

# Winter Holiday

MAGAZINE



A SUPPLEMENT to the  
**JEWISH EXPONENT**

NOVEMBER 24, 2016



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my  
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# Happy CHANUKAH



NEED HOLIDAY  
*Inspiration?*

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# FIVE great BUYS

FOR THE JEWISH MUSIC LOVER IN YOUR LIFE

LIZ SPIKOL | JE STAFF

*There's nothing like the balm of music to soothe a troubled mind — and given the collective angst generated by the last few months, now is the perfect time to indulge in the sweet harmonies of escape.*

*If the music has a Jewish theme, well, it's all the better as a Chanukah gift, whether your loved one is addicted to vinyl or only listens to songs online. Below, some music and related goodies that'll bring a smile to any music-lover's face.*

See Music, Page 14



# YOUR TRANQUIL PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE

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Set on 43 pristine acres in Frazer, Chester County, Haym Salomon Memorial Park's established arboreal surroundings, dignified formal gardens and stately mausoleums offer a magnificent and peaceful resting place. Please visit [haysalomonmemorialpark.com](http://haysalomonmemorialpark.com) for more information and to schedule a tour.

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## LEONARD COHEN, YOU WANT IT DARKER

Canadian Jewish singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen — best known for his songs “Suzanne,” “Bird on a Wire” and “Hallelujah” — had just released his 14th studio album before he passed away this month at 82. His vocal style had changed as he aged, but it was still a powerful instrument.

Unlike so many cringeworthy late-career entries from legendary performers (Sinatra and Elvis come to mind), Cohen’s new album is a stunner, full of rich, exquisite orchestration and haunting melodies.

In a recent *New Yorker* profile, Cohen professed himself ready to die, and indeed the songs on this new album delve into mortality and endings, sometimes from a very Jewish perspective. Yet the album, despite its title, isn’t dark. Rather, it feels filled with hope and love and longing. The perfect gift.

## SPECIAL EDITION

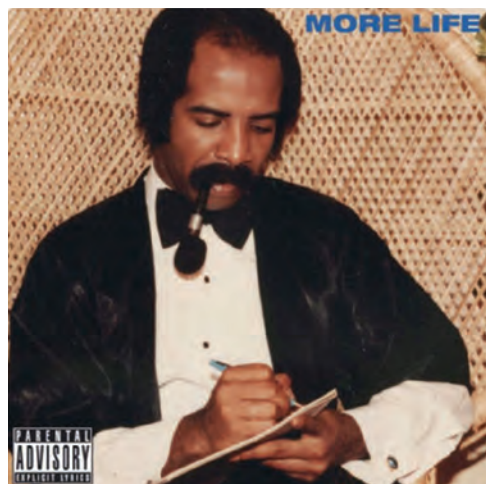
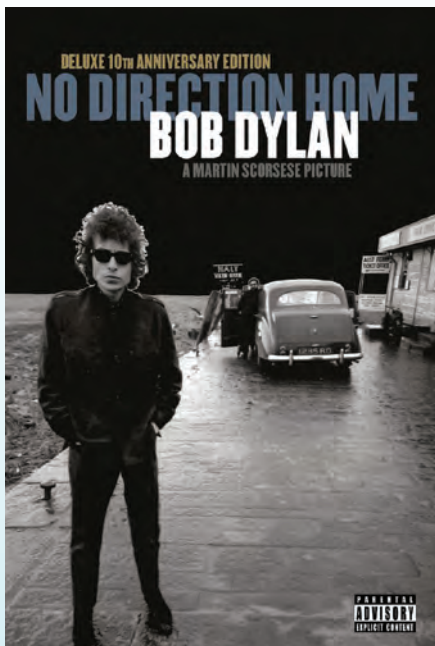
### NO DIRECTION HOME: BOB DYLAN 10th Anniversary Deluxe Box Set

If Leonard Cohen has an American analog, it’s probably Bob Dylan, though Dylan once told Cohen he considered himself a better writer. The 2016 Nobel Prize committee apparently agreed, bestowing its prize for literature on Dylan — the first musician to receive such an honor.

Now, to celebrate the 10th-anniversary release of *No Direction Home*, Martin Scorsese’s critically praised documentary about Dylan, a box set is available for purchase for Dylan completists.

The box set includes a two-disc Blu-Ray edition and two-disc DVD edition in a deluxe portfolio; three 8x10 lithographic photo prints; and a special-edition Bob Dylan magazine featuring historical articles and photos. The Blu-Ray and DVD have an additional two-plus hours of never-before-seen footage, including classic Dylan performances and an unused promotional spot.

For those who don’t necessarily want all the *mishegas* — they just want to see the movie — it’s now available for viewing on iTunes for the first time. Either way, it’ll help explain that Nobel choice.



## MORE LIFE, DRAKE

Here’s one for the young R&B and hip-hop fan in your life — a new project by Drake, the Canadian Jewish (on his mom’s side) heartthrob responsible for such earworms as “Hotline Bling.” The 30-year-old, who’s dating Pennsylvania native Taylor Swift (shikse alert!), last released a full-length album, *Views*, in 2015.

His new project is reported to be a “playlist project” — at least that’s what Drake is calling it right now — with all original music, though details are scant and the release date is simply “sometime in December.”

So far, three songs from *More Life* have been made available on iTunes, with more to come, so the best gift in this case might be a late-December iTunes gift card.



## BEAUTIFUL: THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL

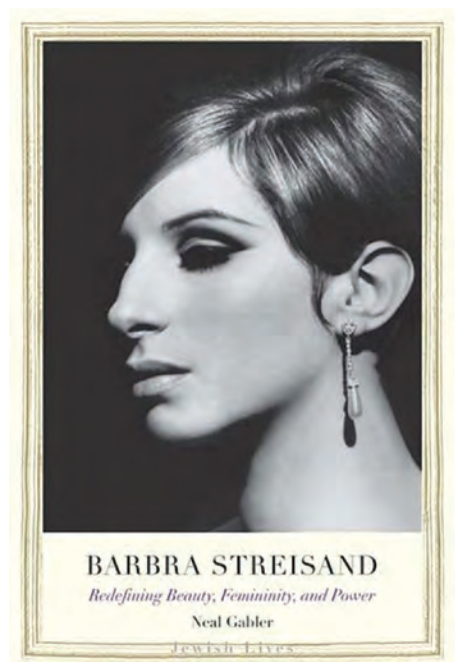
“So Far Away.” “You’ve Got a Friend.” “(You Make Me Feel) Like a Natural Woman.” “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feeling.” “I Feel the Earth Move.” “Up on the Roof.” It’s hard to list all of the blockbuster hits that singer-songwriter Carole King — born Carol Klein — wrote over the years, both for herself and for other groups.

The Broadway musical *Beautiful* chronicles King’s journey from the nice Jewish girl who comes to New York at 16 to the mature woman who transformed American music with her songs.

