B BAVID BAVID Bulletin

December 2022

From Rabbi Michael Silbert

Over the years, you might have seen Chabad's giant-sized *chanukiot* (Chanukah menorahs) in various public places. It's not just a Rochester-area phenomenon; one will find them wherever Chabad operates.

So, why is it only on Chanukah that Jewish ritual takes to the public square? Why do we not

see public shofar-a-thons? Gigantic sheets of matzah in Brighton's Twelve Corners? Perhaps a super-sized facsimile of the Ten Commandments hanging out at a high traffic intersection in Pittsford on Shavuot? Is it in order to compete with – or to provide a Jewish answer to – all the Christmas trees one sees at this time of year? No. The answer is: *Pirsum haNess*.

Pirsum haNess means "publicizing the miracle" and it is one of the central commandments of Chanukah. The Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Shabbat 21b) teaches that the very purpose of lighting Chanukah candles is in order to publicize the miracle of the festival, which explains why we are instructed to place the *chanukiah* on a windowsill in the home that faces the street, so that passersby can see the candles burning. Therefore, Chabad, in their enthusiasm, has long brought the candles to where people are in order to publicize the miracle.

On the other hand, you might also have heard reports or seen the 1990s documentary about Chanukah in Billings, Montana, when a brick was thrown through the window of the Schnitzer family's home while their Chanukah candles twinkled in the window. Believe it or not, our sages anticipated it would not always be safe for Jews to be public about their observance. Immediately after teaching us to place the *chanukiah* in a place which will be visible to all,



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the Talmud continues: "And in a time of danger, when Jews are prohibited from kindling (Chanukah) lights, one places the *chanukiah* on the table and that is sufficient to fulfill one's obligation."

In other words: publicize the miracle unless you live in an environment which is hostile to

Jews, in which case, keep it to yourself.

The irony of the atrocious Montana episode is that instead of feeling compelled to retreat to a life of undercover Jewish practice, word of the Schnitzer family's terrifying incident got out and raised the ire of many of their neighbors. MANY of them. Although "the local Jewish population numbered only about 150, (it was estimated that up to) 10,000 *chanukiot* soon decorated homes and other buildings in Billings" (Dr. Yvette Alt Miller, Aish HaTorah), in places where they were publicly visible. Talk about a Chanukah miracle!

The messages here are deep:

- Despite an isolated instance of violent antisemitism, the holiness of the festival triumphed over hate and was taken to heart by thousands of people who might otherwise have never even heard of Chanukah.
- Hate prevailed for a short time for as long as it took the perpetrator to hatch the plan and execute it – but it was dramatically outlived by the power of love.
- In America, Jews have the right to be Jewish and to celebrate their traditions, whether privately around their tables, semi-publicly at their windows looking out onto the street, or in full view in the public square.

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The mission of Temple Beth David is to provide an environment where the concepts of community prayer, education, and service to the greater Jewish community are provided within the context of Conservative Judaism. We take pride in being a friendly, participatory, egalitarian community, welcoming all to be a part of our synagogue family.

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As the ADL is quick to remind us, our current times are among the darkest in American history in terms of the incidence and ubiquity of antisemitism. Nevertheless, we need to allow Chanukah this year to remind us about our obligation as Jews to create light and to do what is necessary to banish darkness, even when darkness is a force of nature. The audacity of the Macabees, a fringe force who journeyed from their homes in Modi'in up to Jerusalem in order to overthrow a foreign occupier, and their SUCCESS, inspires us to fully embrace this opportunity to be as Jewish as we want and need to be, with the assurance that love and light will triumph.

Chag Urim Sameach - a very happy Festival of Lights,

N lichael

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All in the Family

December Birthdays

- Lori Davis Adele Gan Stanley Schaffer Phil Katzman Sharon Alva Fay Neuberg Sue Drexler Neil Hyman Scott Davis Merrie Franklin Daniel Shapiro
- December 2 December 4 December 4 December 11 December 20 December 27 December 27 December 29 December 31 December 31



Kiddush News

What food or foods do you associate with each week's parashah? Contact Alison Helms, kiddush coordinator, at alison.helms@gmail.com, and she will try to include those foods in the kiddush/take home treats for that Shabbat. Please consider sponsoring a treat at \$18 or cholent at \$36 in honor of a good news event!



The next <u>Temple Beth David Board of Trustee Meeting</u> will be held on Tuesday, **December 13 at 7:00 pm** via Zoom. All temple members are invited to attend or you may submit your questions or concerns in advance of the meeting for consideration by the board of trustees. Board member names are listed on the last page of this bulletin. For more information on how to attend the meeting, please contact the temple office at 585-266-3223.



Shabbat Service will be held in the Temple Beth El Chapel on Saturday, December 17 at 9:30 am

Take Home Treats

If you would like to help with take home treats distributed after Shabbat service each week or wish to sponsor "Take Home Treats" in honor of a good news event, please contact the temple office or speak with Alison Helms (her contact information is listed in the temple directory).

Riverside Cemetery Plots are available to purchase from

Temple Beth David

at reduced temple member rates for Jewish burials in adherence to Temple Beth David ritual requirements. For questions regarding purchase, contact the temple office. For questions pertaining to Jewish burial ritual requirements, contact Rabbi Silbert.





Dear Congregants,

What a (nearly) six months it has been. It's been an honor to serve as President since June and I know that our leadership for the coming years will provide great stewardship for our beloved congregation. Congratulations to our incoming officers and board members. And thank you to all of our Board of Trustees for their dedication and work.

