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THE **JEWISH VOICE** OF DELAWARE  
& THE BRANDYWINE VALLEY

DECEMBER 2025



**Not by Might, Not by Power:  
The Spirit of Chanukah**

**Faith, Connection, and Hope:  
How a Piece of Jewelry Could  
Change Your Life**

**The Pawsitively Jewish  
2026 Calendar**

# CHANUKAH

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**Editors Note:** Chanukah! Hanukkah! Hannukah!  
Each instance of the word in this issue reflects the  
spelling used by each respective agency or author.

**DECEMBER 2025**

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JEWISH  
**LIVING**  
DELAWARE

**20**

## Not by Might, Not by Power: The Spirit of Chanukah

"Mistaken as the Jewish Christmas because it takes place in the winter and is celebrated with lights, Chanukah commemorates the victory of a group of Jews—the Hasmoneans, sometimes called the Maccabees—over the Assyrian Greeks more than two thousand years ago." Rabbi Yair Robinson shares the context of the holiday and what we might learn from conflict.



**22**

## Faith, Connection, and Hope: How a Piece of Jewelry Could Change Your Life

The Honest Jeweler is a faith-rooted jewelry brand that blends, beauty, meaning, and spiritual grounding. Read on for an exclusive interview with founder Rachel Samani.



**26**

## The Pawsitively Jewish 2026 Calendar

Back again in 2026! The Pawsitively Jewish 2026 Calendar is a 12-month calendar featuring 12 super-cute dogs celebrating Jewish holidays and sporting Jewish-themed clothing and/or accessories, all supporting a great cause. The creators, based just outside of Delaware in Chester County, are excited to share this year's calendar and the organization they are supporting.



## Columns

### **10** **Synagogue News: A Celebration of Light**

Join Adas Kodesh Shel Emeth for the 140th Anniversary celebration on Sunday, December 21. The afternoon will feature Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin, with a benediction from Rabbi Albert E. Gabbai, and music from Ezekiel's Wheels Klezmer Band

### **14** **In Finance: 2025 Yearend Tax Savings and Charitable Giving Strategies**

As Chanukah—and the end of the year—approaches, many of us begin to think of how we might give to those less fortunate than ourselves. Retired Tax Director Jordon Rosen offers some insight into how one might approach charitable giving with efficiency.

### **30** **Book Review: An Eight Star Read for the Eight Nights of Hanukkah**

Looking for a light and funny read this holiday season? Give Jean Meltzer's *The Eight Heartbreaks of Hanukkah* a try! Phili Miller shares her review of the author's latest Jewish rom-com.

### **Comm.Unity**

**4**

### **JCRC**

**6**

### **HEC**

**8**

### **Synagogue News**

**10**

### **Agencies**

**12**

### **In Poetry**

**16**

### **Rabbis' Voices**

**18**

### **In Delaware**

**28**

### **Food For Thought**

**32**

### **Crossword Puzzle**

**36**

### **Obituaries**

**38**

## COVER IMAGE

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# Eight Days and Nights — Eight Community Lights

**The Hanukkah story tells how a small amount of oil lasted eight days, a miracle. During this time of year, we reflect and rededicate ourselves to ensuring the flame of our people will continue to burn bright.**



Photo source: AdobeStock.com

**W**e light a candle on the first night of Hanukkah for **Einstein Day**—the only Jewish day school in Delaware—fostering inquisitive learners, critical thinkers, and dynamic leaders.

On the second night of Hanukkah, we light a candle for the **Siegel JCC** and their **Early Childhood Center**, who nurture Jewish belonging and encourage social, physical, and intellectual growth in an environment guided by Jewish values and culture.

We light a candle on the third night of Hanukkah for **Jewish Family Services of Delaware**, who provide critical care management and community education, guided by Jewish values, to strengthen the well-being of the individual, family, and community.

On the fourth night of Hanukkah, we light a candle for **Kutz Senior Living Campus** and the **KSLC Auxiliary**, who recognize that growing older is a special time in life. They provide a continuum of care with sensitivity and compassion steeped in Jewish tradition and values.

We light a candle on the fifth night of Hanukkah for the **University of Delaware Hillel** and **UD Chabad**, who pave the way for students to have meaningful Jewish experiences. UD Hillel and UD Chabad serve as focal points of Jewish life on campus.

On the sixth night of Hanukkah, we light a candle for Israel and our overseas partners, the **Jewish Agency for Israel**,

including our **Partnership2Gether (P2G)** sister city in Mitzpe Ramon; the **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)**; **World ORT**; and **Leket Israel (Food Bank)**.

We light a candle on the seventh night of Hanukkah for our synagogues throughout the First State—**Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth**, **Chabad Center of Delaware**, **Chabad of Southern Delaware**, **Congregation Beth Emeth**, **Congregation Beth Shalom**, **Congregation Beth Sholom of Dover**, **Seaside Jewish Community**, **Temple Beth El**, and our **Community Havurahs**.

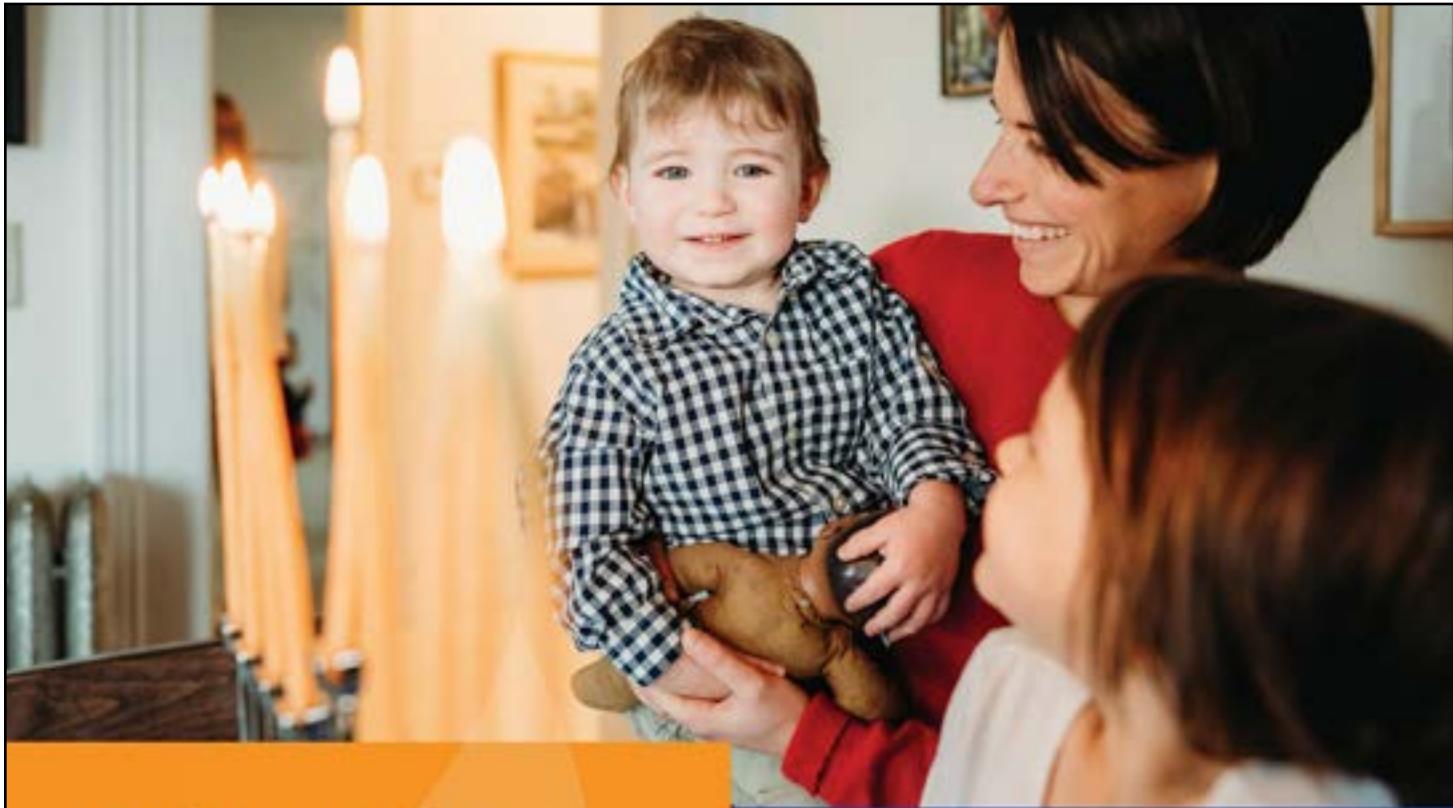
And, on the eighth night of Hanukkah, we light a candle for a strong **Annual Campaign** to meet today's needs and creating a **Jewish Legacy** that ensures our Jewish future.

The impact of **Jewish Federation of Delaware** is extraordinary. Together with our community-wide network of organizations we help care for people in need, nurture and sustain the Jewish community, and respond to emergencies here in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, in Israel, and around the world.

