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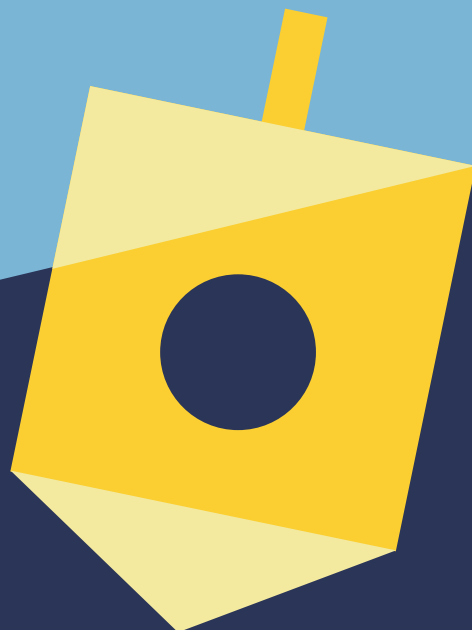


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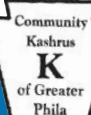
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Time to Do the Wishes

This is a perfect time to jump-start your efforts at tikkun olam and tzedakah — and make manifest someone's holiday needs and desires.

MARISSA STERN | JE STAFF

With the holidays right around the corner, you might be starting to get in the giving spirit. And what better gift to give than your time to organizations in need of helping hands during the busiest time of year?

Whether you want to be in the kitchen and serving meals to those in need or helping out some furry friends at a pet shelter, there are plenty of ways to get involved and volunteer in Philadelphia and around the area.

If You're Into Serving up Some Holiday Spirit: The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger no doubt needs some help during the holidays. The organization partnered with more than 100 providers in the area that they have listed on their website to showcase those who need support this season.

While they aren't specifically Jewish-oriented, the mitzvah of "tzedakah" can be exercised anywhere.

"They're small little organizations run by volunteers and they need all the help they can get," said Tom Mahon, communications manager for the Coalition Against Hunger.

The coalition reached out to many organizations across the region to see which ones are holding holiday-specific meals. The coalition itself also takes volunteers to help out with administrative tasks.

"Year-round, we bring in volunteers to answer phones and screen people for their food stamp applications," he said. "It gets so busy with food pantries and soup kitchens — we work with over 100 providers in the region."

Those who volunteer in food pantries are often shocked by how great the need is, Mahon added — especially when they discover a food pantry in their own neighborhood.

"It's a great opportunity for people to go out and serve a meal to people who face food insecurity on a daily basis; it really could be anybody in that situation," Mahon continued. "A lot of people are surprised when they call us and they tell us there's this pantry right down the street. It's kind of a little bit shocking to some people. It's good — it's important for them to see that as well."

These organizations are always looking for help, he said. The holidays, however, are a perfect time to start getting involved.

"Especially this time of year, there are so many people looking to volunteer, and it's great a lot of people want to come out. We're thankful everyone's in that holiday spirit, and they want to reach out and help people — but these places need help year-round," he emphasized. "If someone wants to make a difference, they can call in July and there'll be the same opportunities."

More information and a list of places to volunteer to serve meals can be found at hungercoalition.org.

If You're More Into Being Behind the Scenes: The Jewish Relief Agency has a big food distribution on Dec. 20. (A November drive was held closer to Chanukah as the holiday arrives early this year.)

The JRA is always looking for volunteers and, with its new website, JRAid.org, finding ways to help out has never been easier.

Volunteer gigs and specific jobs are posted on the site that anyone who is able to can do, said JRA Philadelphia executive director Amy Krulik. The holidays are the perfect time to get involved because it is really the giving season, she added.

"I think people have an incredible capacity for kindness," she said. "These projects give you an opportunity on the food delivery side to come together with over 1,000 other people on a Sunday morning to bring people a basic need, which is food, and you're doing it with a ton of other people."

According to Krulik, volunteering for JRA, a Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia supported agency, provides the chance to do more than just deliver food. During this particular time of year, maybe someone needs help taking their air conditioner out of the window in addition to receiving a food delivery. Those kinds of opportunities are listed on the JRAid site.

While Jewish values teach us to be charitable at all times, Krulik understands that the holidays create a pull for people. She wants to make sure JRA is there if they wake up one morning and say, "I want to do a mitzvah today."

"It's not like you can dial 1-800-bring-me-food for the holidays — it doesn't exist," Krulik said with a laugh. "This fills in that space there for people in need of support. And it gives a time of giving to people who are looking to be giving. We have a few really good outlets to engage people that way."

There are designated distribution days and people can sign up in advance to participate — but Krulik doesn't mind if you "just show up" on the day of.

More information can be found at jewishrelief.org or JRAid.org.

If You Prefer Dogs to People:

PAWS is essentially entirely volunteer-run, and with three locations — in Old City, Northeast Philly and South Philly — extra "paws" are always welcome. Though they are not open on Christmas Day, there are plenty of other times where you can volunteer around the holiday season and during the rest of the year.

There are definite perks to volunteering to work with the animals, according to Donna Bright.

"They get to know what it's like to have adoptable animals in the shelter waiting to be adopted, how many unwanted cats and dogs there are," said Bright, the nonprofit's administrative and operational assistant. "Hopefully, they learn how important it is to spay and neuter your pets. There are so many unwanted animals in the city."

There are multiple orientation sessions; those looking to volunteer can attend in order to get pup-erly acquainted (sorry) with the animals and other duties as needed.

Volunteers are always welcome for cat care, dog walking and cleaning, but there is also plenty to do if they don't want to get hands-



on with the animals, Bright said. They could use help with administrative tasks and website maintenance.

More information can be found at phillypaws.org.

If You Are a Thrifty Shopper:

Jewish Family and Children's Service has a thrift store boutique in Northeast Philadelphia that makes it a one-stop shop for holiday shopping — and for volunteering.

Those interested can fill out an application on JFCS' website, said Robin Henkin, manager for volunteers and community engagement. Volunteering shifts are typically during the day, as per the store's hours.

But that isn't the only way you can volunteer with the Jewish Federation supported agency — though shopping is one of the most important parts of the holidays, joked Suzanne Myers, JFCS vice president of marketing and communications.

JFCS offers multiple ways to volunteer, including its Silver Wheels program, in which volunteers can offer rides and other service for the agency's older adult population who might need more help during this season. They may not be able to drive to pick up a medication, for instance.

"We have a lot of older adults that get very isolated and lonely around the holidays, and we have a couple opportunities to help them and help them stay engaged in the community," Henkin said.

Even just volunteering your time to spend time with one of JFCS' older clients is a great way to give, she said.

Volunteers also have the opportunity to get to know one another while they receive proper training and tools in order to be effective volunteers through workshops.

The workshops, called "The Joy of Giving...of Yourself," will be held on Dec. 3 in Elkins Park and Dec. 7 in Center City.

This is a perfect time to volunteer and give of your time, Henkin



said, because that's a key part of this season.

"This is a time people want to give back, and many want to give 'Jewishly,' which means to give of themselves and their time," Henkin said, "and they think about how fortunate they are and often in counting blessings, they want to give back to other people."

Giving back to someone less fortunate, she continued, is a "wonderful way to get to the essence of giving."

More information can be found at jfcshilly.org/volunteer.

See Volunteer, Page 14



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Volunteer

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If You 'Heart' Giving Back:

KleinLife's Adopt-A-Family and Heart-to-Heart programs provide a way to give tzedakah through gift cards to families in need.

The gift cards can range from places like Target and Amazon, where they can be used on anything, to more specific places like grocery stores, gasoline gift cards or movie theaters. It's up to the donor's discretion as to how much they want to give.

This is a great way to help families in need, said Karen Gurmankin, program director of Heart-to-Heart.

"It's an opportunity for donors in particular to enhance the holidays for families that are so challenged by their material needs that they don't have the extra means for a festive holiday celebration," Gurmankin said.

Heart-To-Heart is a self-sufficiency program that assists Jewish families and individuals under 60 with financial stability and health services.

Those who wish to donate on behalf of Heart-To-Heart for Adopt-A-Family can also do so.



Adopt-A-Family runs twice a year, on Chanukah and Passover — the two holidays that might cause the most financial stress for those in need.

The gift cards free up some room for the families and individuals who receive them — who remain anonymous to the donor to protect their integrity — so they can pay for other bills they might be struggling with.

"There are single people out there who have been out of work for a long time and have trouble paying rent, and something that helps them with other bills frees up money for them to pay for necessities," Gurmankin said.

Donating gift cards and volunteering to participate in the Adopt-A-Family program also provides a lesson for children, she said.

"If you have a family with children," Gurmankin said, "it teaches your children about giving as well as receiving, it provides donors with an opportunity to share their blessings, and to remember there are people

out there within the Jewish community — there is poverty out there, there are people who need a little bit extra to get their lives back to a quality level."

More information can be found at kleinlife.org.

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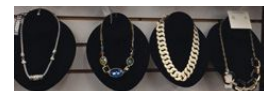
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A Burning Desire to Get Outta Town

These destinations offer motivated travelers the opportunity to sightsee and celebrate Chanukah at the same time.

BY HILARY DANAILOVA



The Breitscheidplatz in Berlin is a destination for locals and tourists alike during the holiday season.

It's Chanukah again — and if that conjures uninspiring images of kitchen-table dreidel games and latkes at the stove, maybe it's time to consider a twist: Chanukah out of town.

