Tampa



## Book/Author

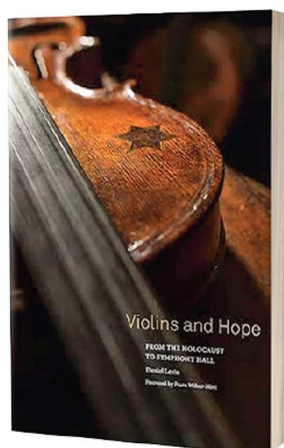


**Friday, December 16 | 12:00 PM**  
**BRIO ITALIAN GRILL – INTERNATIONAL MALL**  
Author, Jennifer Coburn, *Cradles of the Reich: A Novel*

At Heim Hochland, a Nazi breeding home in Bavaria,  
three women's fates are irrevocably intertwined

**Author Discussion & Luncheon Ticket - \$36**

## Music



**Sunday, December 18 | 10:30 AM**  
**Bryan Glazer Family JCC**

**Author Daniel Levin; *Violins and Hope:*  
*From the Holocaust Symphony Hall***

Explores the life's mission of Amnon Weinstein,  
founder of the renowned Violins of Hope program.

**Musical presentation by Patel Conservatory & Bagel Brunch Ticket - \$18**

For more information contact [brandy.gold@jewishtampa.com](mailto:brandy.gold@jewishtampa.com)

# Jewish Heritage Night



21 / BRAYDEN POINT

Jewish Heritage Night

## TICKET OFFER

December 15 | 7:00 PM



VS



**TICKETS ONLY \$38!**

Your ticket includes a custom Lightning pin and a kosher meal on the Budweiser Biergarten available until the start of the 2nd period. There will be a symbolic menorah Lighting on the plaza at approximately 6:15pm



**CUSTOM LIGHTNING PIN INCLUDED!**

To purchase tickets contact Ben Salo at  
813-301-6623 or email  
bsalo@viniksportsgroup.com

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TampaBayLightning.com | 

**BE THE THUNDER**



# Virtual Jewish Caregiver Support Group

First Thursday of the Month  
10:00–11:30 am

This virtual support group provides a county-wide opportunity for caregivers to share their experience and receive inspiration, guidance and support through a Jewish lens.

**Facilitators: Kelly Siegel and Sandi Sunter**

**To register for a Zoom link or for more information  
contact Kelly Siegel at (727) 735-8743 or  
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# Ashkenazi Civilization

## Classes on Zoom

### YIVO-Bard Winter Program on Ashkenazi Civilization January 10-27 | Live on Zoom

Join us this January to delve into Ashkenazi Jewish life and culture during its thousand-year history in Eastern Europe and in many Diasporas. Explore connections between Jewish life and the national, political, philosophical, and artistic identities Jews have historically inhabited. Discover how Jews have been influenced by, and influencers of, the cultures in which they've made temporary or permanent homes.

All classes will take place on Zoom. Class space is limited and courses fill up quickly, so reserve your spot today!



#### AMERICAN YIDDISH SHORT STORIES

Instructor: Anita Norich  
6 sessions, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
January 10-26, 2023 | 10:45am-12:00pm ET



#### HISTORY OF THE YIDDISH LANGUAGE

Instructor: Dovid Katz  
6 sessions, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
January 10-26, 2023 | 2:30pm-3:45pm ET



#### TREBLINKA AND ITS CONTEXTS – PAST AND PRESENT

Instructor: Elzbieta Janicka  
6 sessions, Wednesdays & Fridays  
January 11-27, 2023 | 9:00am-10:15am ET



#### "ISRAEL'S MOMENT":

#### A HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Instructor: Jeffrey Herf  
6 sessions, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
January 10-26, 2023 | 4:00pm-5:15pm ET



#### VISIONS OF CONTINUITY AND RUPTURE:

#### FRANZ KAFKA, S. AN-SKI, ISAAC BABEL, AND JOSEPH ROTH

Instructor: Jonathan Brent  
6 sessions, Wednesdays & Fridays  
January 11-27, 2023 | 10:45am-12:00pm ET



#### THE BIRTH OF THE JEWISH NOVEL:

#### LA CELESTINA, LAZARILLO DE TORMES, DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA

Instructor: Ilan Stavans  
6 sessions, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
January 10-26, 2023 | 6:30pm-7:45pm ET