**Thanks to your continued and generous support,  
We Grow Stronger TOGETHER As One.**

*Chag Sameach,*

The Officers, Board of Directors, and staff of the Jewish Federation of Delaware.



## Join us in Illuminating the Future

As you celebrate the Festival of Lights, honor the spirit of Hanukkah by making a legacy commitment and leave a lasting impact on generations to come.



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With a legacy gift, you ensure that the warmth of Hanukkah continues to spread its glow for future generations.

It's easier than you think! Contact Marla Levy, Endowment Manager, [Marla@ShalomDel.org](mailto:Marla@ShalomDel.org); 302.427.2100 ext. 820 to learn how to create your legacy.

It's not just charity, it's continuity. It's love made permanent.

# Joy and Tears: Rejoicing at the Return of the Hostages

BY **RABBI ELLEN BERNHARDT**, Jewish Community Relations Committee Director and Community Chaplain



Photo source: Freepik.com

**A**fter two long and torturous years, we weep with joy and relief at the news that the Israeli hostages have finally been released from their hell and are now back in Israel with their families. For so long, our hearts have ached for them—for the innocent men, women, and children who were taken from their homes and lives on that dark day, October 7th, when Hamas brutally attacked Israel. That horrific day left deep scars across the nation and the Jewish world, claiming so many precious lives and shattering so many families.

In the endless months that followed, hope flickered between despair and prayer. We carried their names, their faces, their stories in our hearts, refusing to forget. Families held vigils, communities gathered in unity, and people across the world prayed for their safety and return. Those yellow ribbons, the necklaces with their names, and the empty chairs at our tables were a constant reminder that we must not rest until they are all home—dead or alive. Each day that passed without news was another day of anguish—a wound that refused to heal.

And now, after so much pain and waiting, we rejoice. We rejoice for the lives that have been spared, for the arms of parents once again wrapped around their children, for the embraces that have been too long delayed. We rejoice that the hostages are finally free, back among their people, no longer hidden in the darkness of captivity. Now, we wait until all the bodies of the murdered hostages are returned.

**May the  
light of this  
moment  
guide us  
forward—  
from  
sorrow to  
hope, from  
captivity to  
freedom,  
from war to  
peace for the  
entire world.**

Yet this joy is not without tears. So many did not live to see this day. So many families will never be made whole again. There is loss and devastation throughout the region. The grief of loss mingles with the gladness of return, reminding us how fragile peace is—and how sacred life remains.

As we celebrate this long-awaited moment, our prayers turn toward peace. May this release be a first step toward healing, understanding, and an end to bloodshed. May the people of Israel, Gaza, and all who long for safety and freedom, find comfort in each other and in God's promise of renewal. May the leaders in the region come together to forge a lasting peace between all nations in the region.



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Download an application or email your request to: [Scholarships@ShalomDel.org](mailto:Scholarships@ShalomDel.org)



Scholarships are overseen by the Jewish Fund for the Future Grants Committee. Application deadlines vary by scholarship.

# A Small Flicker of Hope

BY RACHEL LEE GAROFOLO,

Freelance Contributor with the Halina Wind Preston Holocaust Education Committee



In my darkest moments I thought I would never climb out of the bottomless chasm of grief and addiction into which I tumbled. Lost in my own echoes in a sunless pit of despair, I blindly felt around me for tools I could not or would not grasp that I so desperately needed to fight my way back to life.

Yet, there was always something within me that told me not all was lost. One day, a flicker of light showed like a beacon, and I took hold, clawing my way out of my well of sorrow. As I trudged uphill, the flicker became a flame of desire that became a firestorm of purpose.

Hope is at the core of Jewish identity. Judaism inspires me for its “abundant reservoir of hope” (David Arnow, *Choosing Hope: The Heritage of Judaism*); the belief that G-d will not abandon Jews is what I know in my soul to be true when I struggle. *Tikvah*, hope, is faith in the unseen, is an unwavering quiet in

suffering’s noise, is a strong cord when the Nazis sought to unravel the world.

The Nazis weaponized hope, turning trust into a tool of manipulation. Through their innumerable lies, they deceived Jews and engaged in psychological warfare, suppressed resistance, and facilitated genocide. The Nazis system was to crush the human spirit and make prisoners believe there was no future where they were free, thereby exterminating their will to live.

In the concentration camps, hope was both a danger and a necessity. Prisoners held onto hope: they would live one more day, the Allies would eventually arrive, and they would see their family again. Prisoners lived day to day hoping the next would bring freedom. Hope was human interaction—sharing the meager scraps they had, comforting each other, and praying together. Despite the atrocious and unthinkable horrors they lived through while in the camps, the

prisoner’s hope wasn’t gone, only hidden. “Hope doesn’t obscure or whitewash reality. Hope tells us that life is full of darkness and suffering—and yet if we survive today, tomorrow we’ll be free.” (*Holocaust survivor Edith Eger, PhD*).

Hope means having trust in yourself, in others, and in a power greater than yourself. “To be a Jew is to be an agent of hope in a world serially threatened by despair.” (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks). In recovery from addiction, the phrase “sunlight of the spirit” describes reconnection or the awakening of the soul after despair; it’s also the experience of that hope realized—when light dispels the shadows that gripped you and your true self shines again. Jewish hope isn’t fragile; it has survived Egypt, the Holocaust, and ongoing antisemitism—and still speaks. While the Nazis sought to destroy Jews’ hope, they couldn’t kill it. Their exploitation of it became the reason the Jewish people still live—and remember.



*“The flicker doesn’t erase the night,  
but it gives you enough vision to take the next step.  
And sometimes, that’s all hope really is—  
a fragile spark that survives long enough to become a flame.”*

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JEWISH LIFE

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We wish you a  
*joyous*

*Chanukah*



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# A CELEBRATION OF LIGHT

## AKSE Looks to the Future as It Caps a Year of Celebrating the Past

BY **DAVID EPSTEIN**, Co-President of Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth

For most of the year-long celebration of our 140th anniversary, Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth has reveled in memories and history. Our culminating event, on Sunday, December 21 at the Siegel JCC, will focus on the future. Our featured speaker, Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin, will address the topic "Rebuilding Our People: The Future of American Judaism." We invite the entire Jewish community to participate.

This is an opportunity to step back, and to step up. American Judaism stands

at a moment of reckoning—not a crisis of survival, but of purpose. How can the Jewish community rediscover its calling to be a people of repair? Rabbi Salkin will consider how the Jewish community can become a center of meaning, how learning can lead to conscience, and how Jewish life can once again serve as a light not only to the nations, but to itself. In the language of our time, how do we reboot American Judaism?

Rabbi Salkin, a noted writer, author, and speaker, is one of American Judaism's most prolific and frequently quoted rabbis. His column, "Martini Judaism: For Those Who Want to Be Shaken and Stirred," published by the Religion News Service, has won several awards both as a column and as a podcast. He has been a commentator on CNN and the BBC, and his essays have appeared in The Washington Post, Commentary, The Wall Street Journal, Tablet, and Forward.

Widely regarded as one of the most thoughtful and provocative voices in contemporary Jewish life, Rabbi Salkin is the author of 12 books on such diverse topics as *b'nai mitzvah*, masculinity, Israel, interfaith relations, the spirituality of career, and Judaism as counterculture. His post-October 7 book *Tikkun Ha'Am / Repairing Our People: Israel and the Crisis of Liberal Judaism* will have special relevance to his talk.



Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin  
Photo provided by Rabbi Salkin



The First Synagogue in the First State

The event program will include a light reception, Hanukkah and Klezmer music by musicians from the Ezekiel's Wheels Klezmer Band, and a short reminiscence by Dr. Howard Berlin, author of 35 books and many articles and part of a multi-generational AKSE family. A Q&A session will follow Rabbi Salkin's presentation. The event will culminate with a communal menorah lighting for the eighth day of Hanukkah, delicious desserts, and some more music.

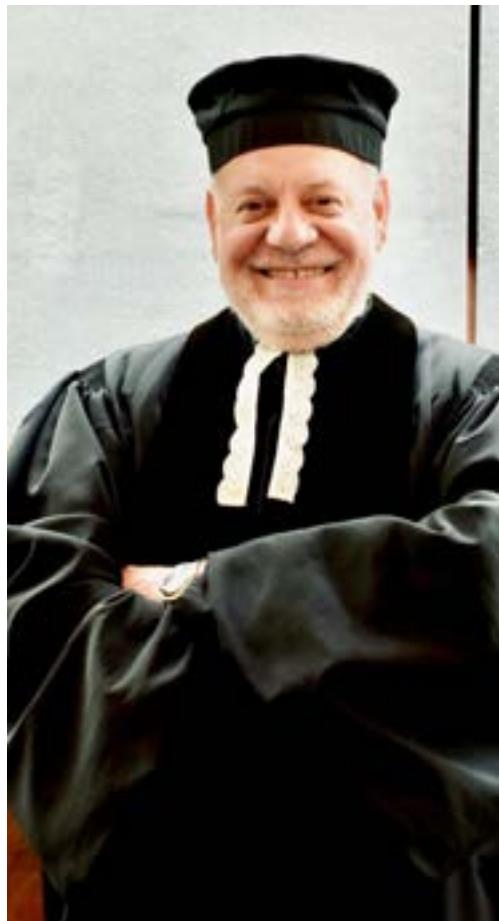
We are honored that Rabbi Albert E. (Abraham) Gabbai will deliver a benediction to close the formal portion of the event. He is the Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Mikveh Israel, a Sephardic congregation in Philadelphia founded in 1740. Born in Egypt, he was imprisoned there for three years following the Six Day War. After immigrating to the US, he studied at Yeshiva University in New York City and the Shehebar Sephardic Center in Jerusalem. Rabbi Gabbai served as Rabbi of Mikveh Israel for 35 years.

