



Hakol

THE VOICE OF THE
PELHAM JEWISH CENTER
December 2018
5779 Kislev / Tevet



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Upcoming PJC Activities & Events

December

- 1** -- Women's Group/ 1pm
- 9** -- Community Hanukkah Celebration/ 4pm
- 11** -- Soup Kitchen/ 4:30pm
- 13** -- Board Meeting/ 7pm
- 15** -- Open Book/ 10:30am
- 16** -- Book Group/ 11:30am
- 25** -- Christmas Day/Offices Closed

January

- 1** -- New Year's Day/ Office Closed
- 8** -- Soup Kitchen/ 4:30pm
- 10** -- Board Meeting/ 7pm
- 12** -- Women's Group/

Rabbi Salzberg's Message

We are all familiar with the classic story of the miracle of the oil on Chanukkah: The victorious Maccabees

returned to Jerusalem and found only enough oil to light the menorah in the Temple for a single day. Nonetheless, they lit the menorah and, miraculously, the oil lasted for eight days.

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (grandfather of the well-known 20th century American rabbi, Joseph B. Soloveitchik) focused his attention on the first moment when the Maccabees returned to the Temple. He imagined their reaction when they found the chaos and all of the bottles of oil broken or defiled.

Nonetheless, he points to their determination to search the Temple to find pure oil that could be used to light the Menorah. In spite of the seemingly hopelessness of the search, they were determined to fulfill a mitzvah - and we celebrate that determination on the



they were determined to fulfill a mitzvah – and we celebrate that determination on the first night of Chanukkah.

This year, Rabbi Soloveitchik's insight has led me to connect with this story in a new way. I am similarly moved by the determination of the Maccabees to rededicate the Temple. However, I am most in awe of their actions after they find the oil, not their decision to search for it.

While their search was successful, they only found a small jar of oil and certainly knew that it would not be sufficient. In light of that, I am amazed that the Maccabees lit the menorah at all. They couldn't have known - or even hoped - that the oil would last for eight days, why would they even bother to try?

We have all experienced this situation. We know that something needs doing, but we also know that we don't have the resources to see the task through to completion. It would be crazy to begin a project knowing that we will be forced to leave it unfinished halfway through. Better not to try at all.

To me, what amazes me about this story of Chanukkah is not that the oil lasted, but that the Maccabees lit the menorah knowing that what they did would not be enough. They knew that on the second day the oil would burn out and the Temple would be left in darkness. Nevertheless, they acted out of hope and faith that their actions had meaning and that they would make a difference. This shift in perspective moves the miracle from the oil to the Maccabees themselves.

The Maccabees were foreshadowing the famous teaching in Pirkei Avot:

הוֹאִהוּ אֹמְרִים, לֹא עֲלֵיךְ הַמְּלָאכָה לְגַמְרָהּ, וְלֹא אֶתְהַבְּחוּרֶיךָ לְבִטּוּלַמְּוֵנָהּ.
[Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.

They couldn't control whether or not the Menorah would remain lit for the full eight days. But that did not free them from the responsibility to light it while they were able. Their commitment to their faith and to their community is the miracle that I find most compelling this Chanukkah.

Miraculously, they lit the menorah and then the oil lasted for eight days.

Miracles like this can occur when we refuse to give up hope, when we act in the belief that we have the ability to improve the world around us.

Happy Chanukkah!

Thank you,
Rabbi Alex Salzberg

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- [12 -- Women's Group/ 1pm](#)
- [13 -- Blood Drive/ 9am-1pm](#)
- [13 -- Book Group/ 11:30am](#)
- [21 -- MLK Day/Offices Closed](#)
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Education Director's Message



עַל הַנְּסִים וְעַל הַפְּרָקָן וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַנְּפִלְאוֹת וְעַל הַנְּחֻמוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזְמַן הַזֶּה."

Al hanissim, v'al hapurkan, v'al hag'vurot v'al hat'tshuot v'al hamilchamot sh'asita lavoteinu bayamim hahem baz'man hazeh.

"We thank You for the miracles, for the redemption, for the mighty deeds, for the saving acts, and for the wonders which You have wrought for our ancestors in those days, at this time".



It is not by chance that the holidays of Thanksgiving and Hanukkah happen in proximity to each other. In truth, in Jewish tradition, all holidays are moments of thanksgiving. We, the Jewish people, are called in the name of gratitude: the word Yehudi (Jewish) comes from the name Yehuda, the fourth son of Jacob. When Leah, our ancestor mom, gave birth to her fourth son, she named him Yehuda as she thanked G-d for blessing her with another son. Therefore, the Hebrew root of the name "Yehuda"(Jew), "Yehudim"(Jews), is the same root as for the word for "Thank you" in Hebrew, "Todah". Indeed, Thanksgiving in Hebrew is called "Chag Ha'hodaya". Therefore we, the Jewish people, are committed to be thankful and acknowledge the goodness around us in our

lives, our identity as a nation is one of gratitude.