#### JEWISH FOLK MEDICINE IN EASTERN EUROPE

Instructor: Marek Tuszewicki  
6 sessions, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
January 10-26, 2023 | 12:00pm-1:15pm ET



#### CLOTHING, CRIME AND CLASS CONFLICT:

#### JEW IN THE SHMATE TRADE

Instructor: Tony Michels  
6 sessions, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
January 10-26, 2023 | 6:30pm-7:45pm ET



#### FROM ASHES TO ASHES:

#### DEATH IN THE JEWISH IMAGINATION

Instructor: Maya Balakirsky Katz  
6 sessions, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
January 10-26, 2023 | 1:00pm-2:15pm ET



#### JEW AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Instructor: Maya Eonton  
6 sessions, Tuesdays & Thursdays  
January 10-26, 2023 | 8:00pm-9:15pm ET

### YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

Held annually in January since 2012, the YIVO-Bard Winter Program on Ashkenazi Civilization invites students to delve into Ashkenazi Jewish life and culture during its thousand-year history in Eastern Europe and in many Diasporas. The Winter Program courses explore connections between Jewish life and the national, political, philosophical, and artistic identities Jews have historically inhabited, illuminating the fact that Jews have always been influenced by, and influencers of, the cultures in which they've made temporary or permanent homes.

**FOR REGISTRATION AND MORE INFORMATION: <https://yivo.org/Winter-Program>**

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\$18 for non-members



Your ad for selling household items benefits CBS

## **Congregation Beth Shalom**

provides a meaningful spiritual home for people of all ages and levels of knowledge, a place to learn and to question, a place to worship and to celebrate, and a place to find a community that cares.

### **We offer:**

- ✧ Friday worship services at 7:00 PM
- ✧ Complete B'nai Mitzvah preparation
- ✧ Adult Education classes
- ✧ Community-wide events
- ✧ Community Food Bank



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# Chanukah 2022

Chabad.org December 2022



Abstract Jewish Painting: Hanukkah in Jerusalem – Jewish Festival of Lights  
By Alex Levin

Did Chanukah happen years ago, or is it happening now? Looking at the events today, you start to wonder. The story of a little candle pushing away the monster of frightening darkness, of human sensibility overcoming terror and brute force, of life and growth overcoming destruction — the battle is very much alive within each of us, and in the world outside of us.

After all, the victory of light over darkness is the cosmic mega-drama — the ongoing story of all that is. It reoccurs at every winter solstice, at every dawn of each day, with every photon of sunlight that breaks through the earth's atmosphere bringing it warmth and life-nurturing energy. With every breath of life, every cry of a newborn child, every blade of grass that breaks out from under the soil. With every flash of genius, every stroke of beauty, every decision to do good in the face of evil, to be kind where there is cruelty, to build where others destroy, to move humanity forward when others pull us toward chaos. And that is [Chanukah](#).

Chanukah is more than a holiday; Chanukah is an eight-day spiritual journey. Many people know the *story* of Chanukah — but only as a historical pretext to give gifts and eat latkes. We can call that the *body* of Chanukah. The *soul* of Chanukah is its meditation, joy, warmth, and light. Not only in our homes with our loved ones, but with the entire world.

# The Miracle of Chanukah

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Chanukah was a miraculous military victory, but a tiny cruse of oil proved more miraculous and enduring in the memory of the Jewish people.

In the wake of Alexander's appearance in and departure from Jerusalem, relations between Jews and Greeks were so good that an exchange of cultures took place. Each influenced the other. For the Jewish minority, however, what began as a small undertow of assimilation — such as giving children Greek names and speaking the Greek language — became a surprisingly powerful, high-speed rip current threatening to drag the caught-off-guard Jews out to the sea of complete assimilation.

Jews who embraced Greek culture at the expense of Judaism became known as Misyavnim, or Hellenists. Estimates are that a third or more of the Jewish population was Hellenist, including those who reversed their circumcision, ate pork, bowed to idols and even became self-hating enough to side with the enemies of Israel. Hellenism threatened to annihilate the Jewish world through assimilation in ways tyrants tried but could not do by force. Had the situation continued as it was, the Greeks would perhaps have won the battle by default. However, they overstepped themselves.