There is no charge to attend the event, but registration is required. Join us for a fun and meaningful celebration of AKSE, a beacon of light for our Jewish community for the past 140 years, and of the opportunity for a bright Jewish future. We hope to see you there!



Ezekiel's Wheels Klezmer Band

Photo Provided by the band



Rabbi Albert Gabbai  
Photo provided by Rabbi Gabbai

### AKSE 140 FINALE EVENT

Sunday, December 21

12–1:15 PM Reception and Music

1:15–2:45 PM Program

2:45–3:30 PM Menorah Lighting, Dessert and Music

Siegel JCC

**Free, but registration is required by December 15 at**  
<https://akse.wufoo.com/forms/akse-140-finale> or by  
contacting the AKSE office at 302-762-2705 or office@AKSE.org

# Happy Hanukkah!



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Laughter & Light*



Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth  
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# Brick by Brick:

## Building the Jewish Future

BY **SARA RUBINFELD**, Development Manager at Hillel at University of Delaware

Under a stunning autumn sky, a diverse group of students, board members, donors, staff, and the Delaware Jewish community came together to celebrate the groundbreaking of Hillel at the University of Delaware's long-anticipated expansion. Since 2020, the number of Jewish Blue Hens has surged, with over 2,250 Jewish students—roughly 13% of the student body—now calling UD home.

In response to this growing community, the visionary members of the Hillel at UD Board of Directors, supported by dedicated long-term donors, initiated a capital campaign to bring a new 18,000-square-foot facility to life at the University of Delaware. The groundbreaking ceremony marked a significant milestone in the "Building the Jewish Future" campaign, which has successfully raised \$9.5 million toward its \$12 million goal to date.

The event featured speeches from Todd Kristol, President of the Hillel at UD Board of Directors; Dr. Laura Carlson, Interim President of the University of Delaware; and donors Stuart Grant and Neil Book. The campaign has secured three major contributions of over \$1 million each from Stuart and Suzanne Grant, the Kristol Family, and the Book Family. In honor of their transformative leadership gift, the new facility will be named the Stuart and Suzanne Grant Hillel at the Kristol Center for Jewish Life.

"This new Hillel building is not just a building. Rather, it is where the next generation of Jewish leaders will be trained," said Stuart and Suzanne Grant. "It is where those students with just a spark of Jewish identity will go to explore their Jewish journey. It is where Jewish students at UD will gather in times of joy and in times of crisis. The building will be beautiful. But the true beauty is what will go on inside these walls. That is the investment we have chosen to make."

"Breaking ground on this new facility is an incredibly meaningful moment for our community," said Donna Schwartz, Executive Director of Hillel at UD. "This building represents our commitment to providing Jewish students with a welcoming home where they can explore their identity, build lasting friendships, and create meaningful connections to Jewish life. We're grateful to our donors, board members, and community partners who have brought this to life."



The new building will replace the existing Kristol Center for Jewish Life and will include a large event hall capable of seating 250 students for Shabbat dinners, small study rooms, lounge areas—including a rooftop deck—and a Beit Midrash. Construction is anticipated to be completed by December 2026.

"We're thrilled to see this project quickly move from vision to reality," said Adam Lehman, President and CEO of Hillel International. "The Stuart and Suzanne Grant Hillel at the Kristol Center for Jewish Life will provide Jewish students with the space and resources they need to thrive—not just during their college years, but as they build a lifelong sense of belonging in the Jewish community. This groundbreaking is a testament to the dedication of donors, staff, and students who believe in the importance of Jewish life on campus."

For more information about the campaign or to donate, visit [www.delawarehillelcampaign.org](http://www.delawarehillelcampaign.org).



UD Hillel is a Beneficiary Agency of Jewish Federation of Delaware



Photo Credit: Kathy Atkinson/University of Delaware



# 2025 Yearend Tax Savings and Charitable Giving Strategies

BY JORDON ROSEN, CPA, MST, AEP® (Distinguished)

Photo source: AdobeStock.com

In last month's issue I discussed how charitable contributions will be impacted by the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB), with several changes taking effect next year meaning it may be wise to look at your charitable giving from a multi-year perspective and possibly accelerating gifts before year end (see November 2025 JLD article at [JewishLivingDelaware.org/navigating-charitable-giving-after-obbb](https://JewishLivingDelaware.org/navigating-charitable-giving-after-obbb) for details).

If you can itemize deductions, writing a check to your favorite charitable organization, such as Jewish Federation of Delaware (JFD) or any of its constituent or supported agencies, is the quickest way to contribute. OBBB made permanent that, for 2025 and beyond, cash contributions are deductible up to 60 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI), with any excess available for carryover for up to five years.

Cash may be king, but when it comes to charitable giving, donating appreciated property is a better deal, since you get a full fair market value deduction for the donation and don't have to recognize gain on the appreciation had you first sold the asset. It also doesn't drain your checking account. Shares of stock, mutual funds, and ETFs are easy to donate, but you can also donate real estate and shares of a closely held business. The deduction for donating appreciated property is generally limited to 30 percent of AGI with the same five-year carryover for any excess amount. You can also donate appreciated securities to a donor advised fund (DAF) and get the same benefits and you can decide later where and when to distribute the funds. Bunching a larger amount of securities and/or cash into a DAF before the end of the year may give you a larger 2025 tax deduction since itemizers will

see a reduction of the amount they can deduct based on income beginning in 2026 and higher-income taxpayers will also see a limited overall tax benefit starting next year (again, see my article from November JLD).

If you have an unincorporated business or partnership that reports on a cash basis, you can reduce taxable profits for 2025 by simply paying qualified 2025 expenses before the end of the year. If you make contributions to charity out of the business, however, they will not reduce your business income, but you can still claim them on Schedule A as a charitable deduction if you itemize.

I mentioned bunching charitable contributions above, but it is worth repeating. If you didn't qualify to itemize last year, consider "bunching" several years' worth of contributions into 2025 to maximize your charitable deduction this year and then claim the higher standard deduction for the next few years. The standard deduction in 2025 for a married couple under age 65 is \$31,500. Since OBBB increased the limit for the state and local tax deduction from \$10,000 to \$40,000 beginning this year, for many taxpayers it will allow them to either get closer to or be able to itemize, thus making the bunching strategy in 2025 more beneficial (and avoid the 2026 reductions).

Age 70 ½ or over? You now qualify for making a qualified contribution distribution (QCD) directly from your IRA (or inherited IRA) up to \$108,000 in 2025 directly to a charitable organization(s) (other than to a DAF). If your spouse is at least 70 ½, they can do the same from their IRA. The benefit of a QCD is that the distribution is not included in AGI but still counts toward your required minimum distribution (so keep this in mind for 2026

as well). Keeping a lower AGI can mean a lower Medicare Part B and D premium, increased medical deductions and other benefits that are based on AGI.

If you have a paid-up life insurance policy, consider donating it to Jewish Federation of Delaware (JFD) rather than canceling the policy. You will get a deduction for the cash value. If premiums are still due, payment of future premiums would also be a charitable deduction.

Thinking of selling your business or real estate? Getting a large bonus? Rather than first selling the shares or real estate which would subject you to federal and state tax on the gain, consider first establishing a charitable remainder trust (CRT) and donating the shares/real estate to the trust. The trust can sell the asset and, since it is recognized as a 501(c)(3), it pays no tax on the gain. In short, the trust pays you (or joint with another person) an annuity or unitrust amount for your lifetime or for a set number of years (not to exceed 20), with the remainder going to the charity(ies) of your choice, such as JFD and its related agencies when the trust terminates. In the meantime, you get a deduction for the contribution to the trust in the year funded (less the value of the future benefit you will be receiving), you avoided paying tax on the sale of the asset and the full value of the assets in the trust are out of your estate. This is great for those that are philanthropically inclined and still want to receive income from the assets for the

remainder of their life. With interest rates still relatively high, the benefits of a CRT can be substantial.