The *Beautiful* soundtrack won last year’s Grammy for Best Musical Theater Album, and the show was nominated for seven



Tony Awards. King herself has said the show is “effing awesome.” Treat the Brill Building fan in your life to a day trip to New York and two tickets to the show. \$99 orchestra seats are available for select performances.



## BARBRA STREISAND: REDEFINING BEAUTY, FEMININITY AND POWER

Speaking of Jewish songstresses, there's no one who quite compares to Barbra Streisand — singer, writer, actor, director and activist.

The longtime Democrat, who's married to actor James Brolin, recently told Australia's *60 Minutes* she'd emigrate to that country or to Canada if Trump won the presidency. Such statements tend to engender either rage or admiration among Streisand watchers, but there's no question that the *Yentl* director is a fascinating personality.

Though she doesn't have a new album out, a recent biography by Neil Gabler (author of *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*) examines Streisand's life through the prism of her Jewishness.

“No one is better equipped to ponder the Jewish origins of Streisand than Gabler,” said *Jewish Journal's* Jonathan Kirsch of the trim bio, which was published by Yale University Press. ●

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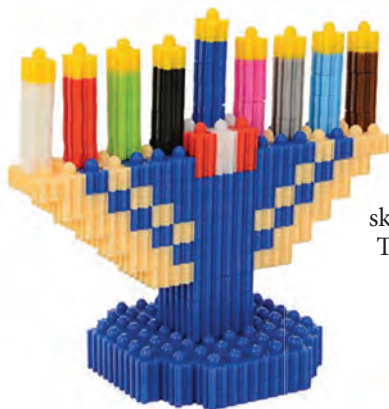
Nothing's more memorable than a bad gift.

Themed holiday socks, a singing wall-mounted bass or basically anything you've ever seen on an infomercial at 3 a.m. can round out that list pretty well.

And when it comes to what to get your young children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and the like, you certainly don't want to disappoint and make for a rather lackluster holiday.

But finding the perfect Chanukah gift for kids doesn't mean mega toy monster trucks or Tickle Me Elmos (remember those?).

A truly meaningful gift combines the spirit of the holiday, a little bit of pizzazz and a dash of educational value (sorry kids, but your parents will agree with me on this one).



## MAKING THE MENORAH

For the Lego generation — and those passing it on to their kids — Deforma Building Blocks (ages 6 and up) are a fun way to allow kids to create their own menorah.

Shaping the menorah is educational, too, helping kids practice problem-solving techniques and build motor development skills. Plus, who doesn't love building blocks?

The set is just over \$20 and can be bought on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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# Kids

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## TOY VEY

Eli Kowalski, owner of Toy Vey Toys in Philadelphia, has been manufacturing “family tradition products to bring families back together” for about two years.

Their main products feature Judah Maccabee, who is the headliner of their most recent 9-inch plush toy.

Hanukkah in a Box comes with the plush toy, a book explaining the story of Chanukah and the Maccabees — which won *Creative Child Magazine*’s 2016 Book of the Year Award — and a refillable dreidel, all for \$29.95.

“The Maccabee Hanukkah in a Box is really what I would call the purest true story of Chanukah,” Kowalski said.

It comes in variations, too, like a musical one that sings the dreidel song for \$24.95, or the Maccabee on the Mantel, which is a Jewish nod to Elf on the Shelf.

The Maccabee on the Mantel is great for interfaith families because Kowalski said “this is a great story where you can mix Chanukah and a little imagination together.”

The company also makes kosher individually wrapped Chanukah fortune cookies for \$7.95.

“It’s fun, especially this year when Chanukah is falling on Christmas Eve and people like to have Chinese food for Christmas,” he laughed.

Overall, Kowalski said Toy Vey Toys’ products convey the most accurate story of Chanukah for kids.

“It’s great for grandparents to sit down with their grandchildren and read them a story,” he added, which also includes songs and blessings and explains how to play dreidel and how to light the candles.

“It’s a fun read but it’s also a little educational experience.”

Orders can be placed at [ToyVeyToys.com](http://ToyVeyToys.com).



## HOLIDAY SWEATERS

It’s always nice to show up to a holiday party with a little swag, and nothing is cuter on kids than ironic Chanukah sweaters (right?).

[Etsy.com](http://Etsy.com) is the best place to go for just the thing, whether they’re “YOU SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND” onesies with cartoon dreidels, or your run-of-the-mill ugly sweaters that say “Happy Hanukkah.”

Some people on the site even custom-make “My 1st Hanukkah” bibs and baby shower gifts.

Some other personal favorite graphic tees: “Little Latke Lover,” “Jewish Christmas” featuring a Chinese takeout box, or the “Jew Chainz” shirt with long gold necklaces with a Jewish star and chai.

## BODY ART

Now don’t get carried away, we’re not talking about tattoos and the like (your bubbe would have a conniption). But for those approaching Bar and Bat Mitzvah age — those delightful preteen years — temporary metallic flash tattoos will make their friends envious.

Temporary flash tattoos have been all the rage in the past year — even for adults — and Modern Tribe creates Jewish ones like a hamsa, latkes, dreidels, menorahs and so on. They can be purchased at [ModernTribe.com](http://ModernTribe.com) for \$12.95.

On top of that, nail art is super popular, and that means — you guessed it — people are painting latkes on their fingernails.

But for those a little less artistically inclined, you can buy nail art stickers with images like Judah Maccabee, gelt or Chanukah candles.

Chanukah season is officially on its way — and on your fingertips.

Nail Decals are \$11.99 at [MidrashManicures.com](http://MidrashManicures.com).



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## Hanukkah Menu 2016

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Roasted Sweet & Sour Chicken Split Breast	\$7.99 lb.
Homemade Applesauce	\$4.99 lb.
Pineapple Kugel	\$6.99 lb.
Potato Latkes	\$7.99 lb.
Parisian Carrot Tzimmes	\$6.99 lb.
Haricot Verts, Roasted Leeks & Red Pepper	\$7.99 lb.
Roasted Rosemary Yukon Gold Potatoes	\$6.99 lb.
Seven Fruit Haroset	\$6.99 lb.
Orzo Cranberry Saffron Almond Salad	\$6.99 lb.
Green Beans Almondine	\$6.99 lb.
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Turkey Gravy	\$4.99 16 oz.
Brisket Gravy	\$4.99 16 oz.
Jewish Apple Cake	\$9.99 each

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# New Moon



Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael

Illustrated by Susan Cathcart & Marilyn Kane

## Kids

Continued from Page 18

### HOLIDAY BOOKS

Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael, a local independent rabbi, has created a unique take on Jewish holidays with her book *New Moon*.

"When my daughter was little, there were just no books like this, mother-daughter books, that sort of explored Judaism with a spiritual approach; learning traditions that had a strong message for Jewish girls," she said.

So she created her own story, which follows Rosh Chodesh, the celebration of the new moon, through the story of a young girl, Rose, and her mother.

"My goal was to bring to life some biblical characters, holiday celebrations and integrated into a new format that links to music," she added. The book is accompanied by music sung by Raphael.

In the last half of the book, the pages are in black and white so kids can color it themselves.