## Here Come the Greeks

At the beginning of the year 190 BCE, the situation between the two great post-Alexandrian empires, the Seleucid and the Ptolemaic, deteriorated badly. The Seleucids mounted an invasion that took their army through the Land of Israel, which was sandwiched in-between.

Whenever a foreign army comes into a country it changes the view of the populace. Instead of an attractive culture, the Greeks were now an occupying enemy. Instead of something to be imitated, now they became something to be resisted. The Jewish people are very stubborn. The same person who is so stubborn that he will not observe the Torah in freedom will observe it with passion if forbidden from observing it. He becomes stubborn the other way. A good case could be made that if the Communists in Russia would have left the Jews alone they would have completely assimilated. However, once told that they could not be Jewish a certain percentage of Jews decided to be Jewish at great risk. That happened with the Greeks as well.

## Progressively More Intolerable Laws

The Greek army exerted a very heavy hand against the Jews. First, they forced Jews to finance their war through collection of taxes. Then they forced them to quarter their soldiers in Jewish homes. Finally, the Greeks were determined to crush the Jewish religion.

First, they took the statue of Zeus and mounted it in the courtyard of the Temple. Next, the Greeks banned the observance of the Sabbath on the pain of death. Then, the Talmud (*Kesubos* 3b) records, there was a period of time which lasted a number of decades when the Greek officer in town had the right to “live” with a woman on her wedding night before her husband-to-be.

The Greeks also banned circumcision. Whoever circumcised his child was put to death; both child and father were killed. Then the Greeks demanded that altars to the Greek idols be established and that sacrifices be offered on a regular basis in every Jewish town. Finally, the Jewish educational system was entirely interrupted.

## The Jews Rebel

About the year 166 BCE, a group finally stood up to the Greeks: Matisyahu (Mattathias) and his family, known as the Hasmoneans. We do not know much about them except that they were of noble descent from the priestly class (*Kohanim*), including those who had served as High Priests.

They lived in a small town called Modin, which was about 12 miles northwest from Jerusalem. (The town exists today, and is about 20 miles west of modern Jerusalem.) One day, a Greek contingent marched in, set up an altar, gathered all the Jews and forced them to sacrifice a pig to Zeus. They then asked for a Jewish volunteer to perform the sacrifice. One stepped forward. As he approached the altar Matisyahu stabbed him to death. Chaos broke out. The Greek army attempted to subdue the crowd, but the Jews were armed and slaughtered the entire Greek patrol. There was no turning back now.

# The Miracle of Chanukah

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## The Maccabees

Matisyahu had five sons, all of whom were people of great organizational leadership as well as pious, committed Jews: Johanan (Yochanan), Simon (Shimon), Jonathan (Yonason), Judah (Yehudah) and Eleazar.

They ran to the caves and organized an army – not to fight an open war, but a guerilla war. Originally they organized of force of about 3,000 men. Eventually it grew to 6,000 and never reached more than 12,000 men.

The General of the Army was the great Judah, known to the world as Judah the Maccabee (or Judas Maccabaeus as he was called in Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost*). "Maccabaeus" is the Greek word for hammer, but the Jews took it, and made it Jewish by declaring that "Maccabee" stood for the first four letters in *Exodus* 15:11, meaning, "Who is like You, God?" – which was said by Moses and the people after the miraculous drowning of the Egyptians at the Sea of Reeds. An enormous Syrian-Greek army, numbering almost 50,000 men, marched into Judea. Judah the Maccabee marshaled his forces and with guile and courage outmaneuvered the far larger Greek army, forced it to divide and then destroyed its various components, killing many thousands and forcing the survivors to flee north to Syria.

It took many years, but their hit-and-run tactics wore down three great Greek armies. However, the Jews paid a very heavy price in terms of blood. Matisyahu died in the early going. Judah Maccabee was killed in the third great battle. Eleazar died while attacking an elephant. Johanan and Jonathan were killed as well. The only Maccabee brother who survived was Simon.