Another vehicle that does well when interest rates are higher is a charitable gift annuity (CGA). Similar in nature to a CRT, the purchase of a CGA will result in the annuitant receiving a partial tax deduction and a lifetime annuity, with any remainder going to a specified charity(ies). For example, a couple, each age 70 purchasing a joint/survivor CGA could receive a 5.5 percent annuity based on the amount contributed (6.2% for age 75 and 6.9% for an 80- year-old couple).

It's not too late to contact your tax advisor to see how you can best lower your 2025 taxes while accomplishing your philanthropic goals.

The information provided above does not constitute tax, legal or financial advice and should not be acted upon without first consulting with a professional tax advisor.

For further information on creating a donor advised fund and other giving opportunities, please contact Lesley Tryon, Endowment and Finance Administrator at Jewish Federation of Delaware, at [Lesley@ShalomDel.org](mailto:Lesley@ShalomDel.org).

#### **About the Author:**

**JORDON ROSEN** CPA, MST, AEP® (Distinguished) is a retired Tax Director at Belfint, Lyons & Shuman and past president of the National Association of Estate Planners and Councils.

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# Chanukah 2025

BY FAITH BROWN

Remembering Chanukah, Festival of Lights  
Illumination from candles for eight dark nights  
“Maoz Tzur,” oil that’s pure  
With a prayer that our people will long endure

To Antiochus, we did not bend  
This is the message we always send  
We gave thanks to Judah, the famous Maccabee  
The hero who helped to set us free

We fought many battles and hoped we’d win  
Just read the “dreidel” letters, “Nun Gimel Hey Shin”  
We always prayed that G-d would care  
Then: “A great miracle happened there!”

Now this holiday of celebration  
Is a reminder of our dedication  
To peace and freedom as a Jewish nation

Today we sing, we’re still alive!  
We know our people will survive!  
So eat a latke—celebrate!  
And don’t forget to add some jelly donuts to your plate!

#### About the Author:

**FAITH BROWN** is a 96-year old resident of Lodge Lane. Faith has been an active member of the Delaware Jewish community for many years, teaching the Hebrew schools and leading choral and dance groups at AKSE with her husband Lou, z”l, for over 60 years, and currently co-leading weekly Shabbat services at Lodge Lane.

Photo credit: Adobestock.com



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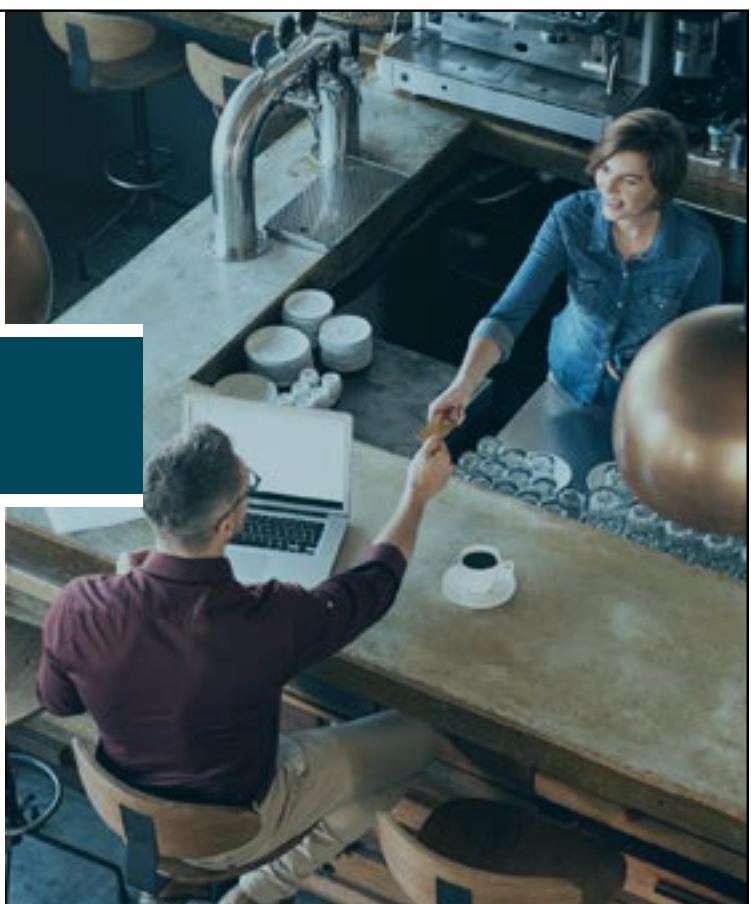
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## **Nes gadol hayah sham/po. What miracles would you like to see come to pass in Israel and this country in the coming secular year?**



Photo credit: Elisa Morris

### **RABBI MICHAEL BEALS**

Temple Beth El

מְלֹא־שׁ

The miracle for which I long for both Israel and the United States is מְלֹא־שׁ, peace. Normally a “miracle” is defined as something supernatural. I always thought *redef shalom*, the pursuit of peace, was within our grasp, not something requiring Divine intervention. But I think we need Help.

It was then-Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, z”l, who, after the signing of the Oslo Accords back in February 2004, imagined Israel-Palestine-Jordan forming a Middle East version of Benelux. Benelux: the European confederation of Belgium-Netherland-Luxembourg, a unity where three distinct European nations could work for the betterment of each of their unique countries. It was not unlike the dream of Stefan Zweig in his 1942 treatise, *The World of Yesterday*. Zweig, a Jewish intellectual, dreamt of a post-World War I utopia of European intellectuals who would transcend national borders. World War II and the Holocaust brought his dreams to ashes and he ended up taking his life by suicide in despair.

I have seen images of a Holocaust-like pogrom Hamas unleashed against Israel. I have also seen images of the complete devastation Israel wreaked upon Gaza, where our father Abraham’s accusation against God came to pass: “far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty.” I find Israel and Palestine in need of a miracle. Alone, without the help of God, I do not see how Palestinians and Israelis will live together in peace, forging

a brighter tomorrow for their children. There is so much rebuilding needed in Gaza. And with Messianic Jews in Prime Minister Netanyahu’s government hell-bent on annexing the West Bank to create a Greater Israel, only a miracle can wright the Zionist ship which leaders like David Ben Gurion and Golda Meir first envisioned back in 1948.

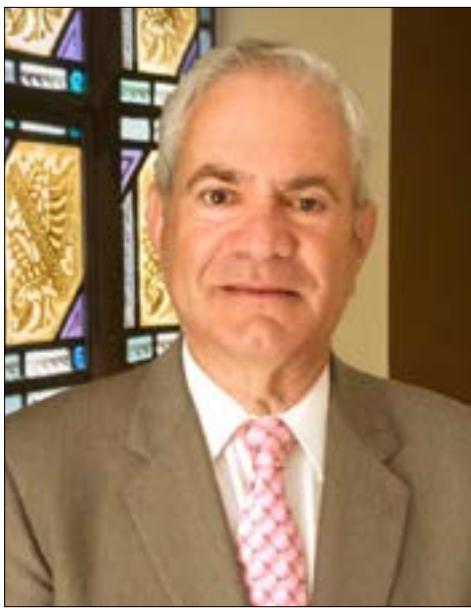
In the United States, I pray for a similar miracle, where leaders in the Republican and Democratic Parties can work together, in peace, to address the pressing needs of all Americans—from a compassionate immigration policy to a far-reaching approach to energy, addressing the threat of global climate change. There was a time when members of Congress debated by day, but when the day was done, they broke bread together—sometimes even shared living accommodations. Their shared humanity allowed them to compromise for the greater good, legislating far-reaching policies to address issues like civil rights and soul-crushing poverty.

In this new secular year, I pray—be it with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders overseas or American leaders in Washington—may they, and the constituents they represent, be gifted to see each other created *b’tselem Elohim*—in the image of God. And from this sense of shared humanity, may the work of miracles shift from the providence of the Divine to the providence of men and women of good will working together in peace, for the benefit of all . . . *v’nomar* (and let us say amen).

Each month, Rabbi Peter H. Grumbacher, along with rabbis from around the state, answer your questions about Judaism.

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## RABBI PETER H. GRUMBACHER

Rabbi Emeritus,  
Congregation Beth Emeth

*Nes gadol hayah sham/po!* “A great miracle happened there and here!” The letters on the dreidel represent that phrase, with a *shin* for *sham* (“there,” Israel if you’re here, for example, in the United States), and a *pey* for *po* (“here,” if you’re in Israel). Some say the age of miracles has ended; some believe there never have been any miracles, defined as “an event in the physical world ascribed to a supernatural cause.”

I’m not adding to that argument, but in one battle during World War II, my father (*z”l*) and a few American G.I.s were surrounded by far, far more German soldiers. When one buddy proclaimed that only a miracle could save them, my father responded, “Do it yourself. If God helps you, you’re lucky.” He did it himself . . . and, yes, God probably helped along the way.

Thinking about it, the one miracle I would like to see in this country is the elimination of the often terrifying differences that exist, threatening the very fabric of what we understand this country stands for. And the one miracle I would like to see in Israel is,

well, the same. There is such rishus (malice) that we wonder if the values my father and thousands of others have lived and died for will be upheld. In Israel there seem to be even more divides, and those threaten the dream of Zionism.