One mother told her that she's going to have her daughter color a new page each month for a year during Rosh Chodesh to see how her art changes and develops.

"There's not many books out there that are aimed at young girls and mother-daughters or grandmothers and daughters," she said. "It's also a fun book for moms to read."

*New Moon* is available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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### SWEET TOOTH

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The popular Dylan's Candy Bar in New York City (and several other locations across the country) has decadent sweets for the holiday, ranging from your typical gelt and chocolates to decorative themed Chanukah cookies.

You also can't go wrong with Mensch Mints or the Mensch Hanukkah Cookie, featuring that signature Jewish beard. Or really just chocolate works, am I right?

Check out [DylansCandyBar.com](http://DylansCandyBar.com) to order.

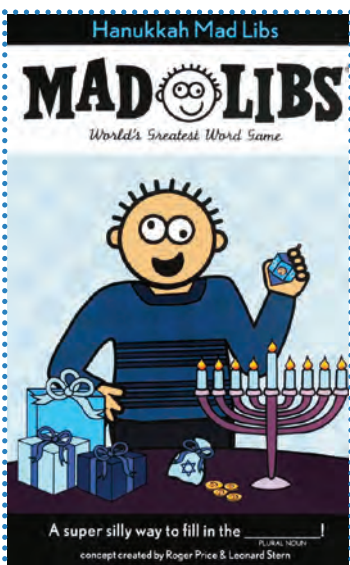


While you're in that same aisle, pick up a copy of the *Jewish Old Maid* card game, too.

If your child prefers stuffed toys to board games, Bed Bath & Beyond also sells the Dancing Hanukkah Puppy for \$19.99 — “a plush dachshund dressed in a blue winter scarf and knit cap, carrying a Hanukkah menorah on his back” that plays music and dances — or the \$29.99 Hanukkah Bear with 20 mini lights, a bow tie and kippah.

You can't go wrong with any of these options for the Festival of Lights. •

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215-832-0737



### JOKE BOOKS

For kids, nothing is funnier than replacing average text with the word “boogers.” And with *Hanukkah Mad Libs*, that laughter never has to end.

The notorious fill-in-the-blank stories have 21 options to rewrite the lighting of the menorah and the spinning of the dreidel — more than enough to occupy eight nights of Chanukah.

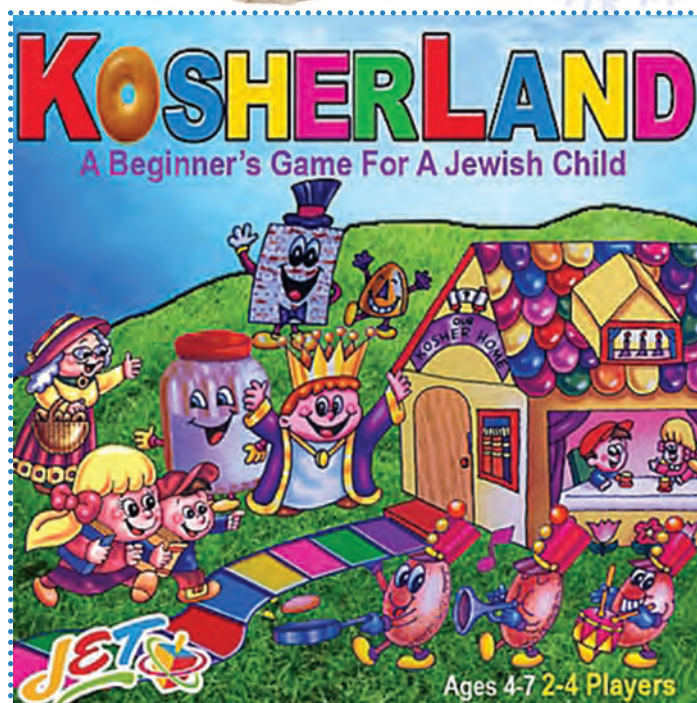
You can purchase the book on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

### GAMES AND CUDDLY THINGS

To get kids away from phones and video games to enjoy a little more

family time, try a simple board game. But not just any board game: *Kosherland*.

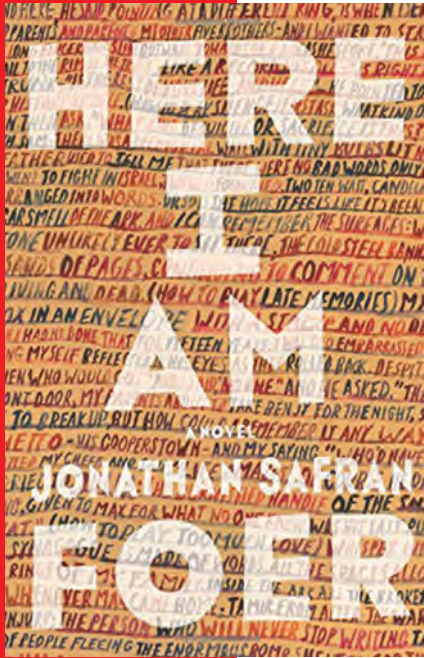
*Kosherland* — yes, the “O” in *Kosherland* is a bagel — is a beginner's game for Jewish kids, following Jewish themes, culture and tradition. You can buy it for \$12.99 at Bed Bath & Beyond.





# Lit Gloss: SHINY NEW BOOKS THAT MAKE GREAT GIFTS FOR THE HOLIDAY

LIZ SPIKOL | JE STAFF



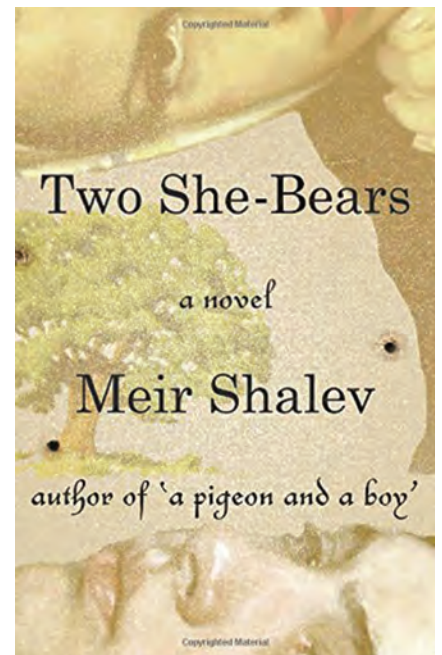
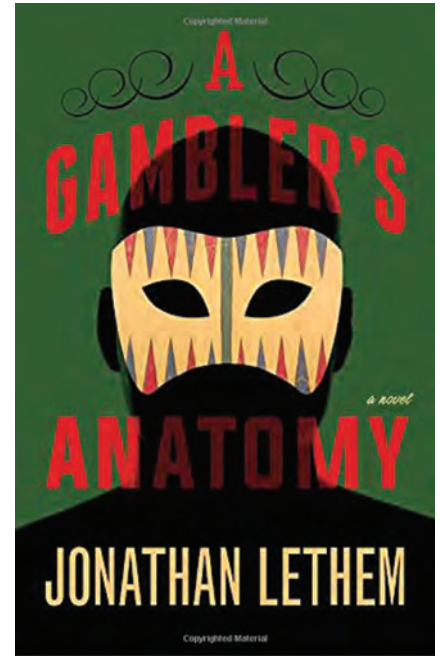
There are so many good books out right now, and coming out in the next few months, that it's almost impossible to pick just a few — especially with so many fantastically talented Jewish authors.