The Holiday of Hanukkah celebrates the miracle of keeping Judaism alive, overcoming immense challenges. We celebrate the victory of the few against the many, the survival of our Torah and its values against the hellenistic idolatry, that happened long time ago, in 164 BCE.

Hanukkah is also the holiday of the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Conversely, although in Judaism we celebrate most holidays in our modern Temples, in our synagogues, during Hanukkah we are all commended to celebrate the holiday at home. From the Talmud we learn that every person must light their own candle, or their own Hanukkah Menorah - also called "Hanukiah". Having this holiday's tradition turn into a personal moment of thanksgiving, we are then enabled to face and reflect on our own life's miracles, past, present and...future. Yes, future miracles. By keeping the lights of Judaism lit in our personal Hanukiah, we are lighting up the future of Judaism. And here comes another mitzvah for Hanukkah - not only each one of us is commanded to light a candle in our home, we are also commanded to advertise the Hanukkah miracle, by placing the Hanukiah near a window facing the street. By doing so, we are publicizing the gratitude, the thankfulness, and making sure it will continue to be an integral part of what it means to be Jewish and do Judaism in the world. By placing the Hanukiah outwards we are making our internal gratitude become part of the communal space. We are filling the world with gratitude and thanksgiving. We are reminding the world and ourselves at the same time that kindness is choosing love over hate, light over darkness and compassion over judgement.

This year, at the Learning Center, we are exploring kindness as our main theme. We are trying to mend the brokenness in the world by bringing the special light of kindness into our lives and the lives of others. Students are learning what does it mean to be "a Mensch" in our relationships with each other and each class is collecting tzedakah money to donate to a charity by the end of the year. Please do not forget to send pocket money with your child so our students will be able to make a difference in someone's life by donating their tzedakah collection to a philanthropic organization of their choice.

After the tragic events in Pittsburgh, our students and families wanted responded to evil with love and kindness. Lead by volunteers such as Judy Shampanier Bowen, Liz Tzetzto, Mimi Steinberg, Melissa Kagan, Bernie Steinberg, and Arielle Spira-Cohen, we baked cookies for the Open Arms Men Shelter in White Plains, donated children's clothes to Kid's Kloset in White Plains, and put together 36 "Soup in a Jar" kits that were donated to homebound seniors through Project Hope from the Bronx JCC. Thank you to all LC families who participated and donated their time to bring light into the world.

On that same day, 12 Bnei Mitzvah families got together with Rabbi Salzberg. The students and their parents discussed the meaning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. When we asked the teens to write down in one word why were they celebrating their bnei mitzvah, here are some of their answers: "Torah, identity, teach and learn, community, connection, heritage, perseverance, prove, understand". From the Jewish educator standpoint, hearing those responses from Bnei Mitzvah lights up the future of Judaism. Every time I see one of our students celebrate their Bar/Bat Mitzvah with their families here at the PJC, I see the victory of the light against the darkness, the promise of the survival of our people coming out in the voices of these young teenagers as they commit to belong to our milenar tradition.

On that note, it's time to publicize our Learning Center miracles. We would like to give a big shout out to our incredible cohort of madrichim, student aides, who come to school and volunteer their time to help younger students learn about Judaism: Sarah Grossmann, Sara Almo, Emma Almo, Rebecca Ploski, Zach Leonard, Madison Cohen, Ellie Zusin, Annie Zusin, Brian Jablowsky, Rachel Lief and Eliana Herzog. These are the teens who chose to continue their own Jewish Journeys by giving back to our community and joining our Hebrew High School as well. Our madrichim, role models in our classrooms, create a big-brother/sister relationship with our younger students which has long lasting positive effects on both sides. This powerful special connection between young adults and children is one of the best kept secrets of Judaism; it is imbued in the Hebrew word masoret, which means, transmission, from one generation to the other, midor ledor. Our students grow up feeling we are all a big mishpuche, a large family, the PJC community, standing together and caring for each other.



There are many more little and large miracles happening around us every day; I invite each and every one of you in our larger Kehilah (Community) to publicize your small and big miracles, as we all together search for the lights that will push away the darkness. Please email or text me if you would like to share your personal miracle, so we can all grow together in a world of thankfulness and appreciation for the miracles of life, as that is what Judaism is all about.

Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Hanukkah

Ana Turkienicz
Education Director

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Letter from Board President Leah Leonard

"Why has light been such a favorite symbol of God? Perhaps because light itself cannot be seen. We become aware of its presence when it enables us to see other things. Similarly, we cannot see God, but we become aware of God's presence when we see the beauty of the world, when we experience love and the goodness of our fellow human beings" (*Etz Hayim Commentary*, p. 503). This month we light the first Hanukkah candle on December 2nd, ushering in the beginning of the Festival of Lights. December is a long month, often feeling like the darkest. How wonderful that we fill our homes with the light of our Hanukkah to warm our days and our spirit.

Following the recent horrific attack on a Pittsburgh synagogue, our days and spirits were darkened. We struggled to come to terms with the actions of the attacker and believe anyone could be capable of such hatred and bigotry. In the days following we planned a memorial service at the PJC, and the next week, took part in the nationwide "Show Up For Shabbat" inviting Jews & non-Jews alike to come together in a show of solidarity and support in their local synagogue.

During these dark days, I was personally reminded of the light from members of our extended local community. The outpouring of our neighbors & friends "showing up" and being present to demonstrate their support was consistent and widespread. I found such comfort and reassurance in the unexpected number of community members who joined us the day after for our memorial service at the PJC, including most of our local clergy. One neighbor and longtime school board member thanked us for planning the service and giving people a place to gather, connect, and grieve.

The following week, the solidarity "Show Up For Shabbat" was further testament to the power of love over hatred and our neighbors demonstrating the importance of the PJC in our community. On each of these days our full sanctuary was open to accommodate the large turnout. It was not only our own congregants who "showed up" but many members of our surrounding communities. One of our local clergy asked if we would have childcare available so he could participate. On Shabbat morning, our Pelham Town Supervisor arrived shortly after the start of the service, sitting in the front row through the concluding words of *Adon Alom*.

Last month in our November Hakol issue, a heartfelt and meaningful letter from one of our neighbors was shared. Our neighbor wrote to us "in the spirit of love, solidarity, and friendship", saying "our family is here for you, and we are around the corner" and "sending all of their love." In this Hakol issue we have reprinted two homemade cards, received from a neighbor family, along with a thoughtful orchid plant. The children's cards expressed "we are all one family" and "we don't believe in hate...we want you to feel supported...we're sad about what happened and want you to feel safe and secure."

Following the solidarity Shabbat, a letter was received from another neighbor thanking us for "the great privilege of attending your Sabbath service...we came to show you that you are not alone. We are your neighbors and your friends. One of our mutual commandments says we must love you as ourselves and so we do...we felt so much love in your building; you have a wonderful and loving group."

By noon on the day of the attack, officers from the Pelham Manor Police Department had been dispatched to the PJC and were parked on Esplanade keeping watch over our space and congregants. In the days to follow, they have been a consistent presence during services and LC class time. Chief Carpenter attended our memorial service, and along with Lt. Atkins and Det Carroll, have met with us and presented at our most recent Board meeting. We are grateful for their ongoing presence and our dedicated partner to help us navigate during this unsettling time.

How fortunate are our PJC congregants to be shown "the love and the goodness of our fellow human beings" directly by our community members in the aftermath of such an atrocious act. May we continue to feel the light in our lives by the kindhearted actions and words of those around us, especially when we need it the most.

Wishing you & your families much joy & light this Hanukkah season!

Chag Hanukkah Sameach,
Leah

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Letter From the House Committee Chair Dan Kushnick

Did you know that members of the Pelham Jewish Center are invited to attend the monthly Board meetings? Board meeting dates appear on the PJC website calendar.

Dan Kushnick discusses the new Security counsel ...

It is sad that the House update has to focus on security but this is the reality of our world today. Security has been an important consideration for me since I took over the House board position. After attending a security briefing before the High Holidays, from the Westchester Jewish Council, it became more crucial. Beyond scheduling the normal High Holiday security detail, I initiated conversations, with the Pelham Manor Police, about a security plan and precautions we could take as a community.

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Since the attack in Pittsburgh these concerns and discussions have taken on a more critical tone. Police Chief Carpenter, Lieutenant Atkins and Detective Carroll met with Darren Lee, Leah Leonard and myself to discuss the kinds of security coverage we can reasonably expect from a police force of Pelham Manor's size. We spoke of the need for a security plan that makes sense for our community.

A security liaison from the Westchester Jewish Council met with me and walked the grounds, checked the interior space and spoke with staff about easy security improvements and increasing our awareness of potential security issues. A number of these items have been implemented.

