

Whitestone Hebrew Centre Bulletin

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



שלום

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Volume XXIX No. 4

December 2019

Kislev — Tevet 5780



WHC CHANUKAH PARTY



Sunday - December 22nd @ 6:30 PM

Come and enjoy our Chanukah celebration

Music, Food and Gift Basket Raffles

(See Enclosed Flier for Details)



Sisterhood General Meeting

Tuesday December 3rd @ 12:30 PM

COME CELEBRATE CHANUKAH

A lite lunch will be served



Family Shabbat

Saturday December 7th @ 10:00 AM





WHC Bulletin Staff

Rabbi Steven Axelman,
Editor
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FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

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President's Message

When I was growing up in the Clearview Gardens section of Whitestone, as you walked around the neighborhood you rarely saw anything seasonally festive in December that was not Judaically inspired. In fact – the Christian Holiday celebrated by the vast majority of the world came into view mostly by driving around outside the community into the towns of Whitestone, Bayside, Flushing, etc., or on TV – with its endless array of Peace on Earth messages that were counterpoint to the news and other programming we were exposed to the rest of the year. Chanukah was rarely if at all mentioned (so much for the myth of the Jewish run Entertainment Industry).

Despite the fact it's not mentioned in the Torah, Chanukah is no doubt the best known Jewish holiday in America. That it falls near (and this year coincides with) Christmas on the secular calendar, and traditionally involves candles and gifts strengthens the parallel mostly for those outside our faith (and unfortunately, many of us as well).

The miracle of the oil is known to most: after retaking the Temple in Jerusalem, on the altar only one day's worth of purified oil remained. The victorious Hebrews went ahead and lighted it, and the oil burned in the rededicated Temple for eight days, long enough to produce a new supply. Many of us do accept this part of the story as fact but to me, the Real Miracle of Chanukah was that the Maccabees successfully challenged and defeated a much larger force, and arguably kept Judaism itself from disappearing. We talked about the similarities with Thanksgiving a couple years ago, when the

(Continued on page 4)

Chanukah begins this year with sunset on Sunday, December 22nd and ends at nightfall on Monday, December 30th. Chanukah is the only Jewish holiday that continues from one Jewish month to the next, beginning on the 25th day of Kislev and continuing into the month of Tevet. According to the Talmud, Chanukah commemorates the miracle that occurred when, after being victorious in war against the Greeks, the Jews found only enough ritually pure oil in the Temple to light the Menorah for one day, but miraculously the Menorah burned for eight days, until more oil was found or processed. (There are many other ways to understand Chanukah's history, the reasons for its celebration, etc. from traditional and less-traditional perspectives—those discussions are better suited for a class than a column; as always I welcome one and all to our Sunday classes at 12:45 p.m. and our Monday classes at 7:30 p.m.)

On the weeknights of Chanukah, it is best to light the candles 20 minutes or so after sunset and they should remain lit for at least 30 minutes. However, on Shabbat it is forbidden to light the candles after sunset. The proper procedure, therefore, is to light the Chanukah candles before lighting Shabbat candles at the proper time, which on December 27th is 4:13 p.m. The candles should remain lit for approximately 90 minutes. For those who perform this mitzvah with olive oil and a wick (as does the writer of this article) this does not present a problem. For those who use the standard Chanukah candles, which burn for about 45 minutes, it is preferable to buy longer candles, which are readily available in stores. Some claim that freezing the candles will significantly lengthen their burn time as well. This year the seventh night of Chanukah falls on Saturday night. On that

(Continued on page 4)



Happy Chanukah

From your
Whitestone Hebrew Centre
Family

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Message

Thank you to Iris Kirschner, Sisterhood's Program Chairperson, for giving us a wonderful program for our Paid-Up Membership Meeting last month. Since November was "Jewish Book Month", Iris talked about a variety of Jewish books. The members who attended also recommended and discussed books that they had read.

Please join us on Tuesday, December 3rd at 12:30 PM for Sisterhood's Chanukah Celebration. A lite lunch and refreshments will be served. We hope to see you at the Chanukah Celebration.