Unlike Passover and the High Holidays, Chanukah has no established getaway tradition. But it does have a party tradition, and so do a handful of cities where the Jewish communities celebrate with distinctive local flavor. This is also the ideal year to travel, since Chanukah falls in early December — neatly between the peak periods of Thanksgiving and Christmas.

So whether you have time for a day trip or the means for a trans-Atlantic jaunt, here are four destinations that guarantee a memorable Festival of Lights.

New York: The World's Largest Menorah, and a Jewish Cooking Renaissance

Of course New York City hosts the world's largest menorah. This is a town that revels in its own superlatives, and the massive hanukkiyah that illuminates Grand Army Plaza in Manhattan befits the world's

largest urban Jewish community. Each night of Chanukah, crowds gather in front of the Plaza Hotel to watch the lights flicker on atop a 32-foot-high, 4,000-pound steel menorah.

But the real reason to celebrate in New York this year is gustatory. From bagels to appetizing, the past few years have seen a renaissance of Jewish cooking in all its diversity — from the traditional lox purveyors that made the Lower East Side famous to trendy new boîtes like Mile End Deli. The latter, for those who don't follow the New York food world, fuses Montréal-style Jewish fare with the Brooklyn passion for all things local and artisanal, and the result is a menu that includes not only matzah ball soup, but also roasted sunchoke salad, poutine, and Stumptown coffee. The Mile End team recently added a Manhattan location and also launched Black Seed Bagels, which introduced controversial (but tasty) wood-fired bagels to a city still mourning the closing of H&H.

See Get Outta Town, Page 18

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Get Outta Town

Continued from Page 16

Some trace the Jewish-cooking renaissance to the rebirth of the storied 2nd Avenue Deli a few years back, when the murdered founder's nephews reopened the shuttered kosher icon in two new locations. Also branching out is Russ and Daughters, which celebrated its first hundred years by opening a much-heralded restaurant in 2014 that landed on many critics' Best-of lists. Meanwhile, Jewish-inspired bakeries like Sadelle's in SoHo, which serves up treif like lobster salad alongside appetizing classics, add a modern twist to a scene that still venerates the old school, epitomized by Barney Greengrass, the Upper West Side's undisputed temple of smoked fish for over a century.

Which brings us to another reason to savor Jewish New York at Chanukah: Fresh, innovative takes on tradition are now sprinkled throughout the city rather than clustered downtown. You can bring the kids to the Jewish Museum Chanukah Family Day celebration on Dec. 14, then take your pick of pastrami at 2nd Avenue Deli (which is actually on First Avenue) or the new Upper East Side outpost of Pastrami Queen.

With an entire weekend...

How about latkes, Cajun-style? New Orleans lets the good times roll for Chanukah, with candle-lighting by the Mississippi, spicy latke cook-offs, and French Quarter festivities where Jewish classics get a Southern spin. After all, what is a latke if not first cousin to a hush puppy?

New Orleans offers plenty of opportunities to contemplate the similarities this season. Start with a latke bar from local chef Daniel Esses at "Latkes With a Twist" on Dec. 3, a community-wide party sponsored by the Jewish Children's Regional Service. It's a chance to

kick off the holiday early with cocktails and music from Israeli soul singer Eleanor Tallie at the sexy, candlelit Bellocq Bar.

Every year, an amateur latke-flipper shows his stuff against New Orleans's finest chefs at the Celebrity Chef Latke Cook-Off 4.0, held each Chanukah at Chabad Uptown. Schmoozing, networking, flirting: it's all encouraged at this annual event for young Jewish professionals, where home cooks can pick up latke-making tips from the pros over beer and games.

There are more latkes at the Dec. 6 menorah lighting on the Spanish Plaza at Riverwalk, where the chanukiah lights shimmer across the Mississippi River, and crowds gather for face-painting and live music around a spectacular fountain. A decade ago, this waterfront was a very different place, and the exuberant rebirth of New Orleans — exemplified by the shiny new Riverwalk complex — is a modern miracle worth celebrating on Chanukah. Chabad of Louisiana sponsors the party, with a special emphasis on children's activities.

A more grown-up Chanukah spread — along with serious foodie bragging rights — is to be had at Shaya, the much-touted Israeli restaurant whose chef, Alon Shaya, was raised in Philadelphia. During the last week of December, Shaya will offer a family-style, \$65-per-person prix fixe Chanukah dinner that starts with salmon caviar and caramelized oxtail jam for your latkes, and ends with sufganiyot garnished with candied satsuma and black tahini gelato.

Even after the eighth candle snuffs out, those latke bars go on. There's a last chance to light the menorah at "Chanukah in the Quarter," a Dec. 20 Latin-style fête for the 45-and-under set at Evangeline. Cocktails, a latke bar, desserts and (of course) a menorah lighting take place in the courtyard of this characteristic French Quarter spot, sponsored by JNOLA, an organization for young Jewish professionals.



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...Or you could head West, to the capital of holiday kitsch

Ugly sweaters and silly costumes — why should Christmas corner the market on holiday kitsch? That's the question asked by a lot of San Francisco Jews, who celebrate Chanukah with the quirky, ironic spirit that defines Bay Area culture.

You'll find that spirit at nightspots around town, at events like HANUCON, the Chanukah edition of the "Mazel Top!" Gay Jewish cabaret series at SF Oasis — amazingly, it's the Bay Area's only gay Jewish club night. Or at the Punchline Comedy Club on Dec. 15, where "undercover" members of the tribe riff on their experiences as Asian-American and African-American Jews in a show called "You're Funny, But You Don't Look Jewish."

Only in San Francisco would a nonreligious rock-music promoter team up with Chabad to make Chanukah history. That's exactly what happened in 1975, when Chabad partnered with Bill Graham — who also happened to be a Holocaust survivor — to mount a 25-foot-high menorah in downtown Union Square.

And that's how San Francisco became the birthplace of the public menorah-lighting movement. San Francisco designates the first Sunday of Chanukah as Bill Graham Menorah Day, and the "Mama Menorah" — so called for the legions of oversized public menorahs it has spawned in cities across the globe — remains the heart of the city's Festival of Lights, drawing more than 5,000 people for latkes, sufganiyot and singing.

A very different kind of Chanukah party takes place in San Jose, where Jews who have always secretly coveted those bell-and-

elf-laced Christmas sweaters gather for the Ugly Chanukah Sweater Party hosted by the Hillel of Silicon Valley. What qualifies a sweater as ugly in a place as counterculture as San Francisco maybe a matter of debate. But those looking to appropriate Christmas kitsch can advance the Jewish argument over donuts and dreidel designs.

And if you land in San Francisco too late for Chanukah, but right in time for Christmas? You're in luck — just in time for the 23rd Annual Kung Pao Kosher Comedy, San Francisco's longest-running comedy institution and a Christmas ritual for legions of irony-prone Jews. From Christmas Eve to Boxing Day, choose either the dinner show (early) or the cocktail show (late) at the New Asia Restaurant, for a metaphysical sendup of the ultimate American Jewish holiday rite.

Celebrate a Modern Miracle: Chanukah in Berlin

If Chanukah celebrates a long-ago miracle, what location could be more fitting for the party than Berlin, the modern miracle of European Jewish rebirth? Jewish life is flourishing in this least likely of postwar burghs, fueled by newcomers from the former Soviet Union and a more recent influx of Israelis, who have imported their taste for nightlife to a city already humming with after-dark activity. Even before the menorahs are lit, wintertime Berlin bathes in the soft glow of candles flickering from the windows of cafés.

There is perhaps no Chanukah sight more indelible than the massive chanukiah that illuminates the Brandenburg Gate, a landmark powerfully associated with the German state and the Nazi regime. When Yoav Sapir, an Israeli-born tour guide who specializes in Jewish heritage (berlinjewish.com), takes his visitors past that site, he talks about the dramatic changes in German-Jewish status

See Get Outta Town, Page 20

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Get Outta Town

Continued from Page 19

— as well as the sad reality that every Jewish event and institution still must be heavily guarded.

Still, it is a sight no Jew could have imagined only 50 years ago — public menorahs lighting up crowded plazas all over Berlin. Nor could they have imagined the public revelry of Berlin's annual Chanukah Ball, held each year on the Saturday of the holiday at the Grand Hyatt Berlin, with a live band and DJs spinning sets all night. Or the most improbable and lovely sight of all — capacity crowds of young people and children of all ages, singing and dancing and gobbling down sufganiyot during Chanukah festivities at Fraenkelufer Synagogue, a vibrant nexus of Jewish community in the Kreuzberg district.

How to catch the Berlin-Israeli vibe this Chanukah: Shop for Jewish tunes at Gordon Café and Record Store in Neukölln, a Berlin offshoot of the Tel Aviv music store. Debate the relative merits of the hummus at Zula, Djimalaya or Shiloh Vegetarian Café, three of the most popular hummusiyas that are sprouting up like dandelions in Israeli neighborhoods. Ex-

Winter is always full of candlelight in Berlin, as evidenced by the scene at this Habait party.



plore the parks and elegant prewar boulevards of Kreuzberg, where the chatter of Hebrew-speaking families mingles with Arabic, Turkish, and a variety of accents from all over Germany. Pick up a copy of *Spitz*, the Hebrew-language magazine of the Berlin Israeli community, for the latest on Chanukah happenings at Habait, the Israeli-expat cultural society that hosts the coolest parties, poetry readings and concerts.