## The Heavy Hitters

Some of the biggest names in contemporary fiction — both in the U.S. and in Israel — have new books out all at the same time, only one of which is in paperback. That's OK, though: Hardbacks make better gifts anyway. Easier to wrap.

Start with the latest from **Jonathan Lethem** (*Motherless Brooklyn*; *Fortress of Solitude*), whose new book, *A Gambler's Anatomy: A Novel*, tells the suspenseful story of Bruno Alexander, a backgammon hustler who travels the world from Berlin to Berkeley with his parasitic manager. *Vogue* called the novel “delightfully weird,” which is sort of Lethem’s M.O., while the *Chicago Tribune* described it as a “strange and wondrous” act of channeling Thomas Pynchon and Ian Fleming.

If you want to get more serious, try the newest from Pulitzer Prize-winner **Michael Chabon** (*The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*; *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*). *Moonglow: A Novel* is based on an experience from Chabon’s own life, when he visited his grandfather on his deathbed in Pittsburgh. Here, the unnamed grandson hears stories of his grandfather’s life, from early 20th-century Jewish South Philly to a penal colony in upstate New York to a retirement home in Florida. Obsessed with spaceships, World War II and postwar, posttraumatic survival, *Moonglow* was named by Amazon Best Book of November 2016, whose reviewer called it “an intensely personal story uplifted by the shifting





tectonic plates of truth and memory.” Chabon will be at the Philadelphia Free Library’s main branch to read from *Moonglow* in December.

While Chabon’s book reflects on Jewish biography, it’s not nearly as marinated in the Jewish experience as *Here I Am*, the latest by **Jonathan Safran Foer** (*Everything Is Illuminated; Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*), whose very title references the story of Abraham and Isaac in the book of Genesis. The doorstep-length novel, now out in paperback, tells the story of a Jewish family in crisis, and the way their Jewish identity, religious beliefs and connection with Israel informs their lives. Author Lev Grossman, writing for *Time*, compared *Here I Am* to *Middlemarch*, while other critics have likened the author to Roth, Bellow and Malamud.

“delightfully weird”

—VOGUE

As Safran Foer reflects on the American Jewish responsibility toward Israel, one of the Jewish state’s most important writers, **Amos Oz**, has just published his own new novel, *Judas* — his first full-length work since *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. The novel, which centers on three misfits living in a mysterious old house in Jerusalem in 1959, serves as an allegory, of sorts, for the evolution of the state of Israel, and offers a new spin on the biblical story of Judas. “One of the most triumphant novels of his career,” said the *Forward*.

Along with Oz, the famed Israeli author of the novel *A Pigeon and a Boy* also has new work out. In his latest translated work of fiction, *Two She-Bears: A Novel*, **Meir Shalev** writes of a schoolteacher in present-day Israel who’s trying to unravel a mystery that took place on a *moshava* in 1930, in early British Palestine. According to official accounts, three farmers committed suicide in the same year. But were they all suicides, really? What is the truth about these men living in rural Israel? Elaine Margolin, writing in the *Jerusalem Post*, called *Two She-Bears* “a masterful work that explores with great insight the mysteries that surround male closeness.”

## The Graphic Thinkers

There was a time, before Art Spiegelman came along, when people thought graphic novels were just collected comic strips: frivolous and light. Then Spiegelman wrote *Maus*, about the

See Books, Page 24



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## Books

Continued from Page 23

Holocaust, and the medium proved its worth for exploring even the most difficult topics.

Now there are a plethora of weighty, meaningful graphic novels by Jewish authors, many of whom were recently featured in a panel called “Ink Bleeds History: Reclaiming and Redrawing the Jewish Image in Comics” at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York.

One of the panelists was **Miriam Libicki**, author of *Toward a Hot Jew*. Libicki grew up Orthodox, went to Jewish day school, and then joined the IDF and wrote a graphic novel about it. In her newest collection of illustrated essays — rendered with graphite, inkwashes and watercolor — Libicki reflects upon Jewish identity, from black-Jewish relations to the Israeli soldier as fetish object. The book is richly nuanced and philosophical, and could open the eyes of both Israelis and American Jews.

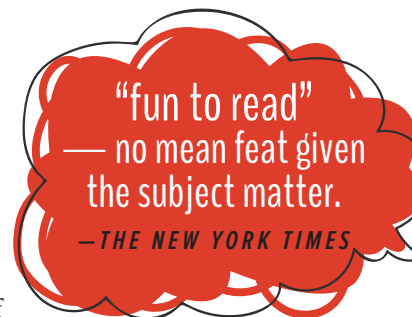
Another of the panelists, **Amy Kurzweil**, also has a new book out: *Flying Couch*. In this graphic novel, Kurzweil tells the story of three Jewish women: her, her mother and her grandmother, a World War II survivor who disguised herself as a gentile to escape the Warsaw Ghetto. She juxtaposes her own experience as an

anxious, preoccupied child with her grandmother’s harrowing life, told in her own words.

Meanwhile, her mother, a very American psychologist, is the intermediary in this story of intergenerational trauma. Though she takes on serious topics, Kurzweil’s cartoony style makes for an enjoyable, compulsive read, calling to mind graphic novels by Roz Chast and Alison Bechdel.

Finally, for a much lighter touch, consider the new book by the beloved co-star of *Broad City* **Abbi Jacobson**, a Wayne native. *Carry This Book* is not a graphic novel; rather, it’s a series of drawn set pieces in which Jacobson imagines what famous people (Donald Trump, Anna Wintour, Bernie Madoff) and fictional characters (Homer Simpson) carry in their purses and briefcases.

Philadelphia’s Questlove, of the Roots, said of the book: “Looking at these illustrations and trying to guess who they belong to is like an inside-out game of *Where’s Waldo?*” Refinery 29 said, “This is the next best thing to being BFFs with Abbi Jacobson.” In other words, it’s the perfect gift for the Jewish millennials in your life, all of whom — trust us — *do* want to be best friends with Jacobson.



“fun to read”  
— no mean feat given  
the subject matter.

—THE NEW YORK TIMES



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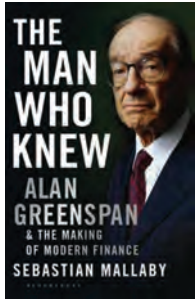
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## The Lives

There are a ridiculous number of memoirs and biographies out right now by and about



Jewish people. But now might be the perfect time to gift *The Man Who Knew: The Life and Times of Alan Greenspan* by **Sebastian Mallaby**. Mallaby, the Paul A. Volcker Senior Fellow for International Economics at the Council on Foreign Relations, has been praised for presenting a balanced view of Greenspan, from his childhood with a single Jewish mother in Washington Heights to his role as Nixon advisor to his leadership of the Fed, an institution of which he was deeply suspicious.