SISTERHOOD DATES TO REMEMBER

Tue.	Dec 3rd	Sisterhood Board Meeting	10:00 AM
Tue.	Dec 3rd	Sisterhood General Meeting	12:30 PM



On Monday, November 11th at Midway Jewish Center in Syosset, our Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island (BQLI) Region of Women's League for Conservative Judaism held its Kick-Off event which supports the Torah Fund Campaign. Thank you to the Sisterhood of Midway Jewish Center for hosting this event. The theme of this event was, "A Day in Celebration of Chesed: Lovingkindness." The Program was "Mah Jongg: How a Chinese Game Became a Jewish Pastime". There were 120 attendees. The following women who attended from our Sisterhood, including myself, were Lilian Gradofsky, Iris Kirschner, Linda Pereira and Rhoda Weinstein. Thank you to Iris Kirschner and Linda Pereira, our drivers.

Prior to the program, we heard from two speakers. The first speaker, Rabbi Perry Rafi Rank of Midway Jewish Center spoke about "Why Jews Should Never Give Charity". The second speaker, Rabbi Manes Kogan, of Hillcrest Jewish Center spoke about "Mar Ukva and His Wife: When Chesed is More Than a Project".

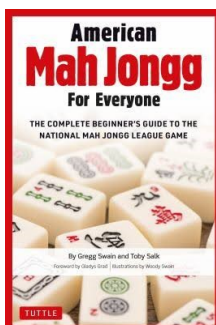
The last speaker, Gregg Swain, an author, art historian and lecturer spoke about "Mah Jongg: How a Chinese Game Became a Jewish Pastime". As part of Gregg's presentation, she showed pictures of elaborately drawn tiles, as well as Mah Jongg cases that had beautiful carvings. We learned many other things about Mah Jongg. Mah Jongg started in China in the 1800's and is similar to the game of Gin Rummy. The game started in the United States in the 1920's and quickly became a craze. Men

also played the game. We saw a picture of Alma Gluck, an opera singer who performed at the Metropolitan Opera House and her husband, Efrem Zimbalist, the famous violinist, playing Mah Jongg. Gregg pointed out that the Chinese and Jewish cultures are similar in some ways. Both cultures are family oriented and steeped in tradition. Also, the Mah Jongg tiles are read from right to left. In 1937, the National Mah Jongg league was started by five women. The game was a way for people to socialize, get together and form friendships. Organizations used Mah Jongg as a way to fundraise by having tournaments. During World War II, playing Mah Jongg was a way of distracting and escaping from hearing the news about the war. In the 1950's and 1960's Mah Jongg was very popular in the Catskills, at the hotels and bungalow colonies. Pictures were shown of women playing by the pool at popular hotels, such as Grossinger's. Grossinger's even had a room set aside for Mah Jongg tournaments. We learned that there are hundreds of ways to play Mah Jongg. In fact, a new game of Mah Jongg, called Siamese Mah Jongg, can be played by two people.

Following the program, we had a Chinese Buffet Luncheon. Everyone received a complimentary gift, a Mah Jongg key ring. Of course our BQLI Region had raffles. I won a raffle and so did Iris Kirschner.

All the speakers and their topics helped to make our BQLI Region Kick-Off event very successful.

Patricia Smolker





Our Hebrew School children learned about the history of Chanukah on Sunday November 24th, which was the last day of Hebrew School before Erev Chanukah on December 22nd.

Since there will not be Hebrew School during Chanuka due to Winter Break, we plan to play our annual dreidel game that day. Stay tuned for announcement of the winner!

December Happy Birthdays



Barbara Friedman Tricia Smith
Dorothy Schneider

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 2)

rarely occurring convergence of the lunar and solar calendar brought them together but mostly we pair it with its nearest (Christian) seasonal neighbor. In fact, it resonates powerfully with America's own founding, offering lessons about standing up for one's beliefs and challenging injustice. It can in its own way be considered, like Independence Day, a Festival of Freedom.

Though Chanukah is not considered one of our Major Holidays (as are Yom Kippur, Pesach, etc.), American Jews have always promoted it to encourage pride in their heritage and its messages of renewal and hope. On that basis it speaks for itself.