## The Miracle

The last famous battle was for the fortress of Antonius, which guarded the Temple. When Antonius fell, the Jews came back to the Temple. They shattered the statue of Zeus and cleaned the Temple to the extent that they could. Any priests who worked for the Greeks were sent away or executed.

They only found one small flask of uncontaminated oil with the seal of the High Priest. By Torah law, the flame of the *Menorah* (Candelabrum) in the Temple could only be lit with specially prepared pure olive oil. The amount of oil remaining in the one uncontaminated flask was only enough to burn for one day, and it would take eight days to produce a new batch of pure oil.

What could they do?

They lit it – and it miraculously burned for eight days. That is why *Chanukah* lasts eight nights (the festival was established a year later by the Rabbis).

## What is Chanukah?

The Talmud does not say much about *Chanukah*. There are perhaps forty lines spread out in different volumes, whereas almost all the other holidays have an entire Talmudic volume about them. In addition, the few words the Talmud has to say about *Chanukah* are cryptic. Perhaps that is why *Chanukah* has been subject to reinterpretation, as it has been in our time. People make whatever they want to make out of it. However, that is a mistake, a tragedy.

In the Western world, it has the misfortune of falling out in December. Therefore, in the homes of many Jewish people it has sadly become the Jewish version of the December holidays, a mixture of commercialism and non-Jewish traditions and ideas.





# The Miracle of Chanukah

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## What is Chanukah?

What the Talmud does say is that the important thing is to “advertise the miracle.” People have to recognize that a miracle took place. It is vital to keep the wonder in Chanukah. That is why the rabbis gave more emphasis to the miracle of the lights than the military victory.

Wars come and go. Even the glow of miraculous victory can fade. Young people today do not think that Israel’s War for Independence in 1948 was such a miracle. In 1967, Jews expected a second Holocaust. Now people brush the miraculous Six Day War off as nothing special.

History provides numerous examples of outnumbered forces defeating a superpower using guerilla tactics. Was the Maccabean victory so miraculous? That was the question Jews at the time must have asked themselves.

However, when the small flask of pure oil that could only last one day lasted eight days it proved that there was a miracle that happened there. The little flask of oil shed light on the big military campaign. “Not by the army, not by power, but through My Spirit, says God” (*Zechariah* 4:6). *Chanukah* is about the little light that sheds a great light.

There is an indefinable, spiritual, electric charge that binds the generations together that cannot be found in any book. It can only be had when parents and grandparents do things like sitting together with their children around the *Chanukah* lights celebrating, discussing and advertising the miracle; experientially getting in touch with the wonder of the past, the wonder of the present, the wonder of life.

## What Ever Happened to the Hellenists?

*Chanukah* is a very popular, emotional and beautiful holiday. However, the necessity for *Chanukah* begins with the story of the invasion of Greek culture and the weakness of the Jews in responding to it. It originates from the growth of an enormous sect of Hellenists within the Jews, who even supported the Greeks during the war.

What happened to the Hellenists? Their influence all but collapsed in the wake of the defeat. They would never return again as Hellenists, because the war brought out their true colors as traitors and they lost whatever appeal they could have had to the Jewish people.

Most of them retreated to the city of Caesarea, which remained a Greek city (and later would become a Roman city). They were just not part of the Jewish people any longer.

Their demise punctuated the fact that more than a military victory, the miracle of the oil signified that *Chanukah* was a victory of the spirit of the Jewish people, a victory that granted them the right to observe the Torah. That is why its memory and the people who observe it have endured.



# Chanukah Blessings



## HANUKKAH BLESSINGS

We place the candles in the hanukkiyah from right to left, and light them from left to right.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם,  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר של חנכה.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam,  
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.*

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,  
You hallow us with mitzvot, and command us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים  
לאבותינו ואמותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, she-asah nisim  
laavoteinu v'imoteinu, bayamim hahem baz'man hazeh.*

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,  
You showed wonders to our ancestors in days of old, at this season.

FOR THE FIRST NIGHT ONLY:

ויך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן ה...:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu,  
v'kiy'manu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe, for giving us life,  
for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.



## 10 Early Warning Signs of Dementia You Shouldn't Ignore

How to spot symptoms that your loved one may have Alzheimer's or dementia  
by Patrick J. Kiger, [AARP](#), Updated November 04, 2022

From age 50 on, it's not unusual to have occasional trouble finding the right word or remembering where you put things. But persistent difficulty with memory, cognition and ability to perform everyday tasks might be signs of something more serious.