I think of the miracle of Chanukah, not the oil but the stand taken by the Maccabees. They stood up to power. There is a book entitled *All Politics IS Religious* by Rabbi Dennis S. Ross.

He writes, “. . . religious people have the right—a responsibility as I see it—to a public voice, just like everyone else. We live here and have a duty to contribute to the national conversation. We think, we vote, we pay taxes, we write letters, and we lobby—we are in the marrow. That’s how democracy works.”

The Maccabees and their followers had to fight hard to defeat the enemy, but a great miracle happened there. We have to do the same, but our fighting is, so far, limited to our voices and votes; we have to “Do it yourself.” May there be the miracle of clear vision as we move forward.

  
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*Renna Van Oot*

**Renna Van Oot, JD, MSS, MLSP**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Not by Might, Not by Power: **The Spirit of Chanukah**

BY **RABBI YAIR ROBINSON**, Congregation Beth Emeth



**A**s we approach Chanukah this year, we may be spending some time thinking about the story of the holiday, especially the centrality of conflict and—in this time of (hopefully still) cease-fire in Israel but also profound disagreement in our own country—how to transform it. Conflict is, of course, part of the human condition; there's no way to avoid it. As human beings, at some point we're going to have a difference of opinion or experience that's going to cause us to be in conflict with one another.

But can conflict be productive? Can there be learning that emerges from it? And can it be transformational for all the parties involved, moving enemies to friends, and conflict to peace?

This may seem like a strange topic for Chanukah. Mistaken as the Jewish Christmas because it takes place in the winter and is celebrated with lights, Chanukah commemorates the victory of a group of Jews—the Hasmoneans, sometimes called the Maccabees—over the Assyrian Greeks more than two thousand years ago. The Assyrian Greeks, we learn, banned ritual circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, and the study of Torah, and tried to turn the Jewish people to idolators. Mattathias, his son Judah Maccabee, and others fought back and were able to rededicate the temple (the word Chanukah means 'to dedicate') on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev and may-or-may-not have celebrated Sukkot late as a result. Hence, an eight-day festival in the dead of winter.

Of course, that's not the whole story. The Chanukah we celebrate is a very American holiday, and I don't just mean about the presents. Born of a violent overthrow of colonial tyranny,

we use it to commemorate the fight for religious freedom and liberty, a story that should sound familiar to any student of American history. I often describe Chanukah as Jewish Thanksgiving plus July 4th rolled into one. When you know the story, and (pardon the pun) cast it in that light, you can see why everyone—Jews and non-Jews alike—wants to get a selfie lighting the lights of the Menorah. Not found in any biblical book the Jews preserved, while the Catholics kept the books of the Maccabees, they are considered apocryphal and weren't read by Jews. It commemorates human beings triumphing violently over other human beings without divine intervention. And it celebrates a 25-year long war where the casualties were innumerable. Perhaps it was this reason that the rabbis of old—themselves reeling from two uprisings against Rome that ended in defeat and tragedy—excluded the story of Maccabean battlefield exploits and instead lifted up the story we know so well, of the cruse of oil lasting eight days—a sign of God's intervention more in keeping with the words of the book of Zachariah, the Haftarah for Chanukah: "not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says The Eternal God." (Zachariah 4:6)

As I said earlier, conflict seems inevitable in our day and age. It seems all the time that it's easier to go to war than to make peace, easier to stand in opposition than to find compromise, easier to yell than to listen. But I would suggest there may be another way. In the Talmud, in tractate Rosh Hashanah (19a if you want to look it up), we have this report: *On the 28th of the month of Adar came glad tidings to the Jews that they should not abandon the practice of Torah. For the Roman government had issued a decree*

*that they should not study the Torah and that they should not circumcise their sons and that they should profane the Sabbath* (that is, the same circumstances as the story of Chanukah). *What did they do? They went and consulted a certain Roman noblewoman whom all the Roman notables used to visit. She said to them: "Come and demonstrate at nighttime. Scream out in the marketplaces and in the streets in order that the ministers should hear and have compassion on you."* *They went and demonstrated at night, saying, "In heaven's name, are we not your brothers and sisters? Are we not the children of one parent? Why are we different from every nation and tongue that you issue such decrees upon us?" The decrees were thereupon cancelled.*

My teacher, Rabbi Daniel Roth, asks the question based on this story whether the Hasmoneans could have achieved their goals through nonviolent demonstrations instead of a bloody war? It's a good and important question, especially now in a time of deep conflict and sometimes animosity between people. For the Jews to say: "are we not your brothers and sisters," and remind the non-Jews in their midst what was in common, for them to find an ally who could help de-escalate the situation, and take to the streets is just as brave, if not braver, than sallying forth to violent conflict. That going out and declaring our common humanity can be more effective than declaring everyone our enemy. And that, as we light our lights of rededication this year, we may focus not just on physical strength, but spiritual strength, as well as our obligation to spread that light especially in dark places. And, even in this time of discord, we can allow the lights of Chanukah to help us transform conflict into connection, and enemy to friend. ■

# FAITH, CONNECTION, AND HOPE:

## How a Piece of Jewelry Could Change Your Life

BY **EMMA DRIBAN**, Editor

### **A Jewish Living** **Delaware Exclusive** **Interview with Rachel** **Samani, Founder of** **The Honest Jeweler**

**T**he Honest Jeweler—a faith-rooted jewelry brand that blends, beauty, meaning, and spiritual grounding—began as a personal act of healing.

After going through a time of loss and uncertainty, founder Rachel Samani engraved her first piece with Hebrew words that brought her strength: “*ה' עמך*” (G-d is with me). She quickly found that her pieces resonated with others.

Today, her signature spinner rings serve as tangible reminders of faith and calm. Each one is engraved with powerful Hebrew or English messages like “*This Too Shall Pass*” or “*You Got This*,” offering quiet comfort during difficult moments. Her elegant rings, bracelets, and necklaces carry the themes of *emunah*, connection, and hope—values deeply woven into Jewish life.

Read on to learn about Rachel’s journey from uncertainty to inspiration.

#### What moment or experience first inspired you to create the Honest Jeweler?

There was a moment where I was on the floor playing with my kids—I had five little ones at the time—and we were just playing a game and I realized at that moment that my mind was scattered all over the place. I went through a very hard time when I began the Honest Jeweler, so there wasn’t really any particular moment. It was very difficult for me to be with my kids because I had so much in front of me but my mind was either in the past or worried about the future. It hit me that I wasn’t living in the now. I was in pain from what had happened and I was worried about where my future was headed. There were months passing when my kids were growing up and it was like I was with them but had zero feeling behind it. That was when I realized I have to seize the moment, I have to live for today. I found myself rubbing my fingers together, grounding myself with a tangible, tactile act like, “Okay, Rachel, you’re here; you’re here right now.” It really helped me look at my kids, to appreciate their



Rachel Samani, Founder of the Honest Jeweler  
Photo provided by The Honest Jeweler

sweetness and their innocence. Moments are fleeting.

The whole concept of mindful jewelry kind of came from that idea. Spinner rings are a tangible reminder to be in the moment. You spin the ring and you’re grounding yourself, reminding yourself of what truly matters.

#### When did you realize that your personal expression of faith could resonate with others, too?

I really created this for myself. I was engraving other things at the time. I bought a machine to keep myself busy. To be honest, it was more of a distraction for myself. I started engraving baby bracelets, some pendants, and then this spinner ring came to mind. I would go out in all different places and people would ask what it was. I would say, “Oh, you know, it says ‘G-d is with me’ or ‘Let Go, Let G-d,’” and it seemed to really resonate with people. They wanted their own.



I started gifting it to people and then actually creating it, posting it on Instagram, and that's when it really started. I got emails. I remember getting an email, just one sentence, saying thank you for bringing this ring into the world. That was it. It was so beautiful. I didn't even realize it meant so much to whoever this was. I realized that it had an impact on people more than typical jewelry. It was a reminder that they needed when they were going through life—maybe it was a challenging moment, maybe it was a happy moment. It doesn't matter. Just to be present and to be in there.

**The spinner rings are a signature part of your collection. What other pieces do you have in your collection that you would want to highlight?**

We have bangles, which are also one of our bestsellers. There are many different bangles and they don't tarnish. We have a lot of sayings like, "Let them, Let me." That one is actually inspired by Mel Robbins, who, by the way, also wears our spinner ring. Rachel Platten, the singer of "Fight Song," wears "this too, shall pass." She loved the saying. She was actually playing with it in one of her concerts a couple months back and said it is just something that grounds her.