Detective Carroll was asked to address the concerns of the entire Board at our November meeting. Since these meetings, Darren Lee has volunteered to chair a security committee that will focus on a security plan. The first meeting of this committee was attended by a dozen volunteers committed to the safety and security of the Pelham Jewish Center. This committee will explore a variety of options including improvements to the physical plant, such as improved lighting outside, adding security locks and doors to the front entrance as well as exploring more comprehensive options.

Committee members will reach out to the Pelham Manor Fire Department to upgrade our fire drill and evacuation plans for the Learning Center as well as for PJC staff. We will develop security plans with local law enforcement related to active attack drills and other general precautions including the PJC's online presence.

As these security concerns are researched, we will face bigger questions involving the entire PJC community. Questions that will weigh the security of our congregants with the culture and openness that we have prided ourselves on since the establishment of the Pelham Jewish Center.

The board will continue to provide updates regarding security improvements and plans as they develop. The security of our community will require the efforts of all of us and cannot be the sole responsibility of those that volunteered to join the Security Committee. We will need people to step up in various capacities to help us take security from the planning stages to its implementation phase.

If you have any concerns or ideas please feel free to contact Darren Lee at copyusany@aol.com or myself at dkushnick@yahoo.com and we will see how to address them.

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Interfaith Thanksgiving Address

Good afternoon and welcome to the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service sponsored by the Pelham Interfaith Council.

I am Judy Cooper, a parishoner at OLPH-St. Catharine's. However, as a member of the Pelham Interfaith Council I represent the Pelham Jewish Center. Why? Well, my husband, Len, is Jewish and has been an active member of the PJC for 40 years. We both attend Shabbat services regularly and count ourselves very fortunate to belong to such a vibrant and caring religious community. So we in the Cooper Family have our own interfaith group!

But the Pelham Interfaith Council is far broader than this. Each of the clergy from the various houses of worship in our town participate in the Council along with lay representatives from these same houses of worship. We seek to learn about other faiths and hope to bring the broader Pelham community ideas on how to celebrate the similarities and differences of our religious backgrounds.

With the devastating events that occurred in Pittsburgh and before that at a South Carolina Church, it is all the more important for us to join as a community in this celebration of Thanksgiving to help eradicate such evil and promote inclusiveness.

Thank you again for joining us, and how fortunate we are to share this day in Pelham among friends.



Save the Date: PJC Gala

The PJC annual Gala will be on Saturday, March 9, 2019.

There will be dinners at Congregant Homes, followed by a reception & a performance by the Keskeset acapella group.

More details to come, looking forward to seeing you all there!

Share a Simcha!

simcha!

"Share a Simcha" allows congregants to share their news with our PJC community. Please submit news about family members -- engagements, births, job updates, kid achievements, community acknowledgements and any other milestones to [Jacqui Stein](#). This will continue to be a regular *Hakol*

feature, so keep your news and updates coming!

- Wishing *Mazel* to Barry & Jill Goldenberg on the wedding of their daughter, Melissa to Brett Wishnia on November 10th in Tarrytown, NY.
- Mazel tov to Ginny Herron Lanoil on the birth of her granddaughter, June Elora Edelman, and mazel tov as well to the proud parents!

Tributes & Donations



Make Tributes & Donations [ONLINE!](#)

Donations to the PJC from...

- Patricia & Maria Bouboulis, in memory of Norman Bloom
- Max & Sidney Fink, in memory of their parents -- Julius & Bronia -- founding members of the PJC
- David Haft & Jacqueline Schachter, in memory of David's father, Abraham Haft
- Marshall & Naomi Jaffe, in honor of Rebecca Ploski, on the occasion of her *Bat Mitzvah*
- Adam & Kate Lauzar, in honor of Barry & Jill Goldenberg, on the occasion of the marriage of their daughter - Melissa -- to Brett Wishnia
- Ruby Vogelfanger, in honor of Naomi & Marshall Jaffe

Donations to the PJC Learning Center from...

- Hal & Audrey Beerman, 6 new children's headphone sets, for learning Hebrew

Donations to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund from...

- Daniel Perkis & Eleanor Einzig, in memory of Dan's sister, Marion Last
- Barbara Saunders-Adams, in memory of her father, Charles Saunders

At any time, if you wish to pay by check, please make it payable to "**The Pelham Jewish Center**" and mail it to

our bookkeeping firm at: The Pelham Jewish Center, P.O. Box 418, Montvale, NJ 07645.

All donations to the **Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**, at any time throughout the year, should be made payable to **"The Pelham Jewish Center -- Rabbi's Discretionary Fund"** and mailed directly **to Julia Coss at the PJC office**.

Thank you!

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