### What is dementia?

Dementia isn't actually a disease, according to the Mayo Clinic. It's a catch-all term for changes in the brain that cause a loss of functioning that interferes with daily life. It can diminish focus, the ability to pay attention, language skills, problem-solving and visual perception. Dementia can also make it difficult for a person to control his or her emotions and can even lead to [personality changes](#).

Roughly 6.5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, the most common type of dementia, though many experts say that number is probably higher. And its prevalence is projected to reach nearly 13 million by 2050, according to [a 2022 report](#) from the Alzheimer's Association. Globally, over 55 million people have dementia, the World Health Organization estimates.

If someone is showing signs of dementia, it's important to see a medical expert who can conduct tests and come up with a diagnosis. Several, often treatable, conditions — from infections to a vitamin deficiency — can cause dementia-like symptoms, so it's necessary to rule them out first.

If it is dementia, you'll want to plan how you will manage care, especially as the condition progresses.

### 10 warning signs of dementia

Here are some symptoms to watch for:

- 1. Difficulty with everyday tasks.** Everyone makes mistakes, but people with dementia may find it increasingly difficult to do things like keep track of monthly bills or follow a recipe while cooking, the Alzheimer's Association says. They may also find it hard to concentrate on tasks, take much longer to do them or have trouble finishing them.
- 2. Repetition.** Asking a question over and over or telling the same story about a recent event multiple times are common indicators of mild or moderate Alzheimer's, according to the Cleveland Clinic.
- 3. Communication problems.** Observe if a loved one has trouble joining in conversations or following along with them, stops abruptly in the middle of a thought or struggles to think of words or the name of objects.
- 4. Getting lost.** People with dementia may have difficulty with visual and spatial abilities. That can manifest itself in problems like getting lost while driving, according to the Mayo Clinic.
- 5. Personality changes.** A loved one who begins acting unusually anxious, confused, fearful or suspicious, or who becomes upset easily and seems depressed is cause for concern.
- 6. Confusion about time and place.** If someone forgets where they are or can't remember how they got there, that's a red flag. Another worrisome sign is disorientation about time — for example, routinely forgetting what day of the week it is, says Jason Karlawish, M.D., a neurologist, and professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine and codirector of the Penn Memory Center.
- 7. Misplacing things.** Someone with dementia may put things in unusual places and may have difficulty retracing their steps to find misplaced items, the Alzheimer's Association notes.
- 8. Troubling behavior.** If your family member seems to have increasingly poor judgment when handling money or neglects grooming and cleanliness, pay attention.
- 9. Loss of interest.** Not feeling especially social from time to time is one thing, but a sudden and routine loss of interest in family, friends, work, and social events is a warning sign of dementia.
- 10. Forgetting old memories.** Memory loss that becomes more persistent is often one of the first signs of dementia.

Some people who experience memory loss or have difficulty with attention, decision-making language or reasoning may have a condition known as mild cognitive impairment (MCI). The condition causes a noticeable decline, but the changes are less severe than with dementia and a person can still perform normal daily activities, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

People with MCI are at an increased risk of developing dementia.

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### Where to find help

When your loved one is displaying troubling symptoms, a trip to a primary care physician is often the first step. But to get a definitive diagnosis, you'll need to see a specialist such as a neurologist, geriatrician or geriatric psychiatrist.

If you can't find one, the National Institute on Aging recommends contacting the neurology department of a nearby medical school. Some hospitals also have clinics that focus on dementia.

Specialists will want to know about the patient's medical history and habits (Do they exercise? Are they a smoker?) as well as their family medical history.

Recent research suggests that a prevalence among even members of your extended family can increase your dementia risk. And modifiable factors like high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes and insufficient physical activity can increase a person's risk for dementia.

Doctors also will conduct physical and neurological exams to rule out other treatable causes for dementia symptoms.