**How do you balance aesthetics and spirituality in your jewelry? What inspires the messages you use on your pieces?**

I'm my own North Star. I've been through a lot of different challenges in my life, so it's almost like I think to myself, *what would I want to tell myself or that little girl?* Recently, I made a bangle and a ring that says, "*bishvili nivra ha'olam*," which means "the world was created for me." It just came to my mind. I would want to hear that the world was created for me. And someone else is going to want to hear it. And then, a couple days later, I got a call. Someone asked me to engrave for an orphanage. 60 girls in an orphanage. She couldn't decide what quote to use and I asked

her, "What about the world was created for me?" And she's like, "Oh, my God, I love it. Yes." I happened to just get the rings in and I was able to package the 60 rings for the girls in the orphanage. It was something that I would want to tell them, that G-d created the world for you and that you matter.

When I engrave, I'm intentional. I literally think of that girl who's wearing that ring. I want her to look down at that ring, I want her to spin that ring, and I want her to know that G-d created the world for her soul.

**You describe your brand as rooted in *emunah*—faith. How does your Jewish identity influence your creative process?**

It's the foundation of it all. For me, my faith fuels my creativity. Deep inside my soul, there's definitely a foundation of true *emunah*. The entire brand was created from this. I think it's from my teachings, from my studies, from when I said *Shema* at night. When I created a ring for *Shema Yisrael*, for people who need that extra reminder. I think the entire business honestly revolves around everything I learned as a child. Judaism is the foundation for it all.

**Do you see jewelry-making as a spiritual practice in itself?**

Definitely. I'm grateful every day that I get to do this. I mean, creating 60 pieces for girls at an orphanage, it's like, who gets to do that? It's unbelievable. It fuels my soul. I actually also made a couple of hundred, or maybe it was a few thousand over time, bracelets that say *Eshat Chayil*, which is "the wife of a soldier." When the soldiers were in Gaza, we had organizations where we sent these to gift to the wives of the soldiers who went into Gaza during the war. I had emails coming in saying, "It was my birthday today and my husband wasn't here." Or, "I was in the middle of fertility treatment and my husband just left for war." And, "I just feel so alone and when I got this bracelet, it said *eshat chayil*." It was just so beautiful that I

got to be a part of that. It fuels me. It makes me feel good. That, for a lot of women, it's not about the bracelet. It's the feeling that it brings them. I get to be a part of that feeling. It's incredible.

**Have there been any orders that have especially moved you?**

I had a woman who told me that she lost her son, and she asked me to engrave "David, my boy" on the ring. It was going to be one year since he passed; he would have been 22. Sometimes people reach out to me, which is great, but most often I don't know the story behind the ring. I wrote the date of his passing because she happened to tell me on the phone even though she hadn't asked me to engrave it on there. I wrote "forever" inside and added the date just to surprise her. When she got the ring, she was stunned. It was everything she wanted and I just wanted to make her smile. Does it take me another 15 minutes to do the inside of the ring and write forever? Yes. But for me to do something extra, for her to feel she's not alone, and for me to acknowledge her pain. I'm holding space for her, and that's something that I feel so honored to be a part of.

**How do you hope your jewelry supports people in moments of uncertainty or transition?**

Sometimes it's hard to redirect your thoughts. It's difficult to change our inner critic into an inner coach. People say, "just replace your negative thought." But, it's hard. We all have a lot of negative thoughts. As much as we want to stay positive, it's really hard work. These rings are positive, mindful reminders. Stay present. And there's just so many sayings that resonate with many different people. I'm so happy to be able to do this. It's really my passion.

**Continued on next page.**



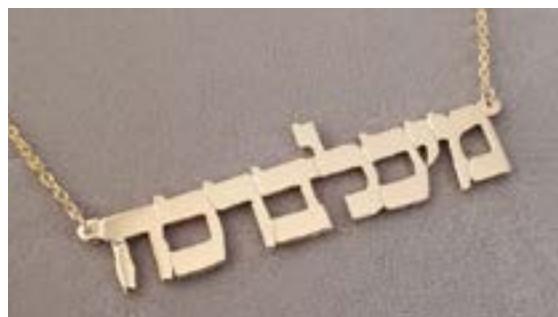
Photo credit: thehonestjewelershop.com

### How has this journey changed the way you view strength, healing, and connection?

Initially, it was a distraction from pain and the different things that were going on, but it has really fueled me. It made me be just more present, more mindful. And when you are present and when you live in the moment, you just become more grateful. You become grateful for what you have and for the health that you have—whatever it is, your kids, your husband, your family member, your parents. You view the world differently. Instead of all the negativity that happened or shouldn't have happened, I can really appreciate the good. I've become more grateful, more positive than I ever was before.

### Where do you hope to take the brand next?

Right now, I'm really hoping to get more physical locations. People reach out to me saying they need a gift really fast. Someone is not well, going through cancer, and they're going to the hospital right now. They'll ask if I have a location in Brooklyn, or wherever. Right now, I only ship from my home. I would love to get these in stores around the US, so people can grab a bangle, grab a ring.



We are always creating new designs, more with pavé diamonds on the side of the spinner ring. We're getting more pendants in. There are a lot of beautiful designs coming your way. We're really excited to just grow and inspire. That's the main idea. We all need inspiration, and these days, we all could use a little extra inspiration.

### What makes your products a great gift for anyone during this Chanukah season?

It has such a personal touch. You can get a scarf, you can get a sweater, but this has so much meaning. It's a great way to show that you are thinking of someone. Whether you pick "Let Go, Let G-d," or a bangle with positivity or strength or gratefulness, it's a personal message of "I thought of you." ■

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**Learn more about The Honest Jeweler at [TheHonestJewelerShop.com](http://TheHonestJewelerShop.com) or follow the page on Instagram, @TheHonestJeweler.**

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# The Pawsitively Jewish 2026 Calendar



BY **ABBE LUNGER**,  
Founder of Print Art LLC

Inspired by the need to do something positive for our Jewish community after the horrific events of October 7, 2023 and the aftermath, Rabbi Robyn Frisch (Founder of Mazel Pups) and I created the adorable, thoughtful, and extraordinary Pawsitively Jewish 2025 Calendar. The warmth and appreciation we received in response to our passion project—a 12-month calendar featuring 12 super-cute dogs celebrating Jewish holidays and sporting Jewish-themed clothing and/or accessories—was truly

heartwarming and spoke volumes to the need for uplifting, light-hearted ways to celebrate being Jewish.

I don't think any of us ever imagined that, as we approach 2026, we'd be in a time and place where antisemitism would be so rampant. Sadly, this seems to be getting worse, not better. The reality is that now, more than ever, the Jewish community needs to unite and support each other as we celebrate who we are, our history, and the traditions that bind us together. *And what better way is there to celebrate anything than with a dog?*

As in last year's calendar, the 2026 version features a variety of dogs from throughout the US and Canada, each selected for the special way in which they display their Jewish pride. While all of the dogs celebrate Jewish traditions and activities in their own homes, many of our *pawsitively awesome* dogs are also active on social media, posting about their support of Israel, bringing awareness of the hostages, and fighting the fight against antisemitism. Some share their support out in the community as well, wearing bandanas and clothing with Israeli flags, Jewish stars, and other pro-Jewish and Israeli messaging.

Although not Jewish, our August dogs, sisters River and Brooke—Russell Terriers from Ottawa, Canada—stand strongly in

support of their Jewish friends. As soon as I came across the photo of them wearing orange bandanas, a Batman cape and a toy with a Jewish star in view, I knew they'd be perfect for August. August is the birthday month of Ariel Bibas, the older of the two little orange-haired brothers that we all came to know as the youngest hostages kidnapped and murdered in captivity. Ariel's favorite superhero was Batman.

Our cover dog, Berra—a rescue Lhasa Apso mix from Washington, DC—has been a voice for Israel through her social media activism. From rallies and protests to standing vigil at the Empty Shabbat Table each week, even marching in the Israeli Day Parade in NYC, Berra has been a steady presence in supporting Israel and the Jewish people, advocating alongside her humans in efforts to raise awareness to bring home the hostages. In Berra's world, there's no room for hate, especially antisemitism. She is a Proud Jewish Dog with a strong message to end antisemitism. She barks for love, justice, and a world where everyone can live freely.

A unique aspect of The Pawsitively Jewish Calendar is that we donate a portion of our profits to a Jewish and/or Israeli organization, with a preference to those with a canine component. Last year, we were thrilled to support the *Israel Guide Dog Center*, which provides guide dogs for



Cover dog Berra poses with her likeness on the 2026 calendar



the blind and visually impaired, PTSD-trained service dogs for soldiers who have experienced service-related emotional trauma, and emotional support dogs for those with special needs. This year, we are supporting the *United Hatzalah's Psychotrauma Canine Unit*, which features certified handlers and specially trained dogs to provide emotional support and reduce anxiety, especially for children and teens, at emergency and disaster scenes. The unit is the first of its kind in Israel and aims to enhance United Hatzalah's ability to provide immediate psychological assistance during emergencies. Both organizations are using the donated funds to enhance their existing programs with additional dogs and advanced training.