Chanukah Sameach!

Bruce Berenson

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

(Continued from page 2)

night the candles should NOT be lit until dark, approximately 40 minutes after sundown.

Originally the Menorah was placed outside one's home by the door on the opposite side of the Mezuzah so one could see it easily from the street and pass between the two mitzvot of Mezuzah and Menorah when entering the home. Many in Israel follow this practice even now. The more prevalent custom is to light the Menorah in a window that faces the street. Each night we add one candle, the first night, 1, the second night, 2, etc. The *shamash* (the extra candle) is lit because it is forbidden to derive benefit from the candles of Chanukah; we can only derive benefit from the light provided by the *shamash*. (Bear in mind that until relatively recently in history, candles were the main source of light!)

On the first night we recite three blessings (B'rachot) that are found in the Siddur/prayer book, including "Shehechiyanu", the blessing we recite the first time we observe any Mitzvah. On subsequent nights we recite only two blessings. It is customary for everyone in the house to light their own Menorah. After lighting the Menorah, "Haneirot Hallalu" and "Maoz Tzur" are sung.

Various possible origins are cited for the custom of playing

dreidel on Chanukah, including that the Jews, when prohibited from studying Torah, would pretend to be gambling with a dreidel when caught by the Greeks. The letters on the dreidel: *Nun, Gimmel, Heh, and Shin* stand for "*Nes Gadol Haya Sham*" or a great miracle happened there, referring to Israel.

Another widespread custom is to eat latkes, as they are fried in oil, to commemorate the miracle that happened with oil. In Israel today (and increasingly outside of Israel), they eat "sufganiyot", jelly donuts, instead.

There appear to be several reasons or sources for the custom of giving Chanukah-gelt, though none for our "custom" of gift-giving, though I never quarrel with that custom.

Again, this article does not claim to fully cover this subject. Almost every sentence presented herein is subject to interpretation and dispute. I have merely presented the most common traditional view of Chanukah in the simplest possible way.

Wishing you all a Chanukah Samayach—a happy and healthy Chanukah!

(For English and transliterated lyrics, as well as audio of the Brachot and Ma'oz Tzur, please go to our website at www.whitestonehebrewcenter.org/chanuka).



Visit with the Rabbi— In the Comfort of your Home!



Rabbi Axeiman is available to visit with those of our congregants who are either homebound or find it difficult to get out, but would appreciate the opportunity to meet with the Rabbi at their convenience and in their own home. If this is something you would be interested in, please phone the office and let us know what the best days and times would be for the Rabbi to visit (any day after December 22nd).



At a time of much negative news about Israel recently concerning the indictments pending against Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu and the issues surrounding a possible third election within one year, it seemed a good time to highlight some of the recent positive news generated by Israel, of which we can all be proud.

Sheba Medical Center ranked world's 10th best hospital Wednesday, November 27, 2019

Excerpted from:

www.israelhayom.com/2019/03/21/sheba-medical-center-ranked-worlds-10th-best-hospital/

Chaim Sheba Medical Center at Tel HaShomer has been ranked one of the world's ten best hospitals by Newsweek magazine. The Israeli medical center comes in at No. 10 on the magazine's list. The famed Minnesota-based Mayo Clinic received the top ranking. In its report, Newsweek called the medical center in Ramat Gan "a leader in medical science and biotechnical innovation, both in the Middle East and worldwide" and noted it "includes centers for nearly all medical divisions and specialties and serves over one million patients per year." According to the magazine, 25% of all clinical research performed in Israel is carried out at Tel HaShomer's state-of-the-art facilities. In a statement, Tel HaShomer said the hospital's ranking was "the product of 70 years of excellence, professionalism and innovation and thanks to the thousands of dedicated Sheba employees, both past and present.

Discovery at Hebrew University could revolutionize chemotherapy

New technique singles out cancer cells while leaving healthy ones unharmed, enabling patients to receive less chemo and fewer side effects.