Chanukah fairs are popping up in a city famous for its Christmas markets, with handcrafted menorahs and rugelach where once there were only fruitcakes and *glühwein* (the latter, hot spiced mulled wine, remains an ecumenical holiday pleasure and the perfect antidote for winter's chill). The monthlong market at the Jewish Museum Berlin is reportedly on hiatus this season — but visitors to the museum can enjoy Chanukah family festivals on December weekends, with games and retellings of the Maccabee

story. Wind down in the café's sunny glassed-in courtyard, a pleasant setting for contemporary Jewish fare — a cuisine enlivened by the diverse cultures that are reinvigorating Berlin.

Hilary Danailova is spending this Chanukah at an undisclosed location.

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JON MARKS | JE STAFF

Yes, diamonds are still a girl's best friend. But when it comes to buying jewelry for the holidays, they're by no means your only option.

Depending upon a number of factors — your bankroll, whether you want to schlep into the city, deal with the crowds at the mall or venture someplace else — there should be something for everybody. With Chanukah almost here, it's getting to be a busy time in the jewelry business.

Only, it's not quite as busy as it used to be.

"In the past, jewelers used to do about 60 percent of their business from the end of November to December," said Ben Sorkin of Ben Sorkin Jewelers, who's been on Sansom Street for 35 years. "It's not quite like that anymore with the advent of the Internet and other factors.

"So you have to work harder to get business. Make the phone calls. Get out and hustle."

Those on Jeweler's Row like Sorkin face a different challenge. Not only do they have to lure customers into Center City, where they often have to deal with traffic, parking and other hassles, but they have to compete with each other.

If you don't like the merchandise in one store, there are plenty of others eager for your business. Since no one wants to price themselves out of the running, you may get more bang for your buck.

"This is still the street of dreams," said Steve Rosen of Sydney Rosen Co., whose late father founded the business 70 years ago "Absolutely. For those who like to come into town for some significant shopping, Jeweler's Row is still a significant draw. They can go into dozens of stores for some serious comparison-shopping. They don't pay mall prices since we're all competing with each other, so we keep the prices down. They can see a lot of choices all on one trip. And they're dealing with family-owned businesses rather than corporations. Many people like that."

On the other hand, Jake Spiegelman, of Jay Roberts Jewelers in Marlton, says he offers the best of both worlds: affordable prices without having to deal with the annoyances of coming into the city.

"What we have here, rather than an open smaller location, is one super location," said Spiegelman, who opened the business with Roberts 30 years ago, moving to its current location in 1991. "We're all under one roof, with a full-time jeweler and watchmaker. This is kind of a supermarket of jewelry all located in one spot."

While he's working the Jersey market and people like Sorkin, Rosen and Robert Schwartz of Harry Merrill & Son — which has been around for 61 years — try to drive customers to their respective stores, Joy Stember does it a bit differently.

Now in her fifth year running her own company, she's become one of the experts in the relatively small field of metal arts, special-

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Selection

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izing in Judaica. Whether it's a menorah or dreidel for Chanukah, a mezuzah for the home, a Passover seder plate or even a specially designed keepsake holder for the glass broken under the chupah, she makes it in her Abington studio.

With luck, just like the kiddush cup or that Shabbat candle holder which has been passed down from generation to generation, her original creations will be passed down, too. "The work I make is to be part of family legacies," said Stember, whose father, Jonathan, operated a fine jewelry store in Blue Bell for 41 years, which is where his daughter learned many of the tricks of the trade. "It's a modern take on a traditional item, which can become something meaningful to a family. We hold onto those items to remember our family. My favorite part of doing what I do is hearing the stories, like somebody who tells me they still have their grandmother's candle-holder she brought from Poland during the Holocaust. It's a way of remembering those who've come before us."

But why metal? And why the emphasis on Judaica?

"My dad taught me metals from the time I was 9," said Stember, who grew up in Cheltenham, attended Tyler School of Art at Temple, then realized her niche after attending a workshop in Asheville, N.C. "I feel metal is the proper material to realize my designs. Clay was too messy. It didn't give me that crisp edge I wanted. Metal just seemed to fit right. And actually all I work with is pewter. That also goes back to the days I was working with my Dad."



A Halo pendant from Ben Sorkin Jewelers.

"I decided on this after I came back from a trip to Israel on Birthright," she continued. "When I was about to turn 26, I decided to go, because I didn't want to miss the opportunity. I hadn't felt the connection before. I was pleasantly surprised how deep a connection I felt. When I came back, I started working in my studio, and all the pieces I ended up making were Judaica. I kind of took that as a sign from God — or whomever — this is the path I should be going on."

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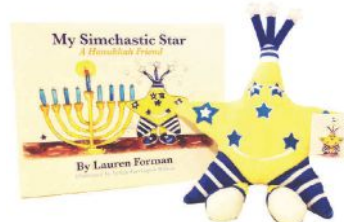
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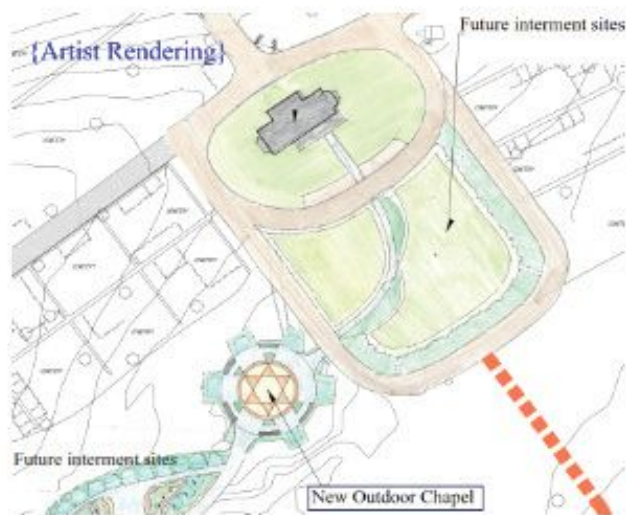
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Selection

Continued from Page 22

Judaica has become a more personal gift over the years, whether it's buying a Yahrzeit candle-holder or an apple-and-honey dish for Rose Hashanah like she sells, or buying a necklace with a Jewish star or a yad at a jeweler. While many of them have ideas on the perfect gift, they're more than happy to incorporate yours.

"People are buying custom designs and redesigns, which is something we do a lot of," explained Robert Schwartz of Harry Merrill & Son, whose grandfather founded the company in 1954. "Maybe they inherited something from their grandmother and it's sentimental but not to their taste. So we remake it into something."

At the same time, they're always trying to anticipate what the public will want. "We stock up on certain stones — rubies, sapphires, emeralds — our 'bread and butter,'" added Schwartz, flanked by his

■ You want customers to be a part of creating their own piece of jewelry, which I think is way more fun than buying something ready-made."

BEN SORKIN

mother, Iris, Harry's daughter. "But of course, there's trends.

"One year you might sell more stud earrings or bracelets. For a while, journey necklaces or 'past, present and future' necklaces were popular.

"We do some Judaica, too, though it's not as popular as it used to be. We'll get a Star of David from an estate sale or someone will say, 'I had this or that custom-made for a Bar Mitzvah.'"

You can even design your own. In fact, Ben Sorkin encourages it. "Jewelry should be fun," said Sorkin, whose store is filled with an array of sports memorabilia, including baseballs signed by Hall of Famers and a Wilt Chamberlain signed photo. "You want customers to be a part of creating their own piece of jewelry, which I think is way more fun than buying something ready-made.

"I love to create from a customer's ideas. Even with Judaica, I try to give them a variety and let them choose what they want, whether

it's incorporated into a pendant or a bracelet with the classic Jewish inscription."

As for what to look for during the holidays: "I think diamond studs are always a terrific gift," offered Sorkin. "Now they're doing them with what they call a 'halo' style — a center diamond surrounded by smaller diamonds. It makes the diamond look bigger and is a great fashion accessory which is going to be very popular."

Just as fashion has changed through the years, so have the accessories men and women wear in public. "The world is not as formal as it used to be," said Spiegelman, who was born in Netanya, Israel, before his family moved to Vineland, N.J. when he was 5 years old. "Lifestyles are more casual, therefore jewelry's more casual.

"Before, people went out on weekends and to nice restaurants and were more dressed up. Today, they'll put on jeans. People tend to buy jewelry that can be worn every day."

They also tend to buy it when they feel they're getting good value. For generations, that's been the word along Jeweler's Row. But as the older generation begins to give way, there's concern for the future

"The last few years, it really has become an age thing," noted Sorkin. "People over the age of 40 will come into town to Sansom Street, because they know it's a great destination. It's the younger generation I feel we're having a problem with getting the word out. They might not know how excellent a place to shop Sansom Street is. You can see a tremendous variety of new and old items that you'd never be able to see it in any one store.

"But you certainly can see it in 60 stores. It's true that a satisfied customer is the greatest asset in any business. Because jewelry is such a personal item, a job well done usually leads to more business. I don't want to be negative about large jewelry stores, but they're not manufacturers or designer and don't know how to create a piece of jewelry for the most part."

That's certainly not the case with the businesses on Jeweler's Row, at Jay Roberts or with Joy Stember, who puts her metal Judaica on display at some 15 top quality crafts shows throughout the country. So when it comes to choosing that perfect piece of jewelry for the holidays, keep in mind that those are just a few of the options.