Mallaby naturally examines what and when Greenspan knew in the lead-up to 2008's crash, and the conclusions he draws illuminate that time period and the role of regulation overall. Ben Bernanke has said the book is "highly recommended" for "anyone with an interest in postwar U.S. economic and political history." *The New York Times* said it's "fun to read" — no mean feat given the subject matter.

If you want to go from macro to micro on the subject of Jews in American business, pair *The Man Who Knew* with **Lloyd Handwerker's** *Famous Nathan*. The book's subtitle says it all: "A Family Saga of Coney Island, the American Dream, and the Search for the Perfect Hot Dog." Handwerker, who is Famous Nathan's grandson, wrote the story of his Jewish immigrant grandfather with **Gil Reavill**, starting with the illiterate Nathan's arrival at Ellis Island, when he didn't speak a word of English and had only \$25 stuffed in his sock, to a thriving business on Coney Island that helped the hot dog become iconic.

"It all comes down to I did this, and I did that." That's how **Robert Gottlieb** sums up his new book, *Avid Reader: A Life*. Gottlieb spent his life as an editor, at *The New Yorker*, Knopf and at Simon & Schuster, and worked with some of the most fascinating personalities in 20th-century American letters, from Toni Morrison, John Cheever, Doris Lessing and Joseph Heller to Lauren Bacall, Nora Ephron, Bill Clinton and Miss Piggy. His memoir is filled with publishing world gossip and also reveals much about his Jewish New York boyhood. Dwight Garner, of *The New York Times*, wrote that Gottlieb's memoir reveals him as "a kind of Zelig of American publishing." That's precisely what makes his book so much fun. ●

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# 'stocking stuffers'

## CHANUKAH EDITION



MARISSA STERN | JE STAFF

WHILE NOT A PARENT MYSELF, I CAN IMAGINE THAT CHANUKAH PRESENTS A UNIQUE CONUNDRUM IN THAT IT MEANS EIGHT NIGHTS OF GIFT-GIVING, WHICH IS A LOT.

But without worrying about the risk of spoiling your child (that's what grandparents are for), the eight nights can be a way to give little gifts that may be small but just as meaningful as one big gift.

So if you're looking to give eight presents that aren't Barbies or Legos, here are some gift ideas that are fun and, most importantly, easy. Stocking optional.

### NIGHT ONE: TRADITIOOOON, TRADITION

What would Chanukah be without gelt and dreidels?

On the first night, set the tone of the holiday by sticking with tradition and give little gifts that remind us of why we celebrate Chanukah to begin with — and it's not because it's the Jewish substitute for Christmas. You can also add in some Chanukah candles and oil for significance.

While not *exactly* traditional, you can also have some fun and give a Mensch on a Bench, the Jewish answer to Elf on a Shelf. The stuffed character is accompanied by a book about Moishe the Mensch, who helped Judah Maccabee. So as much as it's a wacky retail product, it also has an educational component. Win-win.

### NIGHT TWO: BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

Speaking of books, I might be biased but books are one of the best gifts to both give and receive during the holidays. The best part about them is there is something for everyone.

If you're looking for a children's book that is a fun read and also educational and inspiring, look no further than actress Amanda Peet and friend Andrea Troyer's *Dear Santa, Love, Rachel Rosenstein* about a young Jewish girl determined to celebrate Christmas and what she learns about different religions along the way.

Philadelphia-based novelist Jennifer Weiner has two new books out that would be perfect for many generations in your family. Her first middle grade book, *The Littlest Bigfoot*, about two little girls who feel out of place in their respective worlds, is perfect for 8- to 12-year-olds (though this 23-year-old enjoyed it).

Weiner's collection of personal essays, *Hungry Heart*, will satisfy the more mature members of your family as she tackles everything from body image to parenting.

For the HGTV fanatic, *Fixer Upper*'s dynamic duo (and #rela-

tionshipgoals) Chip and Joanna Gaines have released their *Magnolia Story*, which is available now.

Or if you're looking for a gift for the funny girl in your family, actress and hilarious Twitter favorite Anna Kendrick's new memoir, *Scrappy Little Nobody*, should do the trick.

Or honestly just go with Harry Potter, since there's so much to choose from: There's the script for the play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* published in July; the screenplay for the recently released *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (the original Hogwarts "library book" the movie is based on comes with *Quidditch Through the Ages*); or the shiny, new illustrated edition of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

### NIGHT THREE: FOR STUDENTS

If you have someone in your family who's in school, there are a few little gifts that will make their night.

If they're in college, give them the gift of caffeine, whether it's a Starbucks or Dunkin' Donuts gift card or a box of individual coffee cups. It will be much appreciated, trust me.

Since Chanukah falls around New Year's this year, a 2017 calendar or planner is a perfect gift so they can chart their schedules.

To help the older students take a load off, pick out a fun flask. A personal favorite includes one engraved with a line from *Game of Thrones*: "I drink and I know things. That's what I do."

Or maybe only my family gives flasks as gifts?

### NIGHT FOUR: COZY UP.

Pajamas! Chanukah falls in the dead of winter this year, on Christmas Eve to be exact (Happy Chrismakkuh!). What better little gift to give than a nice flannel pajama set? You can get

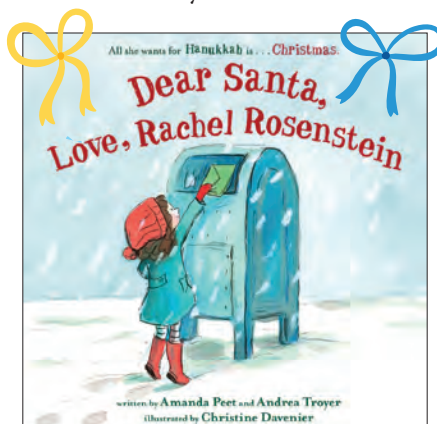
these sets anywhere, in department stores or places like Old Navy.

Or if pajamas aren't really doing the trick, go with a few pairs of fuzzy socks. Everyone loves fuzzy socks.

For students, try a comfy sweatshirt or pair of sweatpants representing their school. This way they can show school spirit without spending any money, for which they will thank you.

### NIGHT FIVE: BUNDLE IT UP

Giving eight gifts also presents a prime opportunity for those who are creative-minded and not afraid to get a little crafty.





A cute gift bundle mixes multiple items that can go together. For example, get some bags of popcorn and boxes of candy and pair them with a gift card to go to the movies (that is, if Netflix hasn't completely stroyed that medium by now).

Or since it will be cold out (assuming global warming doesn't give us mild weather), find a cute mug on Etsy or at a local store and fill it with wintry goodies like hot chocolate mix.