As part of our mission and goal to support as many Jewish organizations as possible and to spread our Jewish pride far and wide, we also offer the calendars to Jewish schools, synagogues, Jewish museums and Jewish community organizations to use for their own fundraising campaigns. We work with Jewish businesses as well, offering wholesale pricing so they can resell the calendars in their brick and mortar and online shops.

The past two years have awakened within me a deep curiosity as a Jew—about my grandparents and their families as Jewish immigrants, about the history of our Jewish ancestry, and about the history of the Jewish people in Israel. I've been inspired to cook Jewish foods, making hamantaschen for the first time, and am looking forward to baking my first challah! I've made wonderful new friends while participating in the Run4TheirLives weekly walks, friends who shared my commitment to help bring awareness to the hostages and support the hostage families. These are friends who understand what it is to be Jewish in these uncertain times. Together we celebrated the wins, such as each time a hostage was returned to Israel, as well as the heartbreaks when others were not.

Creating the calendar each year is an incredibly rewarding experience. It has helped me stay focused during these challenging times and has introduced



me to the most thoughtful, giving, and kind people, all of whom are so joyful to be sharing their dogs in support of the Jewish community. I'm thrilled to continue bringing Jewish joy, pawsitivity, and Jewish pride to even more people with the Pawsitively Jewish 2026 Calendar! Just in time for Hanukkah, the calendar—complete with US and Canadian national holidays, Jewish and Israeli holidays, dog-themed holidays, information about Jewish

holidays and traditions, and fun facts about each featured dog—is a thoughtful gift for your Jewish family and friends. The precious dogs celebrating their Jewishness is a fun way to introduce children to Jewish holidays and traditions as well. A calendar celebrating being Jewish and Dogs, what's not to love?! ■

## To order your Pawsitively Jewish 2026 Calendar,

go to <https://printartkids.com/calendars>

Contact us if you'd like to carry the calendars in your brick-and-mortar store or online shop, or for information about selling our calendars as part of your school, synagogue, or community organization's fundraising campaign.

If you're interested in submitting a photo of your dog for a future calendar, please contact Abbe Lunger at <https://printartkids.com/contact>



Cover dog Berra spreads awareness of the hostages in Gaza

# Allies Against Antisemitism

## Happy Hour

BY LISA AND HENRY WEINER

**O**n October 19, 2025, we hosted an Interfaith Happy Hour at our home which we had been thinking about and planning for a couple of years.

In response to the antisemitism which has been exploding both nationally and globally, and the call to action that I have been hearing at conferences such as the General Assemblies of Jewish Federations of North America and the International Lions of Judah Conference, we decided to give this event a try. We were not sure what to expect but figured that a happy hour might make it fun.

We asked some friends to attend and to bring with them an interfaith ally to brainstorm and discuss strategies for confronting and battling antisemitism.

There was a large and enthusiastic turnout.

After some happy hour mingling, we had a short program. University of Delaware students Annie Mozer and Abby Dranikoff shared personal stories of antisemitism on campus. Katie Sand shared a personal story of antisemitism in the workplace at Drexel University. Rabbi Ellen Bernhardt talked about the work of JCRC, and Erin Taylor Talbert—VP of the School Board for the Unionville-Chadds Ford School District—also spoke about her work.

Afterwards, there were breakout sessions to facilitate the discussion of ideas, with a spokesperson from each group who then shared the group's ideas.

The participants in the breakout conversations were very engaged, and the subsequent sharing with the entire group very eloquent and robust.

In fact, after the event, several attendees commented that the event far exceeded their expectations, as it did ours! Some of our takeaways were:

1. It's vital to reach and teach younger children about Jewish Studies and Israel as opposed to waiting until they reach High School.
2. We need to retrain teachers in how to teach Jewish Studies and Israel and utilize resources like Boundless Israel, which partners with communities to revitalize Israel education and combat Jew-hatred.
3. It would be beneficial for all of us to take the online course called Getting Grounded in Israel and Zionism by Rabbi Michael Uram.
4. We should all look through Jewish Federation of North America's Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism, & Racism toolkit: <https://bit.ly/antisemitism-toolkit>.

In conclusion, we were pleased to have found solidarity and shared values with interfaith allies.

We hope that this alliance will grow and that we will be successful in affecting 'positive change.'

**Allies Against  
ANTISEMITISM**





Photos provided by Lisa Dadone-Weiner

#### About the Author

**LISA DADONE-WEINER** is a Chadds Ford PA resident who is a lay leader for Jewish Federation of Delaware and is a member of the board of National Women's Philanthropy. She teaches mosaic art workshops at her studio. Dr. Henry Weiner is a Cardiologist at ChristianaCare in Delaware.



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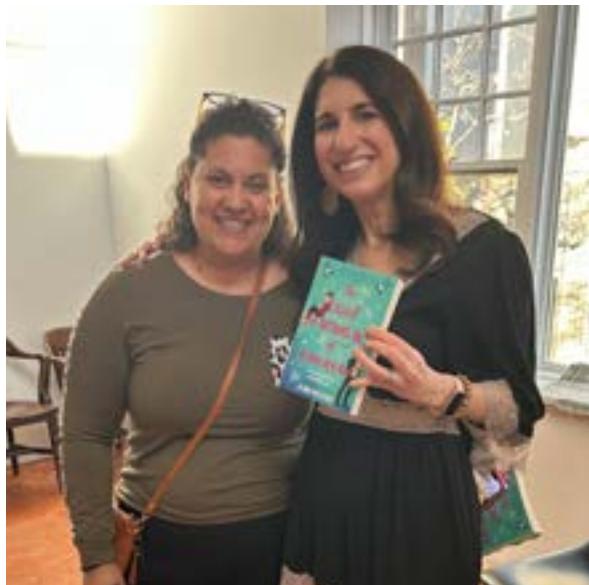
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# An Eight Star Read for the Eight Nights of Hanukkah

BY PHILIPPA MILLER

This past summer, I was looking for a book for my tween to read for summer reading. I wanted to find one that he would relate to, specifically about being Jewish. Many of the books, though, seemed to be Holocaust related. I thought about some of the books that I've read over the years, and it seemed like the same thing—most books that had to do with Jews were related to the Holocaust. Jean Meltzer, author of *The Matzah Ball*, came to the same conclusion. She found that many non-Holocaust books on the market only had a side character that was Jewish or the Jews died in the end. Especially in the romance category, there were very few Jewish rom-coms.

In the last four years Meltzer has written five books—all with Jewish characters and themes throughout. She wanted to see herself in books and, especially with a young niece (who is an Einstein graduate), she wanted her niece to see that, too. In the last two years, as a Jewish author, she said it has been harder to be seen, heard, and read because of rising antisemitism. Living in Virginia, she usually does her book launches in nearby Maryland, where the community is more welcoming. On a visit to Huxley & Hiro in Wilmington, she mentioned to author Jamie Brenner—another Jewish author who moderated the conversation—that it is particularly important in today's climate to have these Jewish voices heard and supported by Jews because otherwise they'll disappear. She continued that she was surprised to have been approached by Huxley & Hiro about



Phili Miller poses with author Jean Meltzer during an "Afternoon with the Author" at Huxley & Hiro.

Photo provided by Phili Miller

coming in for an author talk because the owners weren't Jewish, and she appreciated that they were so welcoming.

One of the founders of the book store, Claire van den Broek, repeated what Meltzer had to say, that even in the book seller community there was a lot of pressure to highlight and support Palestinian authors and store owners but not the other way around. van den Broek disagrees with this—she didn't start a book store for political reasons but to share her love of books. With a PhD in German studies, she said that most of the scholars she learned about were Jewish and wrote many papers that focused on these Jews. Not to mention her appreciation for the "great literary tradition of the Jewish people." van den Broek

continued, "I want to highlight good books—many of my favorite authors are Jewish—and that is what I'm going to have in my bookstore."

Jean Meltzer's newest novel, *The Eight Heartbreaks of Hanukkah*, along with her other books, can be found at Huxley & Hiro.

Workaholic Jewish producer Evelyn Schwartz has landed the opportunity of a lifetime: producing a live, prime-time broadcast of *A Christmas Carol*. But the pressure is immense. Between the stress of needing the show to be a success, the migraines she battles daily, the painkillers she has to ration to manage them, and the constant struggle to balance her energy, time, and emotions, Evelyn is stretched thin. After a minor head injury, her exhaustion takes an unexpected turn—she begins hallucinating her own Hanukkah-themed version of the holiday classic.

Instead of the traditional three ghosts of past, present, and future, Evelyn is visited on Hanukkah by eight ghosts of heartbreak, each one tied to a painful memory—and each featuring her ex-husband, David. As the familiar scenes play out, she feels like she is being punished for the things that she did, or didn't do, and can't seem to identify the moral lessons she's meant to learn. With David now present on set and back in her life after two years, the memories bring up feelings that make everyone wonder why they divorced in the first place.