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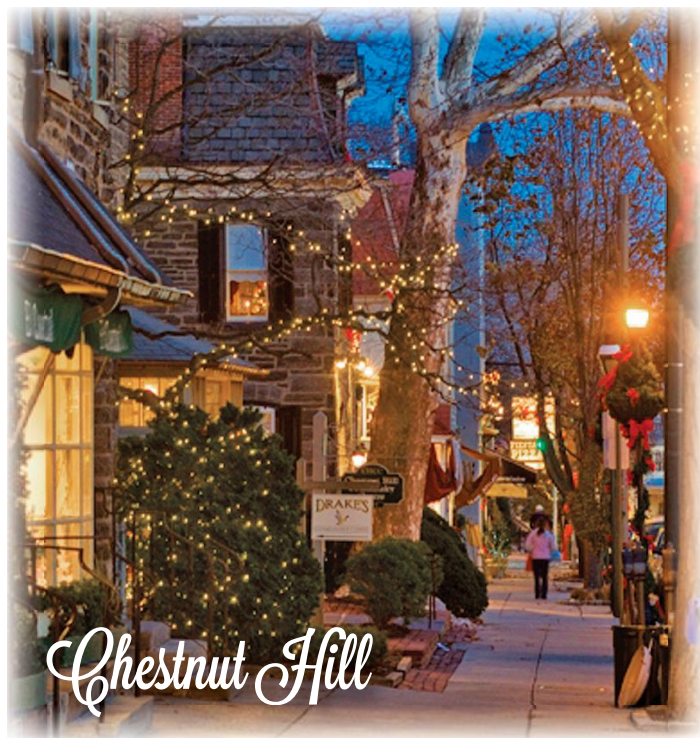
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We love **Moccis**, the hand-sewn Swedish slippers. They're so well-made — natural materials, including washable leather (!) soles, ankle supports to prevent drooping, breathable fabrics — and the designs are so endearing, including our new must-have: the Pengy Brrr!

Prices vary at moccis.uk



YOU'LL HAVE A-HUH BUH-LUUUUE (-AND-WHITE) CHANUKAH

Festified definitely lives up to its name. This company specializes in producing gleefully garish gear for the holidays. Sadly, our first pick — a menorah sweater with flashing lights — was sold out, but we can take solace in the blue-and-white glory of this men's cardigan and the matching women's leggings.

Prices vary at festified.com



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\$99 at mycharge.com and major retailers



GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

You know you need to protect your laptop and/or tablet while on the go, so why not do so with form as well as function? The **Grace laptop sleeve**, by STM, provides ample cushioning within its .7-inch depth, and comes in a wide array of two-tone styles. We're partial to the teal dot-night sky version.

\$39.95 at Radtech.com and computer retailers



NOW, VOYAGER

That's a Bette Davis movie reference — you can Google it later. All you need to know for right now is that **Pelican**, the go-to protective case maker for hardcore travelers, has come out with its latest line of smartphone cases. The Voyager line will keep your phone safe from almost anything you can throw at it — or throw it at, depending on your level of frustration — thanks to a coated screen protector and impact-absorbing materials like TPR and PU rubber inside a polycarbonate shell.

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MAKE IT A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION

Believe it or not, there are still plenty of situations where cell phones don't keep us in touch. For those times, there is the **Motorola Talkabout T460** two-way radio. Ideal for outdoors activity thanks to its 35-mile range, it also has a flashlight and emergency alert button.

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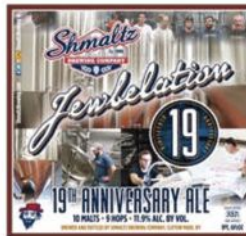
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HAVE A HOPPY CHANUKAH

OK, shut it down. The winner of "Best Play on Words in a Holiday Product" is **Shmaltz Brewing's** Shtick in a Box. Amazingly enough, the beer is even better than the pun, with choices like Hanukkah, Chanukah: Pass the Beer and their anniversary ale, Jewbilation 19. As Shmaltz says, "Candles Won't Be the Only Thing Getting Lit" this season.

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\$159.99 at running stores



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Brooks didn't forget about the male fitness enthusiasts — although, to be fair, **The Greenlight Beanie** is technically classified as unisex. And with good reason: everyone will want to wear this cap — made with moisture-wicking DriLayer fabric and a reversible lid with a smooth finish on one side and a brushed finish on the other for extra warmth — whether they're exercising or not.

\$35 at running stores and brooksrunning.com



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You multitask while awake — why not do the same while asleep? Amarte's **Overnight Express Therapy** is a new, multifunctional sleeping mask that boosts brightness, tightness and clarity. A silk matrix delivers peptides and retinol while soaking up toxins and oil, which you wash away the next morning.

\$79 at AmarteSkinCare.com



DON'T BE TONER-DEAF

For a strengthening toner, look no further than **Suki**, whose serum is made with TLC salicylic acid from white willow, along with calendula, chamomile, aloe and more.

\$29.95, sukiskincare.com



CLOSING THE CIRCLES

To quickly rectify tired skin and dark circles around your eyes, it's hard to go wrong with **Decléor's** Intense Glow for Eyes Dark Circle Corrector — a good example of truth in advertising.

\$56 at decleorusa.com



ACID ROCKS

Who doesn't love a little acid application? Not the folks at **Collin**, that's for sure. Their Derm Renewal Gel-Cream features both lactic and glycolic acids, along with arginine, to help reduce fine lines and detoxify and even out skin tones at the same time.

\$56 at GMCollin.com



LIVING THE LUSH LIFE

The beautifully chosen and wrapped gift baskets at Lush make this responsible skincare company one of our holiday standbys when in need of a pre-selected gift. And with choices like the Zing and Zest (left, \$89.95), which contains all manner of goodies, including Ocean Salt Body Scrub, Yuzu and Cocoa Shower Cream, Lemony Flutter Cuticle Butter and more; as well as the Happy Hanukkah (right, \$18.95), which includes Celebrate Hand and Body Lotion, Gold FUN and The Olive Branch Shower Gel.



INTENSIVE CARE UNITS OF SALE

Not to be outdone on the REM rejuvenation front, **Sebumed** Anti-Dry Night Intensive Cream helps replenish lipid deficiency and accelerate cell recovery. The phytosterols, jojoba oil and glycerin in the cream all help to regenerate skin and relieve dryness and irritation common in winter climes. And to keep the cleanliness and hydration theme going, be sure to invest in their line of soap-free cleansing bars.

Prices vary at beauty retailers

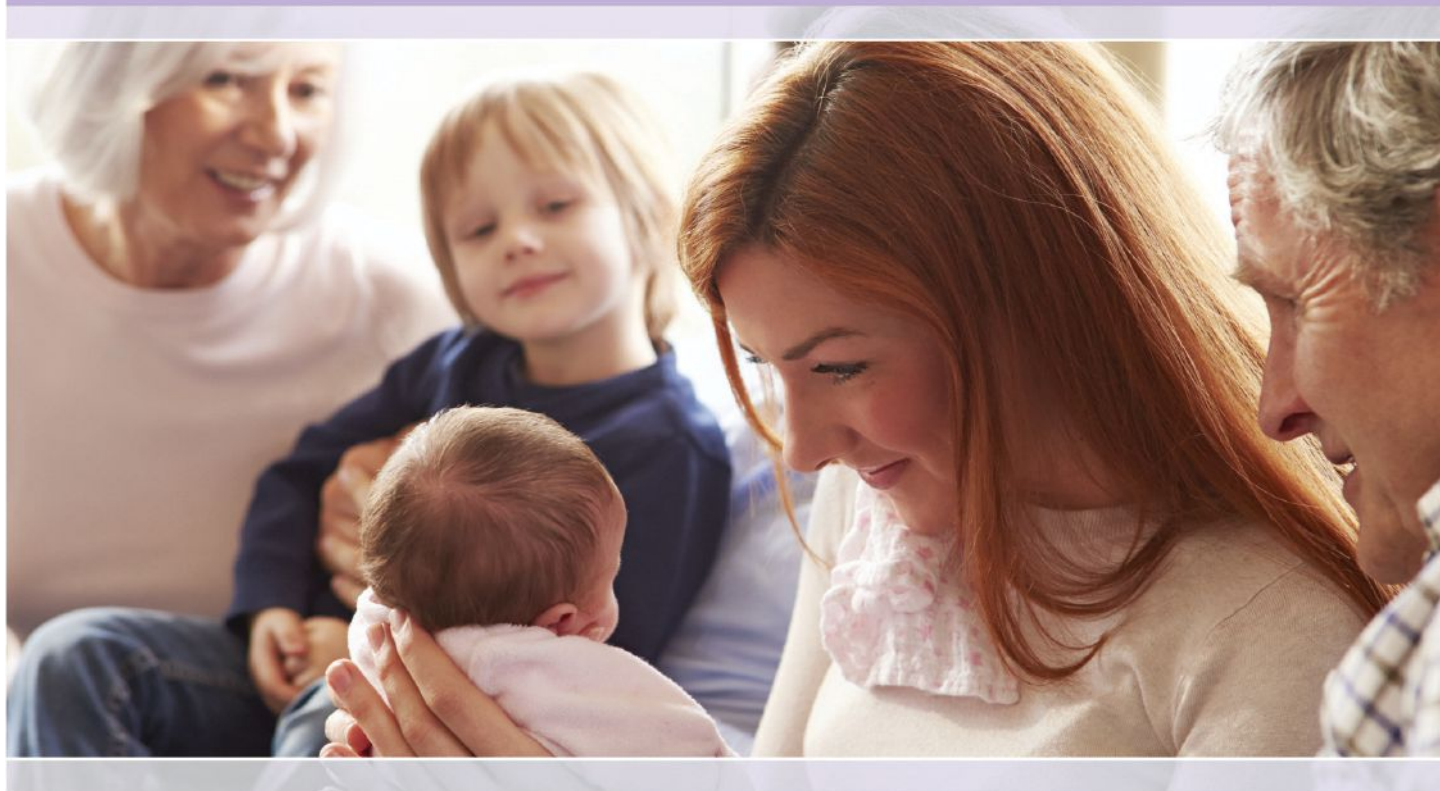


GETTING INTO A LATHER

It's not just enough to be clean, y'know. You should feel good and do good, if at all possible. The locally made Garden Voyage Botanicals soaps are all-natural, vegetable-based and are enriched with Shea butter to leave you feeling clean and rehydrated — a necessity in the winter months.