For the artistically inclined, adult coloring books are all the rage and have health benefits, so pick up a few of those and a set of coloring pencils and crayons and package them together. Bookstores like Barnes and Noble sell coloring books with pictures of everything from pop culture favorites like Harry Potter or Disney to ones with flowers or stained glass windows to fill in.

#### NIGHT SIX: GAME NIGHT

Whether it's a board game or even tickets to a sporting event, you can make the theme of one night of gift-giving around playing with the family.

Interactive games like *Scene It?* used to be a big hit in my house since the trivia game can center around specific shows or topics, like *Seinfeld* or Disney. Giving games like these is a gift not just for those you're giving it to, but also yourself since you get to play, too.

Or get tickets to a Flyers game. Buy some Flyers gear to go with it and make a night of it.

#### NIGHT SEVEN: MOVIE NIGHT

If sports and games aren't your thing, movies are always a foolproof gift and are — bonus — easy to wrap.

Does the person you're giving the gift to love fellow member of the tribe Seth Rogen? Get two or three of his movies and package them together to make a little box set. Though, his recent *Sausage Party* might be a little too graphic for people of any age.

#### NIGHT EIGHT: EVERYTHING BUT THE KITCHEN SINK

You made it to the last night! And you're probably running out of ideas. Here's where you can probably just throw some things together that don't necessarily have a theme. Nail polish, candy, magazines — little things like that are easy to put together and are always good to have around. •

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# *Give* & THE GIFT OF *Experience*

HILARY DANAILOVA | JE FEATURE



My friend Jennifer was recently surprised with birthday tickets to a magic show.

Weeks later, she couldn't stop raving about how the magician produced drink after drink, perfectly concocted, from the same spigot, based solely on what the audience members called out. "A White Russian. Coconut water. Small-batch bourbon. It was amazing!" she recalled. "I have no idea how he did it."

The most amazed one was probably her boyfriend, who'd wondered whether a pair of tickets would be as well received as the usual jewelry or cashmere.

But as it happens, her boyfriend had tapped into our shifting zeitgeist: More and more people favor experiences over objects, a trend that is growing more pronounced with the millennial generation, which famously eschews cars in favor of vacations.

So this year, consider a Chanukah gift that won't take up space in a closet, tarnish or require yet another irritating charger cable. Give an experience like one of these — and get ready to savor the stories.

## BABY DISCO, STANDUP AND STORYTIME, PLUS A WHOLE YEAR OF JEWISH MUSEUM-GOING.

The best Chanukah party this year just might be the family-centric Christmas Day extravaganza at the National Museum of American Jewish History. That's because this year, Dec. 25 is also the first day of Chanukah — so the \$90 family membership, which includes party entrance, is an ideal first-night gift.

And it's a crazy bargain, because the whole family gets free admission the rest of the year. They also get two additional guest passes, discounts at the store and cafe, member exhibition previews, invites to family programs, and special holiday shopping days ... in case they're still scrambling for those last couple of nights.

See Give, Page 30



PHOTOS BY MARIO MANZONI

Above: A membership to the National Museum of American Jewish History is a gift that lasts the whole year.

Facing page: Michael Solomonov fans can take classes with the chef and his team.

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# Give

Continued from Page 29

## TAKE THEIR INSTAGRAM PAGE UP A NOTCH.

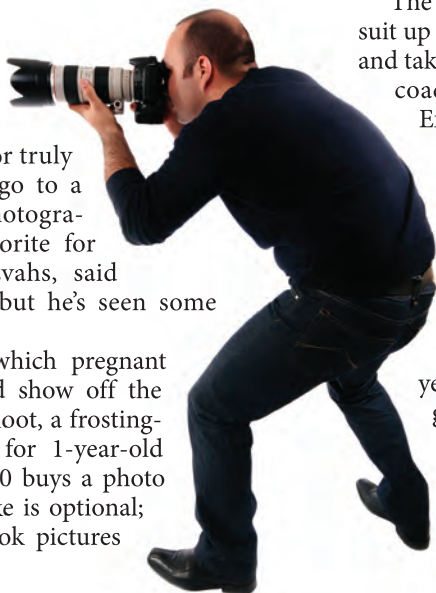
With smartphones and filters, everyone's a photographer — but for truly standout shots, you still have to go to a professional. Philadelphia-area photographers like Jordan Cassway, a favorite for Jewish weddings and B'nai Mitzvahs, said photo sessions are a classic gift, but he's seen some modern twists lately.

Take the maternity shoot, in which pregnant women document their bump and show off the glow. Or the baby cake-smashing shoot, a frosting-smearing rite of passage popular for 1-year-old birthdays. At Cassway's studio, \$350 buys a photo session and a print, though the cake is optional; family portraits and senior yearbook pictures are still going strong.

## PHANCY A PHANTASY, PHILLIES PHANS?

Jewish representation is pretty poor in the Phillies dugout these days, but come January, you can change that. Long after the World Series, for less than the weekly salary of a major league player, you can indulge the long-held phantasies of your favorite Phillies phan.

There's still space available at the annual Phillies Phantasy Camp, which takes place in Clearwater, Fla., from Jan. 18 through



22. (If the spots fill up, organizers will reserve the experience for next year.)

The Player Experience (\$4,895) lets would-be Sandy Koufaxes suit up in a custom uniform, hang it in a personalized club locker and take the field against the Legends (former Phillies), with daily coaching at practice. The General Manager Experience (\$3,890) lets you scout and draft right from the dugout; if you're content to be a Phan, that Experience (\$1,785) gets you VIP seats and clubhouse lunches. All three packages include lodging and meals, mingling and photo-ops, autographed swag and a once-in-a-lifetime thrill they'll boast about for years to come.

What if the giftee is an Eagles fan? This year, aspiring Carson Wentzes can huddle with the greats at the team's first-ever Fantasy Camp, which takes place right here in Philadelphia from April 6 to 8. For \$2,750, your temporary Eagle gets personalized team gear and a locker, daily practice and training with the pros, opportunities to hang with Carson and Connor, and behind-the-scenes access at Lincoln Financial Field.



## IS YOUR BELOVED MORE OF AN ASPIRING MICHAEL SOLOMONOV?

Do you know someone who loves to host Passover, but could use some chametz-free inspiration? There's no shortage of Philly-area cooking classes, and one sure bet is a gift certificate to COOK, the Rittenhouse kitchen-studio that's a partnership between local Jewish restaurateur Audrey Claire Taichman, *Philadelphia Magazine* and Foobooz.

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Solomonov himself has been known to share his secrets for Israeli cuisine there, and the chef team behind his popular Abe Fisher restaurant are regulars. Jewish cooks can choose from more than 20 classes each month, including workshops for major holidays, as well as evenings devoted to wine, pizza, food allergy cooking or knife skills, to name just a few.

The average price of \$160 includes gratuity and drinks; what's left over can apply to the purchase of cookbooks like the best-selling *Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking*, from James Beard winner Solomonov (books are discounted 15 percent the night of a class).

## ARE THERE PEOPLE ON YOUR LIST WHO BRAKE FOR DEER AND RESCUE SPIDERS?

For the animal lovers in your life, you might be mulling a puppy as a gift, but there's a lower-commitment, higher-thrills option: going behind the scenes at a local zoo or aquarium.