Our annual meeting was well attended both in-person and on Zoom. We completed some very important business including:

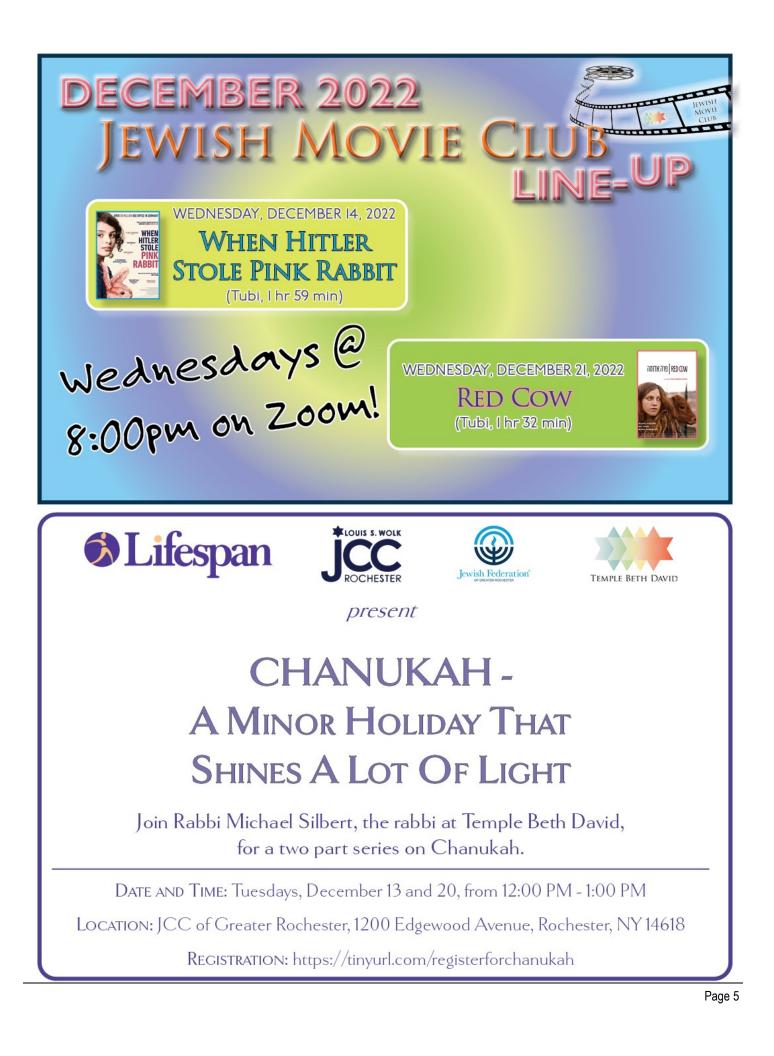
- Thank you to VP, Administration Lewis Rothberg and to VP, Ritual Ron Brandwein for their reports.
- Approval of our budget. Thank you to current VP, Finance Phil Katzman who prepared the budget.
- Election of officers and members of the Board of Trustees. Thank you to Ron Brandwein and Scott Davis who developed the slate of nominees.
- Our bylaws update is progressing. Thank you to all who submitted comments. Not every comment or edit will be included though ALL have been considered. In early 2023 you will receive more information about finalizing this process.
- We presented a motion seeking approval for a move, as tenants, to Temple Beth El. We have had several discussions with key people at TBE and all understand our hopes and our concerns. Please keep in mind that this move is as tenants as we currently are.

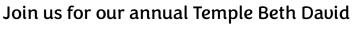
During my previous terms as president, I often said "We will honor and respect our history, but we cannot be handcuffed by it." We must look forward.

I know that change is difficult, and I also know it's inevitable. I look at change as an opportunity for positive outcomes. Why? Because we would not be likely to consider change if there wasn't a problem to solve. A key factor is accessibility. And future opportunities for collaboration can be considered.

Here's to a vibrant future and wishing you a Happy Chanukah and amazing 2023.

Helen





Temple Beth David

Chanukah Party

Thursday, December 22 at 5:00 PM in our Social Hall Latkes, desserts, singing and more! Please bring a non-perishable food item for the Brighton Food Cupboard RSVP to the temple office by December 15 585-266-3223 or office@tbdrochester.org

December Yahrzeits

December 1 Annette Applebaum Abraham Fishman*

December 2 Pauline Markowitz

December 4

Belle Fogelman Myrna Lutzky

December 5 Bany Cohen Lee Rosenthal

December 6 Mildred Levy **December 7** Eli Rothstein Shirley T. Schnidman*

December 10 Ruth Lederer

December 12 Max Roth

December 13 Marie Goldwasser Max Rosenthal

December 15 Sara Gorelick December 16 Ira Kinel

December 17 Leonard Cohen

December 19 Rosalie Bloom Laurence Skopitz*

December 20 Nathan Goldwasser

December 22 Dora Lutzky

December 23 Wilma Meyers December 24 Sheldon Harris*

December 26 Ben Drexler Fajwel Kinel* Harry Vine

December 28 Robert N. Herman

December 29 Lillian Mountain

December 31 Mac Gan Elsie Perlman

*Memorial plaque on display in the Temple Beth David sanctuary. The yahrzeit date that appears above is the date of observance using the secular calendar. These dates match those of the Hebrew calendar for the actual date of death.

to a Friend or Loved One!
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