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WITH POD ON THEIR SIDE

Bialetti has long been regarded as the premier maker of the stovetop coffeemakers known as moka — you know the ones, they deliver a strong brew almost like espresso. For those of us who prefer something faster, cleaner and, well, easier, the company has just produced the **Mini Express**. This stylishly diminutive device can deliver espresso with 20 bars of pressure. And because it only uses pods, cleanup is a breeze. *\$99 wherever espresso machines are sold*



NEW RABBIT GEAR? I'M ALL EARS

Remember when Rabbit wine openers were state-of-the-art for getting to the good stuff? Well, the company is still at it, as evidenced by their two latest offerings. The **Rabbit Velvet Champagne Set** (\$30) includes a pair of pliers to make opening as safe as possible, and a seal that will keep the bubbles where they can do the most good. The **Rabbit Bar Tool Set** (\$39.99) features stainless steel tools like a double jigger, a muddler, a strainer, a bar knife and a bottle/can opener. *Available at metrokane.com*



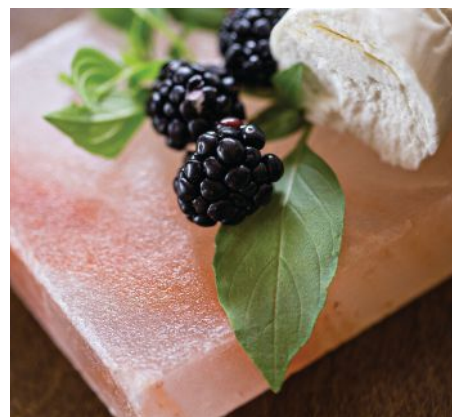
YOU'RE ALL WINERS IN THIS GAME

Don't just drink your wine — play with it! At least, that is the spirit (heh) behind the new game, **Read Between the Lines**. The game, which involves writing the funniest wine descriptions you can think of, requires no oenophilic knowledge; in fact, the less you know, the better you may be at it. In case you run dry of inspiration, you can always consult the Zin-onyms and Vocabernet cheat sheets. *\$34.99 at readbetweenwines.com*



TO AIR IS DIVINE

We all know that wine tastes best when it is aerated, but wouldn't it be nice to avoid making that funny slurping sound as you breathe in with each quaff? Enter: The **Aervana Wine Aerator**, the first-ever electric push-button model. The clean design is clean and efficient to use as well. *\$99.98 at aervana.com*



WORTH THEIR SALT

Your food needs more salt. A lot more, in fact. The **Pink Himalayan Salt Serving Plates** from Salt Rox not only make everything served on them look beautiful, but they also impart a subtle seasoning to foods placed upon them. *\$18 at saltrox.com*



A GLASS ACT

Keeping with a blue-and-white holiday/Israel theme is the duo of Javier and Efrén. These Mexican glassblowing artists use traditional blown **glass** techniques — blowing through a metal pipe while twirling it with one hand — to create a swirling effect in cobalt blue and white, made all the more stunning by the slight variations from glass to glass. *Set of 6 for \$71.99 at novica.com*



GO TO THE HEAD OF THE GLASS

For those events when you're not breaking out the Riedel, go with the stemless wine glasses from **Pubware**. They're unbreakable, won't discolor or cloud, BPA-free and dishwasher-safe. *Prices vary at pubware.com*



THE STAR OF THE TABLE

Wood, stainless, Formica — it doesn't matter — any tabletop is going to be immeasurably enhanced during Chanukah by the addition of this **table runner** hand-woven by the Guatemalan fabric artist Miguel Hernández. He has woven in bands of concentric diamonds in blue, aqua, black and white, and butterflies in blue and aqua complete the design. *\$69.99 at novica.com*

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PLAY MISTY FOR ME

Oh, **Dyson**, is there anything you can't do? Coming to the rescue of countless dried-out bedrooms is the company's new humidifier. Engineered for up to 18 hours of continuous use, with a sleep timer for automatic cut-out, this machine will also kill 99.9 percent of bacteria, thanks to its Ultraviolet Cleanse technology. And yes, it also works as an air multiplier in warmer months.

\$499.99 at local retailers



THIS MACHINE TRULY SUCKS

And if you're looking to partake in some of that Dyson vortex action without too much effort, check out the ultralight **Dyson V6 Absolute** cordless vacuum, which comes with two heads—because, let's face it, they are better than one.

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A HOLIDAY BENCHMARK

Move over, Elf on the Shelf. No, really, move over — the stores need to make room for two new additions to this sedentary toy trend. You may recognize **Mensch on a Bench** from such shows as *Shark Tank*, where the toy's creator secured a deal, or you may have seen Moshe the Mensch peering at you happily from his perch in one of your friends' houses. Now it's your turn to find out what it's all about.
\$29.99 at local retailers



BOARD WITH THE OUTDOORS

Whether you're already on board with camping culture or you're still trying to coax your family into their first time at a KOA, there are few things more important than a good game that appeals to everyone. If you're looking for a way to connect with your loved ones — and connect to the great outdoors — then you need to check out **Camp**. This board game engages players with its fast-paced, intuitive method of learning fun facts about the great outdoors. S'mores optional.
\$19.95 at amazon.com



A MINECRAFT WAY OF TEACHING

Piggybacking on the overwhelming success and influence of Minecraft, the folks at ThinkFun have come up with **Code Master**, a game that uses a Minecraft-like environment to teach players programming logic while they scramble to collect crystals and reach the portal of success — and it's all done without sitting in front of a screen!
\$19.99 at Target



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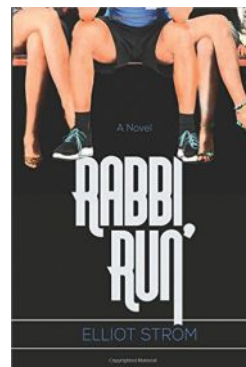


Stephanie Goldberg, SVP
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Happy Chanukah

FROM THE STAFF AT THE JEWISH EXPONENT



PERSON OF THE BOOK

Rabbi Eliot M. Strom is more than just the founding rabbi and rabbi emeritus of Shir Ami Congregation; he is also an author. His new book, **Rabbi Run**, is a novel about the life and times of a handsome, boyishly charming rabbi in suburban Philadelphia. Good to see someone who knows the first rule of writing fiction!
\$14.95 at bookstores



HER TRAVELS, YOUR TREASURES

When Laura Cohn first visited Indonesia 17 years ago, she never could have known that that one trip would lead to a lifetime of involvement with the country's culture and people. Now, we can all benefit from her travels, thanks to her annual **From Bali to Bala** sale, going on now in Chestnut Hill. Check out handmade arts and crafts, like these stunning masks, and also the numerous free themed events she is staging.

Prices vary; frombali to bala.com



FEATS OF CLAY

If you're looking for a menorah that reflects your commitment to Judaism as well as to local artisans, then check out the impressive works thrown by **Ruth Schachter**. A member of the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen, Schachter creates stunning, one-of-a-kind Judaica like this menorah, dreidels and more.

Prices vary; myworkinclay.com

That's a WRAP



NOW THAT'S THE STUFFED

Ever thought to yourself, "Connor Barwin and Jason Kelce are so cute — I wish someone would turn them into 10-inch tall plush figures that I could buy — I mean, give to my nephew," then you're in luck. **Bleacher Creatures** has created figures not just of the Eagles players, but of current Flyers, Sixers great Allen Iverson, as well as Marvel's Avengers, the Hobbit and more. *\$19.99 at bleachercreatures.com*



NO ONE PUTS BABY FOOD IN A CORNER

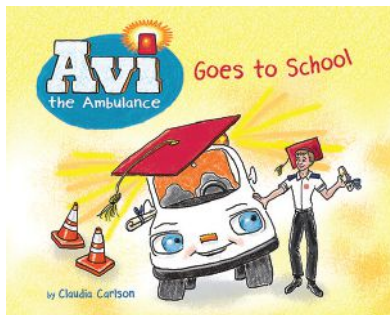
Making your own baby food has always been on your wish list — until you think about the messy mechanics of it all, at which point those little glass jars seem like a decent compromise. No more, thanks to the **Baby Brezza One Step Baby Food Maker**. This thing can steam and blend fruits, vegetables, meats and fish all in one bowl quickly and easily with the press of a button. And no plastic here — only stainless steel blades and a glass bowl. What's your excuse now?

Baby wants to know.
\$99.99 at major retailers



DO BE SUCH A BLOCKHEAD!