Excerpted from: www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/272339

It is a feeling that many who receive a cancer diagnosis can identify with: heartbreak and fear, followed by hopes that chemotherapy will save the day. Unfortunately, for many patients, chemo's painful side effects cause them to stop treatment prematurely. Now, a research team headed by Professor Alexander Binshtok, head of the Pain Plasticity Research Group at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Faculty of Medicine and Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences, has developed a method that delivers chemotherapy drugs directly to malignant cells and bypasses healthy ones. This discovery could allow doctors to reduce chemo doses for patients, thereby reducing the unpleasant side-effects associated with the treatment, and improve treatment compliance and overall prognoses.

"Most anti-cancer treatments are not sufficiently specific, meaning they attack healthy cells together with the malignant ones they're trying to get rid of," explained Binshtok. "This leads to the many serious side-effects associated with chemotherapy. Eliminating cancerous cells while leaving healthy ones alone is an important step towards reduce patients' suffering."

9 Israeli inventions make Time magazine's top 100 list Excerpted from: www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/272355

A personal robot, home water generators, and vision technology device are three of the nine Israeli inventions tapped for Time's top 100

The top inventions appear in the Dec. 2-9 double issue that went on sale Friday in categories that include accessibility, beauty, design, health care and sustainability. The evaluations were based on factors including "originality, creativity, influence, ambition, and effectiveness."

Along with Temi by Robotemi, the personal robot, these are the Israeli inventions, according to the NoCamels website: MyEye 2.0 by OrCam, a vision technology device for people with visual impairments. ECONcrete, an environmental tech company that develops sustainable concrete for constructing ecologically active infrastructures. Nerivio by Theranica, a device that provides acute treatment of migraines. TytoHome by Tyto Care, remote medical examination device. Genny by Watergen, a home generator capable of producing up to 7.9 gallons of drinking water per day by collecting water vapor in the air and putting it through physical, chemical and biological treatment. Alice by Eviation Aircraft, the first all-electric commuter aircraft. ElliQ by Intuition Robotics, a tabletop social robot to help the elderly stay engaged, independent, and connected to family and friends. Giveback by Lemonade, which leverages unclaimed money from its renters' and homeowners' insurance policies for charity.

Israeli-Developed Solar Generator Prototype To Head to Space with NASA

Excerpted from: www.jewishpress.com/news/on-campus/israeli-developed-solar-generator-prototype-to-head-to-space-with-nasa/2019/11/27/

A tiny prototype of a solar generator developed at Ben Gurion University of the Negev will be heading to the International Space Station (ISS) with NASA, the university announced Monday. The device, which is about the size of a US 25-cent coin and only 1.7 millimeters thick, is meant to improve the power-to-weight ratio of private and commercial spacecraft – ultimately making space travel more affordable. It was developed by Jeffrey Gordon of the solar energy and environmental physics department at BGU.

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Mondays @7:30 PM -- Judaism 101

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The recipient receives an acknowledgement of the contribution and it is printed in the monthly Bulletin so all can share the feelings expressed. To place orders, call Patricia Smolker at (718) 746-7068.

Checks for the above funds should be made payable to "Sisterhood of WHC".



Thank you for Donations -- November 2019

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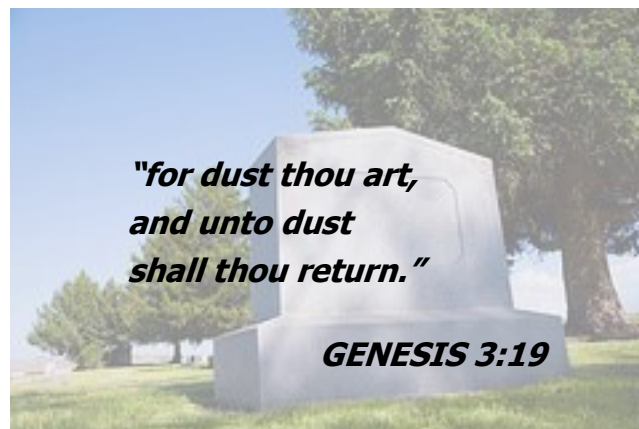
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