### How is dementia diagnosed?

Some of the methods that doctors use to diagnose dementia:

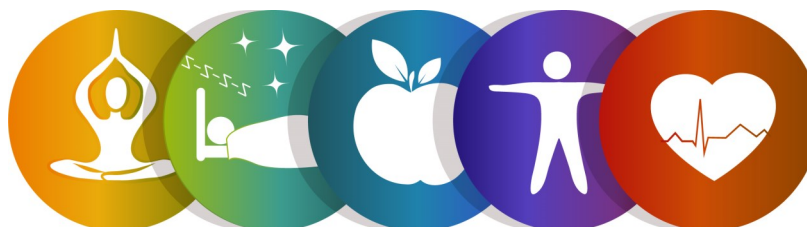
- **Cognitive and neuropsychological tests** assess language and math skills, memory, problem-solving and other types of mental functioning.
- **Blood tests** are relatively new when it comes to diagnosing dementia and are still limited in clinical settings. Doctors can order one to measure levels of beta-amyloid, a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease.
- **Brain scans** such as CT, MRI or PET imaging can spot changes in brain structure and function. These tests also can identify strokes, tumors and other problems that can cause dementia.
- **Psychiatric evaluation** can determine whether a mental health condition is causing or affecting the symptoms.
- **Genetic tests** are important, especially if someone is showing symptoms before age 60. The early onset form of Alzheimer's is strongly linked to a person's genes, according to the Mayo Clinic. Talk with a genetic counselor before and after getting tested.

*Editor's note: This article, published on October 22, 2019, has been updated with more recent information.*

*Patrick J. Kiger is a contributing writer for AARP. He has written for a wide variety of publications, including the Los Angeles Times Magazine, GQ and Mother Jones, as well as the websites of the Discovery Channel and National Geographic.*

*Note:*

*I struggled with this article, should I publish it or not. I decided that I was going to go ahead, even though this article doesn't have Jewish content. The reason is I ended up being a caregiver for both of my parents and even though I have my nursing degree, I didn't realize when they began to exhibit signs of dementia. So I decided I was going to go ahead and share the article. I hope you don't have to experience this catastrophic change in any of your loved ones, but having the knowledge can only help.*

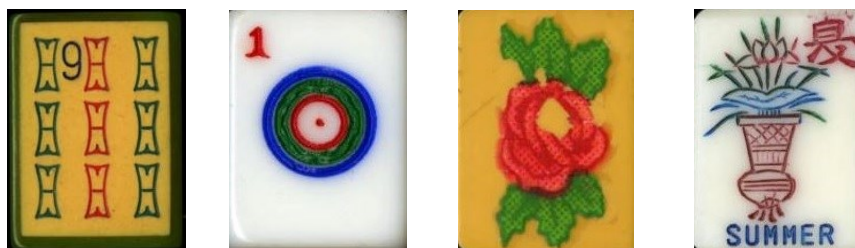




# The History of Mahjong Snacks

BY PENNY SCHWARTZ

First published in “The Nosh”



Vintage Mah Jongg Tiles. Courtesy the Museum of Jewish Heritage  
A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

Four Bam, One Crack, Six Dot.” Generations of Mah Jongg players and their children and grandchildren recognize the names of the small decorated tiles used in the Chinese game that found a devoted American audience among Jewish women.

For thousands of Jewish women from the city, the suburbs and the Catskills alike, the weekly Mah Jongg games, with their friendly wagers, were as much a ritual as lighting Friday night Shabbat candles. Nearly synonymous with the playing were the ring jells, Bridge mix, Entenmann’s coffee cake and other iconic snacks that were served.

Mah Jongg night was a big deal, recalls Audrey Kaplan, whose mother was a regular player when Kaplan was growing up in the 1960s. Now a regular player herself, Kaplan has vivid childhood memories of the snacks that her mother served. It’s a regular topic of conversation with one of the other players in her own game. “We laugh about it because we both remember a cut-up pineapple with those very unhealthy maraschino cherries and the little plastic toothpicks. That was the standard nosh food, along with M&Ms in a bowl. We loved when our moms hosted the weekly game, because there were leftovers of good snacks in the house,” Kaplan said.

## Is Mah Jongg A Jewish Game?

Many people associate Mah Jongg with Eastern European Jewish women. But it first bloomed in the 1920s and 30s among women of the leisure class, many of whom were of German descent, according to Melissa Martens Yaverbaum, executive director of the Council of American Jewish Museums and the exhibit’s curator. There was even an air of the forbidden, with women staying up at night gambling, Yaverbaum said. But it became acceptable as an American game and as an American Jewish game, she said.