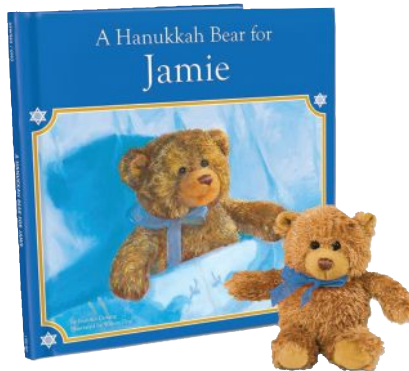
Instead of just reading and stressing about how important STEAM (Science, Tech, Engineering, Arts and Math) are in developing our children's — especially girls' — intellects, why not do something about it? Like, make a game out of it? That's just what the folks at **GoldieBlox** have done. Their award-winning construction sets engage young minds with their whimsical designs while encouraging creativity, and verbal and spatial skills. *\$19.99 at major retailers and goldieblox.com*



THE SIREN SONG OF A BOOK

Now you can give a child a book and perform tzedakah at the same time, thanks to a partnership between **American Friends of Magen David** and Apples & Honey Press. They have teamed up to offer the new series about Avi, an eager young anthropomorphic ambulance — the youngest and smallest in a family of Magen David Adom emergency vehicles living in a garage in Jerusalem.

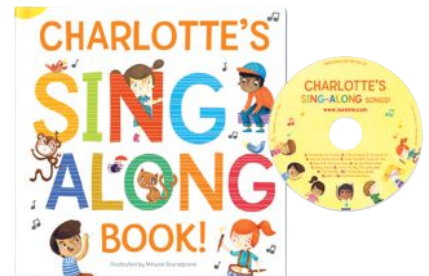
\$9.95 at [amazon](http://amazon.com) and other booksellers



A GIFT THAT WILL BE ALL THE PAGE

Forget about monogrammed backpacks — what if you could get your favorite young'un a book that featured them going on a Chanukah adventure? That's exactly what *A Hanukkah Bear for Me*, from I See Me Personalized Children's Books, will do (for \$39.99, of course). Looking for a non-holiday gift that is just as personal? The company also makes *My Sing-Along Book*, which not only features the child's name in the book, but also in the songs on the accompanying CD (\$39.99).

iseeme.com



WIN THE STROLLER DERBY

If you really want to be ready to walk your baby in the cold — not just this winter, but for a few winters to come — then the only stroller accessory you should be buying is the **7 AM Enfent Blanket 212 Evolution**. This bunting expands as your baby grows. *\$189 at 7amenfant.com*



THERE IS NO TRY; ONLY BUY

You didn't think we could make it through an entire gift guide without having at least one Star Wars-themed gift in here, did you? We'll leave it to others to feature the high-end esoteric claptrap (hello, LEGO — we're looking at you!) and focus on the **Hasbro** offerings that remind us of the toys of our youth, like the super-cool Armor-Up figurines of characters like Poe Dameron, and the telescoping light sabers that come complete with air-slicing hums.

Prices vary; available everywhere, obviously





Reduce, Reuse ... Regift?

Finding the positive — and the Talmudic —
in presenting someone with your unwanted presents.

BY HILARY DANAILOVA

Recently, I visited a friend and her young son, bearing as a gift two books purported to be wildly popular with the toddler set. “Oh, I already have these,” said the 3-year-old upon tearing open the package. “But that’s OK — I can always regift them.”

When a neologism emerges from the mouth of a babe, you know that verb is firmly in our lexicon. Merriam-Webster cites 1995 as the year “regift” was formally defined as the act of passing along an unwanted gift to another, presumably unwitting recipient — a date that probably owes less to etymologists than to a famous *Seinfeld* episode about a regifted label-maker. But Rabbi Chaim Goldstein, who oversees Chabad at Drexel University, pointed out that the phenomenon is at least as old as Moses, whom the rabbi called the original regifter for passing along tablets God had already given him.

Moses was pretty upfront about the tablets’ provenance — but in the 21st century, the implications of regifting make a lot of people squirm. This, despite the fact that regifting is as much a part of

December as latkes and Mariah Carey, if decidedly less heralded.

And from a Jewish historical standpoint, “Chanukah is not primarily about gifts,” noted Rabbi Eli Freedman of Congregation Rodeph Shalom. “The gift-giving custom is a fairly modern invention to try to compete with Christmas.”

But good luck telling that to your kids. While modern Jewish families increasingly incorporate charitable rituals into the winter holiday, the pressure to proffer shiny new prizes continues unabated — and a lot of those prizes get rewrapped, despite the fact that regifting can feel cheap, furtive, even ignoble.

So is this moral discomfort justified? From a Jewish perspective, is the act of regifting ever ethical — or is the person just a *schnorrer*? Do we have an obligation to disclose a regift? And which is morally preferable: keeping an unused item, tossing it out or passing it on to someone who might put it to better use?

The bottom line, according to the experts we spoke with: It really

See Regift, Page 40



Hanukkah Menu 2015

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May Hanukkah Be Special For You & Yours!

*Kosher Style Brisket Dinner

3 lbs. Slow Cooked Brisket
32 oz. Gravy
3 lbs. Potato Latkes
3 pints Matzo Ball Soup
2 lbs. Applesauce
2 lbs. Green Beans Almondine
Jewish Apple Cake

\$99.99

(serves 6-8)



A la Carte Selections—*Kosher Style

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Roasted Whole Turkey 12-14 lb.
All Natural Turkey, 4 lbs. Bread Stuffing,
2 lbs. Turkey Gravy

\$85.99 (serves 8-10)

*Kosher Style Brisket Dinner For One

Slow Cooked Brisket with Gravy,
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Potatoes, Parisian Carrot Tzimmes,
Applesauce

\$10.99 each

Matzo Ball Soup	\$5.99 pt.
Slow Cooked Brisket	\$19.99 lb.
Marinated Rose Geranium Salmon	\$18.99 lb.
Roasted All Natural Boneless Turkey Breast	\$12.99 lb.
Roasted Sweet & Sour Chicken Split Breast	\$7.99 lb.
Homemade Applesauce	\$4.99 lb.
Pineapple Kugel	\$6.99 lb.
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Parisian Carrot Tzimmes	\$6.99 lb.
Hericot Verts, Roasted Leeks & Red Pepper	\$7.99 lb.
Roasted Root Vegetables	\$8.99 lb.
Roasted Rosemary Yukon Gold Potatoes	\$6.99 lb.
Seven Fruit Haroset	\$6.99 lb.
Orzo Cranberry Saffron Almond Salad	\$5.99 lb.
Turkey Gravy	\$4.99 lb.
Green Beans Almondine	\$6.99 lb.
Sherried Beets	\$6.99 lb.
Jewish Apple Cake	\$9.99 ea.

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Regift

Continued from Page 38

is the thought that counts. “The issue with giving a gift is intentionality,” said Rabbi Eric Yanoff at Congregation Adath Israel, noting that the Talmud interprets Jewish laws of giving for various situations. “So before you can talk about regifting, you have to think about what it means to give a gift.”

Like all the rabbis we spoke with, Yanoff took a fairly positive view of regifting, since Judaism regards the spirit behind a gesture as paramount. “Sometimes, there are very valuable gifts that are given without thought, while others are very modest from the point of view of finance but might be quite touching, like a drawing from a child,” the rabbi explained. “It’s not clear to me that the act of placing value on a gift is tied up in spending money on it.”

As an example, the rabbi cited a hypothetical person who receives a second copy of a book he loves, and decides to regift it to someone else he believes would love it, too. “You’re saying, ‘I wanted you to have the experience of reading this book,’” elaborated Yanoff. “The idea that this will mean so much to you — there’s a mindfulness to that that I think is really lovely. I don’t think there’s anything ethically problematic about it.”

At Main Line Reform Temple Beth Elohim in Wynnewood, Rabbi Geri Newburge considered whether the *Seinfeld* episode was ethically problematic. Was Elaine’s boyfriend Tim, who regifted a label-maker she had bought him to Jerry, acting shamefully? “Or is it *derech erez*, a sign of courtesy or respect, wanting a gift to find a better, happier home?” the rabbi wondered. “I would be delighted to receive something that a friend or family member thinks I would enjoy.”

Certain items fall more easily into this category than others: duplicate gifts, books you already own, foods you can’t eat due to diet or allergy. “That type of regifting feels very ethically sound,” opined Yanoff. He and his wife designate one night of Chanukah for tzedakah, another for books and so on, hoping to avoid pointless, perfunctory presents for their three children. “And we teach our kids that the first thing you say, no matter what, is ‘Thank you,’” he added.

For Elisa Goldberg, who recently took over as interim rabbi at the Reconstructionist Kol Tzedek in West Philadelphia, honesty is what makes regifting kosher. “We are blessed to live in a world with lots and lots of stuff,” said the rabbi, who, like others, cited the Jewish commandment of *bal tashchit* — “do not waste” — as a powerful argument against superfluous items shoved in the back of the closet. (Rabbi Freedman noted that this commandment is based on a verse in Deuteronomy about not destroying fruit trees when waging war on a city — an example with little practical application in present-day Philadelphia, but a fine rationalization for disposing of clutter nonetheless.)

“The larger question here is how much stuff we have, and how much we’re obligated to give — it’s crazy,” said Goldberg. She pointed out that the avalanche of obligation can become a financial burden in what are lean economic times for many families — and sometimes, a nicely wrapped regift may be the only affordable price of admission to a classmate’s party.

But as a general rule, tacit regifting “doesn’t feel quite right,” admitted Goldberg, even if it theoretically reduces waste. “You’re not just giving the gift, you’re giving the sentiment.” The rabbi favors donating unwanted gifts, or else passing them on as openly second-hand items, as she does with her 9-year-old daughter on their annual Chanukah Goodwill run.

The honesty approach finds its fullest expression at white elephant parties, in which participants wrap frankly unwanted oddball items (“white elephants”) for a game of exchanges — the funnier and less



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practical, the better. I used to attend an annual Christmas Day white elephant party in Brooklyn, and the fights that broke out over the more hilarious items — a set of “Heroes of the Torah” drinking glasses from Fishs Eddy stands out in memory — could be epic. My sister, who has hosted white elephant Chanukah parties in San Francisco for years, recalls a hideous clown table lamp that resurfaced year after year, perennially regifted, until it finally went missing in 2014.