At the Philadelphia Zoo's "Behind the Scenes" program, \$150 buys two people the opportunity to hand-feed fish to the Humboldt penguin, hang with the alligators in the Reptile and Amphibian House, or see lions, pumas and jaguars in the big cat area. Each Behind the Scenes experience is about 20 minutes long, suitable for ages 5 and up, and allows additional guests for \$50 apiece. But you'll have to reserve in advance — tigers reportedly like some notice.

Across the river, Camden's Adventure Aquarium sells "encounter vouchers" for up-close-and-personal experiences with watery fauna. The \$135 penguin package includes a photo shoot with 20 African penguins; if the shots come out blurry, it's OK because the penguins also paint a canvas you can take home.

Older kids and adults can opt for the Shark & Ray In-Water



Humboldt penguins always are popular at the Philadelphia Zoo's "Behind the Scenes" program.

Encounter (\$185), a two-hour activity that includes a short snorkeling lesson, a look at the sand sharks, and a swim and lunch with New Jersey's friendliest stingrays (OK, you feed them lunch, but who's counting?). And for the faint of heart, there are always the sea turtles. ●

Hilary Danailova is a longtime contributor to publications of the *Jewish Exponent*.

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# Mitzvah Menorah

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**SO WHAT KIND OF HOLIDAY GIFT DO YOU GET FOR THE PERSON WHO SEEMS TO HAVE EVERYTHING?**

Maybe it's an opportunity for them to realize — if they don't know it already — how truly fortunate they are compared to others. Rather than jewelry, a gift card to a store or restaurant, a video game or tickets to a show, why not give them a holiday reminder of just how lucky they are?

Why not let them try to share some of their good fortune with someone else, maybe somebody they don't even know?





That's the theory behind the Mitzvah Menorah that will be put together in early December by the boys and girls in the religious school at Main Line Reform Temple (MLRT) in Wynnewood. By collecting various items ranging from books and clothes to video games and brand-new sheets, then placing them in bins resembling candles, they'll eventually gather enough to bring everything people in need.

"I grew up in Northern Virginia," said MLRT Associate Rabbi and Educational Director Kevin Kleinman, who's heading the project, after organizing a similar one at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in Elkins Park. "My synagogue coordinated a number of synagogues that volunteered at a soup kitchen.

"I went with my parents to do that. And my family 'adopted' a Russian Jewish family and helped them acclimate to America. My dad help the father find a job."

The message was passed on to Kleinman, who wants the next generation to carry on the tradition.

By collecting various items ranging from books and clothes to video games and brand-new sheets, then placing them in bins resembling candles, they'll eventually gather enough to bring everything to people in need .



"When I was pre-Bar Mitzvah, it stuck with me," recalled Kleinman, who plans to teach such lessons to his three young children. "The synagogue can help families develop their own sense of doing justice as a Jewish value.

"During the holiday season, we're looking at items we can give instead of get. So when people are purchasing items, we're reminded we have more needs than just providing for our families."

While the concept of *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah* are by no means exclusive to the Reform movement, no other denomination has used Chanukah as the focal point for performing such mitzvahs.

Some prefer doing it during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Broomall synagogues Congregation Beth El-Ner Tamid and Temple Sholom join forces for Thanksgiving.

And the Reconstructionist movement, while embracing the idea, hasn't yet formalized it.

In fact, while Kleinman's Mitzvah Menorah is tailored for the

The Main Line Reform Temple Mitzvah Menorah is comprised of donation bins that resemble Chanukah candles.

Philadelphia community, the Reform movement as a whole has created *Ner Shel Tzedakah*: the Candle of Righteousness. The sixth night of Chanukah — presumably after everyone's received the bulk of their gifts — has been designated as a special night, which even has its own blessing.

"Families and individuals devote the sixth night of Chanukah to learning about the problem of poverty," the project is explained on [reformjudaism.org](http://reformjudaism.org). "They donate the value of the gifts [or the gifts themselves] that otherwise would be exchanged on that night to organizations that assist the poor, locally or globally.

"By making donations on the sixth night of Chanukah, families help the Jewish candle of righteousness glow brightly for those in need. Don't let the light go out."

Among their suggestions for ways to participate include making donations in honor of others to help poor families keep the heat on during the winter, inviting a welfare agency to match your family with a local family in need, joining a local Meals on Wheels program to deliver hot meals to homebound individuals, or volunteering at a hospital, shelter or soup kitchen.

Beyond that, Kleinman wants to specifically involve the children at MLRT in a more personal way.

See Menorah, Page 36

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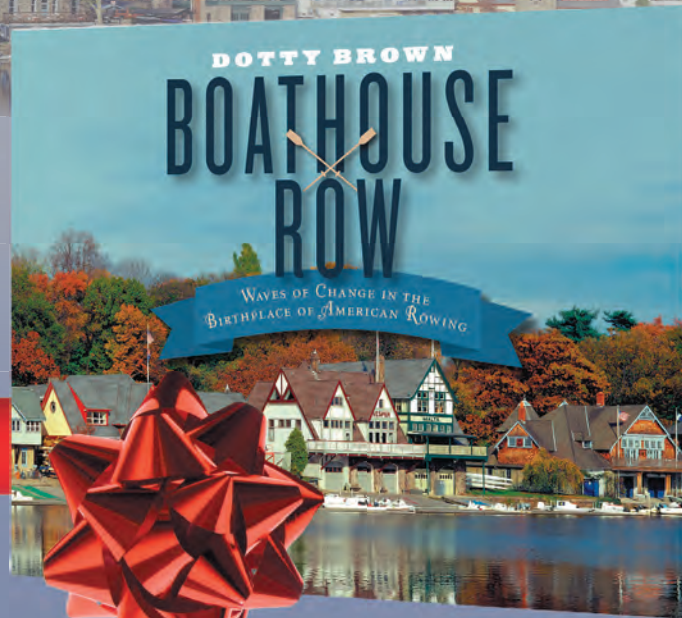
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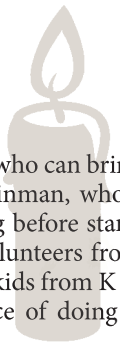
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## Menorah

Continued from Page 35



"We have a contest to see who can bring in the most items," said Kleinman, who'll wait until after Thanksgiving before starting the project. "We have volunteers from each grade level, maybe 300 kids from K to 6, so they get the experience of doing it hands-on."

"Then I take a group every year to a homeless shelter. Once they get a tour and experience where these families are living and see the area where the kids get to play, they realize how much they have in comparison."

Such an eye-opener, especially at an early age, is something you can't fully appreciate unless you see it.

"That may inspire them to take items they might not be using anymore or new items and give them away," Kleinman said. "The Mitzvah Menorah is a vehicle to connect them [and] to educate them about what it might be like for kids their age 5 miles away."

"So we'll build a menorah out of a collection of bins. Each bin will represent a candle. And each candle will go to a family in a homeless shelter."