In 1937, at the inaugural convention of the National Mah Jongg League, all 200 women were Jewish, Yaverbaum pointed out. The league’s focus on donating to philanthropic causes made it a natural for synagogue sisterhoods and other Jewish women’s groups.

In the 1920s and 1930s, when the game was first introduced to Americans, the Chinese influence was more exaggerated, and marketing at times played on ethnic stereotypes, Yaverbaum told The Nosh. Advertisements promoted Chinese food, lanterns, and Mah Jongg-inspired dishware.

Over the last decade, there’s been a renewed interest in the game, and today there are more than 350,000 members of the National Mah Jongg League, which still sells the yearly rule cards that it uses to support philanthropic causes, including many Jewish groups. Given the prominent role of food in Jewish culture, it’s no surprise that when Jewish women get together for Mah Jongg, food is a kind of fifth player,” Barsky observed. “It’s about nurturing, being social and being warm and welcoming to guests.

# Time for a Nosh

## Classic Potato Latkes

By Tina Wasserman at ReformJudaism.org



### INGREDIENTS:

6-8 thin skinned potatoes, such as Yukon Gold  
 3 eggs, beaten well  
 1 Tablespoon salt  
 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
 1/2 cup matzah meal  
 1 large onion, cut into 8 pieces  
 Oil for frying  
 Applesauce (optional)  
 Sour Cream (optional)



### DIRECTIONS






















1. Grate the raw potatoes using the large grating disk on a processor or the largest holes on a grater if doing it by hand. Place the grated potato in a colander, rinse with cold water. Set aside to drain.
  2. Combine eggs, salt, pepper, and matzah meal or cracker meal in a 3-quart bowl. Mix thoroughly.
  3. Change to the cutting blade on your processor. Add the onions to the work bowl. Pulse on and off 5 times. Add 1/4 of the grated potatoes to the onion and pulse on and off to make a coarse paste. Add to the egg mixture and stir to combine.
  4. Add the drained potatoes to the bowl and mix thoroughly, using a large spoon or your hands.
- Heat a large frying pan or large skillet for 20 seconds. Add enough oil to cover the pan to a depth of 1/4 inch and heat for an additional 10 seconds. Drop mounds of potato mixture into the pan. Fry on both sides until golden. Drain the fried latkes on a platter covered with crumpled paper towels. Serve with [applesauce](#) and sour cream.

#### Additional Notes

- Grated potatoes turn black when exposed to air. Rinsing the potatoes under running water washes away excess starch, the discoloring culprit.
  - Always grate the potatoes separately from the onions so that you don't lose any of the flavorful onion juice when you drain the potatoes.
- The best way to drain fried foods is on a plate covered with crumpled paper towels. Crumpling them yields more surface area for absorption.





				1 7:00 PM Adult Education	2 7:00 PM Shabbat Service  	3
4	5	6 6:30 Executive Board Mtg 7:00 Board Mtg	7	8 7:00 PM Adult Education	9 7:00 PM Shabbat Service  <b>Kibbitzer Deadline</b>  	10
11 10 AM - 12 PM Temple Grounds Clean-Up  	12	13 7:00 Men's Club Glory Days	14 Jewish Arts & Culture Mini Fest  	15 7:00 PM Adult Education  Jewish Heritage Night w/The Lightning   	16 7:00 PM Shabbat Service  	17  
18 10 AM - 12 PM Temple Grounds Clean-Up   <b>Light 1st candle for Chanukah</b>   	19   <b>Chanukah 1st Day</b>	20   <b>Chanukah 2nd Day</b>	21   <b>Chanukah 3rd Day</b>	22 7:00 PM Adult Education   <b>Chanukah 4th Day</b>	23 7:00 PM Shabbat Service   <b>Chanukah 5th Day</b>  	24   <b>Chanukah 6th Day</b>
25   <b>Chanukah 7th Day</b>	26   <b>Chanukah 8th Day</b>	27	28	29 7:00 PM Adult Education	30 7:00 PM Shabbat Service  	31