Irony was presumably not the motive for a memorable regift gone awry at the birthday party of Rabbi Anna Boswell-Levy’s daughter. The rabbi at Kol Emet in Yardley, Boswell-Levy recalls unwrapping a dress clearly intended for a baby at her daughter’s third birthday. The giver was a child whose mother also had a newborn at home, and without so much as a card attached, “it was very obviously a regift,” the rabbi recalled. Clearly, this was not the frazzled mother’s finest hour. But Boswell-Levy said nothing, had her daughter write a thank-you note, and donated the gift.

From a Jewish perspective, the rabbi is inclined to look charitably on regifting as a practice that reduces waste in a consumerist society — “using everything you receive to its best purpose,” a view that finds support in the Talmud, which stipulates obligation on the part of the receiver. “But ideally, a gift should be inappropriate to somebody, and a gift from the heart,” Boswell-Levy added.

And in most cases, honesty is the best policy, said Rabbi Freedman of Congregation Rodeph Shalom. “However, we are also taught that dignity and not embarrassing someone are also of utmost importance, and re-gifting could hurt feelings” if made known to the recipient, the rabbi observed. He noted religious precedent for telling a white lie in order to preserve *shalom bayit*, peace in the home: “Actually, in this week’s very parsha, God tells a white lie to preserve Abraham and Sarah’s relationship.”

Whether Abraham ever regifted to Sarah is unclear — but Freedman confesses to having contemplated the practice to preserve peace in his own home. The gift in question is a toy puzzle he and his wife received for their infant daughter; it theoretically emits animal noises when the pieces are correctly placed, but in practice disturbs their *shalom bayit* with random moo’s and baa’s at all hours. “Like in the middle of the night, at bedtime, nap times,” complained the rabbi. “My wife and I have been talking recently about who we don’t like that we will regift it to.”

Freedman swears he is just kidding. But if he caves and regifts the much-loathed toy, he can take comfort in the fact that Jewish ethics are probably on his side. ●

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

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A Handmade Holiday

Some of the very best gifts out there are the ones you make yourself — or by local artisans.

JASON COHEN | JE STAFF

From scrumptious donuts to chocolate menorahs, there are several ways people can celebrate the eight crazy nights of Chanukah.

Local artists like Jennifer Wankoff, Joy Stember and Rivkah Walton make Judaica memorabilia, while Federal Donuts and Michel Cluizel Chocolatrium provide tasty sweets. Several Jewish day schools also participate in educating children about the holiday.

Wankoff, who teaches at Main Line Art Center, Perkins Center for the Arts, The Clay Studio and owns Jennifer Wankoff Ceramics in Roxborough, begins building her holiday inventory in the summer.

She makes dreidels and menorahs using a pottery wheel and hand-built components that are assembled. They are then hand-carved, painted, glazed and fired in an electric kiln.

“I enjoy the challenge of making these pieces function — the dreidels spin well and have well-marked Hebrew lettering so they function well in the game of dreidel and are aesthetically pleasing,” Wankoff said. “Decorating them with layers of glaze is fun for me as well.

“For the menorahs, I like referencing the history of the Chanukah lamp as a hanging oil lamp object with a high back. I enjoy carving window designs on the high back and decorating with glaze but have

also enjoyed the process of designing their function — the candle holder parts, making press molds to create the candle holder parts.”

Stember, who runs Joy Stember Metal Arts Studio in Abington said things get crazy around Chanukah.

In August, orders start pouring in for menorahs, dreidels and other Judaica memorabilia. Everything is handmade, starting out as sheet metal before being soldered together.

For Stember, building dreidels and menorahs is very time-consuming. A dreidel can take between an hour and eight hours; a menorah, up to two days.

“Each piece is made for the individual,” she said. “Making something out of metal is much more of a challenge than with clay. You have to be pretty sure of what you’re doing.”

Menorahs cost about \$250 and dreidels cost \$90 to \$250.

Walton explained she enjoys making menorahs because it “expresses the underlying spiritual meaning through the piece’s form or function for the ritual for which it is to be used.”

She created a balancing menorah, made of brass and acrylic, which resembles ancient navigational instruments like astrolabes. The frame goes increasingly out of balance each of the first four days of the hol-

See Handmade, Page 46

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Handmade

Continued from Page 44



Jennifer Wankoff, who teaches at Main Line Art Center, Perkins Center for the Arts and The Clay Studio, and owns her eponymous studio, spends months getting her Chanukah wares fired up.

Jennifer Wankoff

iday, begins to return on the fifth and is only in full balance on the eighth night — when light has begun to return to the Earth.

Walton told the *Jewish Exponent* that most Jewish holidays have both agrarian and historical roots. She said many people associate Chanukah with the Maccabees, but the Earth-based portion is often overlooked. Chanukah falls over the new moon closest to the winter solstice — the time when the least light is reaching the Earth in the northern hemisphere.

“With the world plunged into darkness, how frightening a time this must have been for our ancient ancestors,” Walton exclaimed. “It is no accident that almost every culture in this half of the world starts lighting flames at this time of year.”

Menorahs and dreidels at the Mud Room in Ardmore range from \$14 to \$25. Someone can design it, paint the item, leave it there to be glazed and fired, and pick it up in less than a week.

Andrea Tirnauer, owner of the Mud Room, said parents and children enjoy making things together and kids love to be creative and get messy.

“Painting pottery lends to both of those areas,” she said. “The other positive part of the project is what feelings the kids and families share when they bring the menorah out and light the candles year after year.”

The Mud Room is partnering with about 60 kids with a youth group from Lower Merion Synagogue, where they will be doing a hot chocolate mug-painting project.

In the past, the Mud Room has worked with several of the Main Line synagogues and helped with youth groups, Chanukah parties

“Parents and children enjoy making things together and kids love to be creative and get messy.”

ANDREA TIRNAUER, OWNER OF THE MUD ROOM

and added family activities to Friday evening services. This past spring, it worked closely with the Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Greater Philadelphia to prepare flower vases for Holocaust victims.

“As you can see, the bigger picture is much more than painting pottery as an art project,” Tirnauer said. “The pieces both made and received will hold a special place in many hearts and that is what means the most to me.”

Jacques Dahan, president of Michel Cluziel in West Berlin, N.J., said the companies’ new 3-D chocolate menorah is already a big hit. So far, 600 have been ordered, but it can take up to an hour to make one because of the intricacy of the meringue candles.

“This one is really beautiful,” Zahan said.

The menorah, which is kosher and pareve, has an interesting backstory, Dahan explained. When his family moved to America 20 years ago from France, his children attended Kellman Brown Academy in Voorhees Township, N.J., and he and his wife, Laura, made chocolate menorahs for the teachers.

The confections became a big hit not just in the community, but

nationwide. The issue was making the candles removable. His creative mind kept churning and last year, he asked a friend in France to design an even better menorah.

"We didn't realize all the changes that we needed to do as well as preparing everything," Dahan said. "Sometimes people don't realize it takes a lot of time to make."

One of the most acclaimed donut shops in Philly will have delicious treats for the holiday. Federal Donuts chef Matthew Fein explained that traditional sufganiyot are yeast-raised donuts, filled with grape jelly and covered in powdered sugar. However, since Federal Donuts doesn't make those, it wanted to find a fun way to offer a version of sufganiyot using their spiced cake donuts.

"Being that we try to do things out of the norm, we decided to dip the donuts in honey, rather than cover them in powdered sugar, and we used a very high-quality raspberry jam instead of the traditional grape jelly," Fein said.

At Perelman Jewish Day School's Forman Center in Melrose Park, students make various types of menorahs, integrating art, science, engineering and Jewish studies.

In the younger grades, students make a symbolic chanukiah — one that is not functional. In Jewish Studies class, children learn what it means for a menorah to be considered kosher. They create papier mâché chanukiyot from the tops of egg cartons, using Popsicle sticks for candles.

Third-graders integrate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) curriculum into the design process. Students create a menorah using recycled bottles, aluminum tins, plastic trays and cups, battery-operated lights, pipes, tubing and other materials.

In fourth grade, they learn about texture and start with a wood base and use a crinkled tissue paper technique with paint and oil pastels to create their chanukiyot. Fifth-graders work with clay to create their own special designs.

At Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy in Bryn Mawr, highlights of the Chanukah celebration include daily candle lightings and an assembly led by student leaders, who are known as the JLI (Jewish Leadership Initiative).

"With six school days this year, we may also try something new involving dedicating each of the six days to each one of our six *derech erez* pledge values of honor, honesty, humility, community, fellowship and modesty," said Rabbi Judd Kruger Levingston, director of Jewish Studies at the school.