The Religious Action Committee's blessing for this occasion says it all: "As we light this 'Ner Shel Tzedakah' tonight," it begins, "we pray that its light will shine into the dark corners of our world, bringing relief to those suffering from the indignity and pain that accompany poverty."

"May our act of giving inspire others to join with us in the fight against the scourge of hunger, homelessness, need and want. Together, let us raise our voices to cry out for justice, and may that clarion call burst through the night's silence and declare that change must come." ●

Contact: [jmarks@jewishexponent.com](mailto:jmarks@jewishexponent.com);  
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Rabbi Kevin Kleinman and Liz Sussman, director of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel's preschool.

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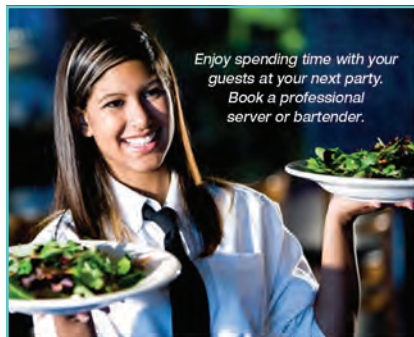
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## GOES (WELL) BEYOND

### Menorahs, Mezuzahs *and* Seder Plates

ANDY GOTLIEB | JE MANAGING EDITOR

**I**n days past, those wishing to purchase Judaica were limited to a narrow selection of conventional items at synagogue gift stores or, if you lived in a heavily Jewish neighborhood, the local Judaica shop.

Some Judaica shops have since closed their doors and they and synagogue gift stores now compete against online sellers, but the variety of Judaica-themed gifts available appears greater than ever. In other words, you're not confined these days to menorahs and mezuzahs. And if you look around, you can find Judaica in nontraditional places, including stores and websites not mentioned here.





“People like to mix it up,” said Sherry Tillman, owner of Past\*Present\*Future ([past-present-future.com](http://past-present-future.com)), an Ardmore gift shop that offers a variety of handmade crafts. “They want their gift to be unique.”

Of Tillman’s sales, Judaica represents about 30 percent, a figure that’s stayed consistent over the years.

“People like to mix it up.  
They want their gift to be unique.”

SHERRY TILLMAN  
OWNER OF PAST\*PRESENT\*FUTURE

Some popular items these days include a glass box with “MAZEL TOV” written across it, bride and groom candles, a Yiddish mug, keychains, wooden boxes with laser-engraved sayings and “Jews glasses,” which are juice glasses featuring famous Jews from all walks of life.

“How many Jewish stars can you have?” Tillman said, referring to the eternally popular Bar and Bat Mitzvah gifts that some

See Judaica, Page 40



Above and below: A selection of Jewish-themed gifts available at Past\*Present\*Future.



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## Judaica

Continued from Page 39

believe are trite. “People try to go beyond that.”

On a much larger scale is the National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) Museum Store ([judaicashop.net](http://judaicashop.net)).

Store Manager Kristen Kreider said the store sells some traditional items, but its patrons — both in-person and online — are looking for something different.

“It’s more often they’re happy to see something they haven’t seen before,” she said.

“We do push the envelope a little. We try to have more personality in the items we carry.”

Those items range from a pewter flask emblazoned with “LCHAIM” to Orthodox Chews saltwater taffy to a Ruth Bader Ginsburg mug.

One popular example Kreider cited is the “YO SEMITE” T-shirt, whose designer was “inspired by her day job at a Jewish summer camp near Yosemite National Park,” according to the museum website.

Also popular are *ahava* (Hebrew for “love”) items, which include necklaces, T-shirts, tote bags, earrings, bracelets and rings.

“We do push the envelope a little. We try to have more personality in the items we carry.”

KRISTEN KREIDER

STORE MANAGER, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

The word is written in the same style as Philadelphia’s famous “LOVE” statue by Robert Indiana. The artist created a 13-foot “AHAVA” statue outside the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in 1977, a year after the “LOVE” statue went on display here.

Proceeds from *ahava* items benefit both the NMAJH and the Israel Museum, Kreider said.

Other big sellers include handbags by Kent Stetson. One features

The YO SEMITE shirt is among the top-selling items available at the National Museum of American Jewish History Museum Store.





the brightly illustrated words “KVETCH KVETCH KVETCH,” while another features mahjong tiles. (Other handbags have more secular themes, such as marijuana leaves or vinyl records.)

Fans of the World Series-winning Chicago Cubs can buy a team hat with the name spelled out in Hebrew letters. Phillies hats are also available, as are (gasp!) those for the Yankees and Red Sox.

No Judaica selection would be complete without some food-related items, and Kreider said the inexpensive (\$7.95) Bagel Whizz, which scoops out bagel innards, is popular.

And of course there are a few nods to nostalgia, including a replica key fob for the gone-but-not-forgotten Grossinger’s resort in the Catskills.

Some of the museum’s top-selling items aren’t really Jewish at all, such as jewelry fashioned out of piano wire.

“We joke that it’s made out of the strings of Irving Berlin’s piano,” Kreider said, noting that the jewelry is crafted by a Jewish artist in Atlanta.

And while this article isn’t about the old standbys such as menorahs, Kreider said she expects to sell lots of travel menorahs this year since Chanukah begins on Christmas Eve.

One particularly clever travel menorah is an Israeli-made 7-inch piece of anodized aluminum with a sleeve that opens each



This handbag is among several available from artist Kent Stetson, who individually signs each one. Another handbag is emblazoned with mah jong tiles.

See Judaica, Page 42

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# Judaica

Continued from Page 41

day to reveal another candle holder. It's available in silver, pink, purple, turquoise and cobalt.

Given the store's significant local following, Kreider said the product mix is constantly evolving.

"To keep things changing, I'm sometimes improvising," Kreider said, pointing to the nine iron, copper and steel candlesticks she grouped together as the Northern Tribe Hanukkah Menorah.

Kreider said 78 percent of the store sales are made at the museum, with the remaining 22 percent coming in online — which she described as a high percentage.

Online vendors are another source of not-your-usual Jewish-themed items.

A search for "Judaica" on **Amazon.com** turned up more than 58,000 results, although the vast majority are conventional in nature.

Interesting items in the first few pages of the search results included a kosher bone plush dog toy with squeaker, a "mah jongg tiles guest soap set," "SHALOM" door mats and a CD titled *Aleph Bet Boogie* by Rabbi Joe Black.

Another option is **moderntribe.com**, which offers both reverent and irreverent gifts.

Irreverent gifts include a "Jewdolph Knit Koozie," with Rudolph's antlers depicted as a menorah; "Jew Jitsu" knee-high socks; a Jewish pet bow tie; "Star of David Kosher Kubes" ice trays; and "Hanukkah Fortune Cookies," to name a few. ●

Contact: agotlieb@jewishexponent.com; 215-832-0797



Above: The Bagel Whizz, which scoops out bagel innards.

Below: An AHAVA necklace and a bracelet made out of piano wire.





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