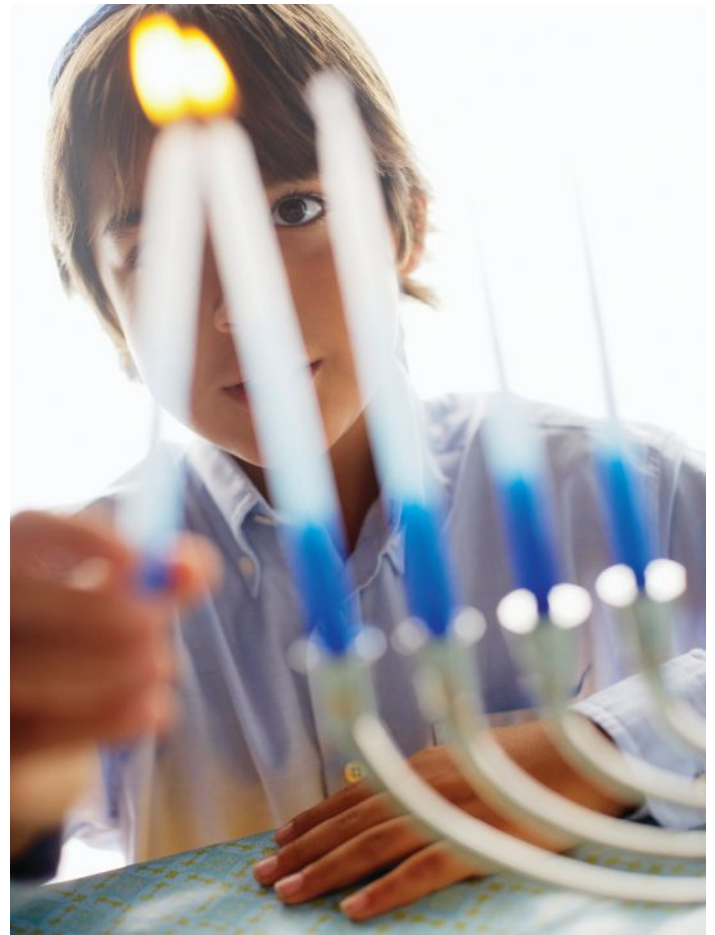
"We will connect themes in the Chanukah story and celebration to themes in the six *derech erez* values."

At Temple Judea preschool in Furlong, there is a school-wide gathering, where family members are invited to hear the children sing Chanukah songs and the staff performs a play telling the story of Chanukah. This is followed by lunch with latkes, jelly donuts and gelt.

"We love when we are actually in school during the holiday, as we will be this year, rather than the holiday coinciding with our winter break," said Preschool director Sheryl Milstein.

Throughout the week, a menorah is lit in every classroom each morning, giving the children a chance to hear the prayers. Some of the children learn about making oil from olives and have a chance to give it a try. A couple of weeks before the holiday, the Parent Association also holds a Chanukah Secret Shop.

"I love the fact that in this small way, the children are beginning to learn to give and not just to receive," Milstein said. "Although we know that Chanukah is certainly not the most important holiday on the calendar, to preschoolers, it would be hard to find something to top it." ●



At Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy in Bryn Mawr, highlights of the Chanukah celebration include daily candle lightings and an assembly led by student leaders, who are known as the JLI (Jewish Leadership Initiative).



The Federal Donuts spin on sufganiyot includes a honey bath before raspberry preserves can crown spiced cake donuts.



Chanukah FAQs for non-Jews

Or, 'All I Want For Christmas is Jew'

RACHEL KURLAND | JE STAFF

It's that time of year again: Christmas. Oh, and Chanukah, too. For non-Jews, Chanukah has been built up to be perceived as the most important Jewish holiday, even though we all know the High Holidays are the real MVPs.

Growing up in the South, I was a small gefilte fish in a big winter wonderland pond during this time of year. It was difficult to explain to my non-Jewish friends why Santa didn't come to my house — or why I didn't confront him about it at the mall.

So to answer all of those holiday questions and misconceptions out there, here's a little something to put you at ease so you can deck the halls with matzah balls.

Q: Oh, so this is like the Jewish Christmas?

A: No two words have ever created a stronger oxymoron. Although Chanukah and Christmas tend to fall in the same holiday season, that's pretty much the only thing they have in common.

Q: Chanukah must be an important holiday for you.

A: Actually, no. Chanukah has been built up to be some store-brand epic celebration because it happens to fall around Christmas. We don't take off work or school. We don't take an extra guilt trip to shul. We just eat.

The High Holidays and Shabbat are the most religiously significant, but if we're talking about personal favorites, Purim is probably the most underrated Jewish holiday because, with all the revelry and costumes, it's a lot like Halloween.

Q: Why is it called the Festival of Lights?

A: Long version: As the story goes, the Maccabees revolted against the Greeks, won and liberated Jerusalem. In an effort to rededicate the Second Temple, Jews lit the menorah with only one day's worth of oil, which miraculously lasted eight days, hence the Festival of Lights. Short version: The Greeks tried to kill us, we won and now we celebrate by eating a ton of greasy fried donuts and potatoes to remind us of the oil that lasted longer than expected.

Q: You don't take off work for Chanukah?

A: As much as I would love to spend eight days indulging in carbs to celebrate our people no longer being enslaved by the Hellenistic Greeks, the truth of the matter is that Chanukah is not as big a deal as people make it out to be. It's an empowering story of overcoming religious persecution, but it's not really in our Top 5 holidays required to do something outrageously Jewy.

Q: Is there a Jewish Santa?

A: If you believe in Hanukkah Harry or Hershel the Hanukkah Goblin, then sure. Otherwise, no. There's a reason *Friends* character Ross Geller dressed up as the pathetic mascot known as the Holiday Armadillo: because Chanukah doesn't actually have a mascot. We don't have fun characters like Santa or Rudolph. We have the real history of the Maccabees and the Greeks. Chanukah has been made into a big to-do when, really, it is not the most important holiday in the Jewish calendar.

Q: Wow, you get eight presents?!

A: It depends on each individual family. Some do seven small gifts with the eighth one being extravagant. Others just do one big gift. Some exchange no gifts at all. Why? Because the story of Chanukah isn't about presents. It's about overcoming religious persecution. (Of course, who wouldn't want to celebrate that with some nice gold hoop earrings?) Gift-giving, in my opinion, is a way to not make the Jewish kids feel left out among their holly jolly peers. And based on my linear understanding of Christmas gift-giving from the cheesy holiday films I've seen, people who celebrate Christmas also get more than one present, especially with the addition of stocking stuffers and some big reveal Christmas morning, so the idea of eight presents shouldn't be that shocking.

Q: Where's your Christmas tree? Do you at least have a Chanukah bush?

A: I do not have a Christmas tree because I don't celebrate Christmas. It's that simple. As fun as it sounds to participate in this tradition of garnishing a plant in my living room, the idea of a Chanukah bush is a sad alternative to a Christmas tree, in my opinion. If any Jew wants to decorate a shrubbery with an angel and lights as a way to feel included in the Christmas hysteria, be my guest. But it is not a Chanukah tradition.

Q: Do you really go to the movies and eat Chinese food on Christmas?

A: Honestly, yes. Now, not every Jew keeps this unofficial "tradition," but it's something that my family has always done simply because those are the only two interesting things open on that day ...

and we kind of think the stereotype is funny. Plus, you get to see all your friends in town in one place by "coincidence," so it becomes a nice shindig.

Q: Why does Chanukah start on a different day each year?

A: Chanukah follows the Jewish calendar and lasts for eight days. Because it is lunar-based, the days it falls on each year vary in the secular calendar. It's just a coincidence that it falls around Christmas.

Q: You must love Adam Sandler.

A: Yes, "The Chanukah Song" was funny in the '90s and *Eight Crazy Nights* was, well, it was tolerable. But just because he put out a few "Now That's What I Call Chanukah" hits doesn't mean he's our golden calf.


Q: If Chanukah lasts for eight days, why are there nine candles on that candelabra?

A: First, that candelabra is called a menorah. The taller candle in the middle (or often off to one side on more modern menorahs) is called the *shamash*, which means helper. The *shamash* is lit first, then you use that candle to light the others.

Q: How do you spell Chanukah?

A: Two K's? One N? No H? The phlegmy clear-your-throat "ch" instead of just H? There are dozens of ways to spell it phonetically in English. Just don't ask me which one to use. I still don't know.

See FAQs, Page 5



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FAQs

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Q: Does Christmas offend you?

A: Not at all. Don't get me wrong, though it seems like I am not full of Christmas cheer, I actually enjoy the Christmas season because, just as much as most of the world, I view it as a fun holiday full of parties, ugly sweaters and candy canes. I can even name five out of nine (*Actually, there are only eight reindeer — Ed.*) reindeer and remember most of the lyrics to "Jingle Bell Rock." However, from an outsider looking in, it's unfortunate that the original celebration and religious purpose of Christmas itself is so far gone from our society today. We are so wrapped up with gift-giving and nog-drinking that some forget to reflect on the whole point of the holiday.

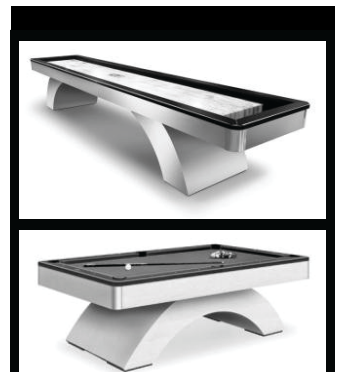
And on another note, I'm not offended when I'm doing my regular shopping during, well basically the entire month of December, and cashiers wish me a "Merry Christmas" on my way out. It's a polite gesture either way, and if this is the one time of year when people are actually nice to each other and relatively pleasant, I'll take it.

So you can talk about Christmas around me, include me in Secret Santa office gift exchanges or wish me a happy holiday. It's OK. Being overly sensitive about it is just as bad as being ignorant. I won't spontaneously combust when I hear the word Christmas. That doesn't offend me. But what does is assuming that Chanukah is some distant cousin of Christmas, when really they have no relation.

Q: Aren't latkes basically hash browns?

A: Now I'm offended. •

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