Having been friends since they were kids, David was always in her life, until one day he wasn't—when he left, walking out on their marriage and life in Manhattan, and never looked back. He was one of her biggest heartbreaks. With memories bringing them closer together, all seems to be going well until the production's difficult "Scrooge," a high-maintenance English star, derails not only rehearsals but also the affection that seems to be growing between Evelyn and David. As dramatic as he may be, though, this Scrooge has some insight into these heartbreaks and their relationship. It is possible that Scrooge did learn a thing or two about the ghosts of Christmas, and relays that wisdom to the reconnecting pair.

Many of Evelyn's heartbreaks were relatable and gave me some perspective—on love, life, and marriage. Meltzer captures the truth that heartbreak isn't always about being a bad person; it's often the result of choices made before we have the tools or experience to make better ones.

So, what's the point of revisiting all these ghosts of heartbreak? You'll have to read to find out. Funny, surprisingly inspiring, and a great read, Jean Meltzer's latest book won't leave you with any heartbreaks this Hanukkah season.

#### About the Author:

Now that all four of her children can read independently, **PHILIPPA "PHILI" MILLER** has more time to read books of her own choosing. She is excited to share some of those books with this new column highlighting books with Jewish themes. As a former PJ Coordinator, she wants to make sure that your kids from 0-12 are signed up for PJ Library or PJ Our Way so they, too, can read great Jewish-themed books.



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Photo credit to  
Sharon Fullerton

# Something Sweet for the Holiday

BY EMMA DRIBAN, EDITOR

**T**he holidays have a way of drawing us back to what matters most—family. Amid the lights, songs, and celebrations, it's the people we share them with who make the season meaningful. Spending time with family gives the holidays their warmth and rhythm, from the familiar recipes passed down for generations to the stories retold at the table and the laughter that fills the house even when plans don't go perfectly.

In Jewish tradition, holidays are built around gathering—lighting candles together, sharing meals, and creating space for gratitude and reflection. Connection is a form of celebration in itself. One of my favorite ways to spend time with family is to share a recipe in the kitchen. While we all know and love our fried favs, here is a family friendly recipe that is easy enough for the youngest baker in the bunch.

## Ingredients:

- ½ cup softened butter
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup crushed hard candy, like Jolly Ranchers or Lifesavers.

## Preparation:

1. Using a mixer, cream together the butter and sugar until fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla extract. In a separate bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, and salt.
2. Gradually, add the dry ingredients to the butter and cream the mixture. Wrap tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. On a lightly-floured surface, roll out the batter to about ¼ inch thickness.
4. Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes. Cut a small hole in the middle of each shape with a butter knife or smaller cookie cutter.
5. Place the shapes on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 5 minutes.
6. Remove the baking sheet, and carefully spoon ½ teaspoon of crushed hard candy into the center of each cookie.
7. Bake for 4–5 more minutes, or until the candy has melted completely. Keep a close eye so the candy doesn't burn!
8. Cool, first for 15 minutes on baking sheet, then move to cooling rack.





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SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION FROM:  
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The mission of Delaware Gratz has always been and will continue to be the education of Jewish teens. Although we are no longer offering traditional classes, we are continuing to offer Jewish teens the opportunity to continue their Jewish education.

Delaware Gratz Endowment Fund will now be offering grants and scholarships to Delaware teens (currently in 9<sup>th</sup> grade) to attend educational opportunities.

These opportunities can include:

- Trips to Israel
- Semesters abroad in Israel
- Gap year educational programs
- Attending Jewish summer camps
- Attending special programs in Israel or in the United States

... as well as many other educational opportunities



Research has shown that the best way to not only give teens a Jewish education but also encourage them to become active and engaged Jewish adults is through experiential learning. These studies have shown that experiences in Jewish camps, youth groups, spending a semester in a school in Israel, and trips to Israel have a much greater impact on these teens than actually attending traditional classrooms.

The Delaware Gratz Board is committed to continuing to enrich the lives of our Jewish teens by supporting their continued Jewish education.



**Jewish  
Federation  
of Delaware**

If your teen is interested in applying for a scholarship, download the Gratz application at:

[ShalomDelaware.org/Scholarships](http://ShalomDelaware.org/Scholarships)

Questions may be directed to [Scholarships@ShalomDel.org](mailto:Scholarships@ShalomDel.org) or to the Federation office at 302-427-2100.



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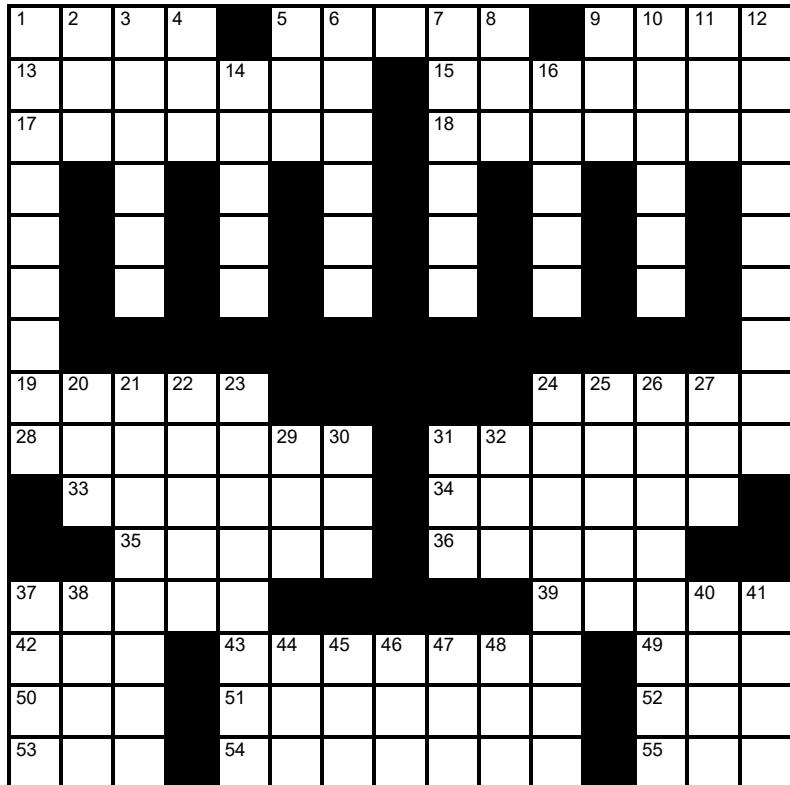
# A Chanukah Puzzle

BY YONI GLATT

koshercrosswords@gmail.com

**DIFFICULTY LEVEL:** MEDIUM

**SOLUTION:** PAGE 40



## ACROSS

- Not fem.
- The Maccabees were strong adherents of it
- "The Closer" star Sedgwick
- \_\_\_ Mot
- How many candles have been lit by one person on night five (not including shamashim)
- Inconsequential
- American yeshiva in Bet Shemesh, Israel
- \_\_\_ Nahash
- Words before "letova"
- Ideal spots
- Shelley's elegy to Keats (and not a pluralization of gods)
- Certain leg exercises
- Wife of Indiana (Jones)
- First, low and reverse
- '72 Olympics star
- Sandler character who celebrates Chanukah
- Chanukah bite
- Website with video game and film reviews

- Michael Jordan, collegiately
- Abrupt turn
- Capote, to friends
- Galapagos isle named for a queen
- Dos half
- Good to go
- Common Chanukah purchase
- "Footloose" hero McCormack

## DOWN

- Chanukah hero
- Crossword answer dir. (but not this one)
- Last surviving Maccabee
- First place athlete in OH
- Darjeeling, for example
- Item that might be put in a chanukiyah
- Continent 12-Down was unable to add to his empire
- "Giddyup!"
- Chess jumpers: Abbr.
- Maccabee who died heroically in battle
- Camping gear retailer
- Most notable Chanukah villain
- Like some business or (successful) maneuvers by 10-Down
- Elements needed for Chanukah?
- Coke has its HQ there
- Chanukah treat
- Sleeping disorder, for some
- Huge
- Silverbacks, e.g.
- "America" singer in "West Side Story"
- Chanukah song
- California wine, for short
- \_\_\_ Lingus, Irish airline
- Leaking noise
- Digital clock settings, for short
- Touch lightly, as water
- Acne, slangily
- Monster of myth
- "Batman" cartoonist Bob
- Jewish Ghostbuster
- King Jehoshaphat's father
- Did the Jerusalem Marathon, e.g.
- Brief annual post on a Facebook page
- Disney's Jetsam, for one
- Spanish "L"



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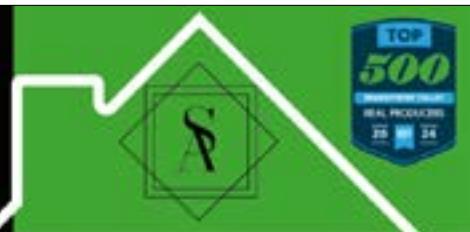
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# OBITUARIES

*Ha'makom yenahem etkhem betokh she'ar avelei tziyon vi'Yerushalayim.*

**May God console you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.**

## **Louis Joseph Freedman**

It is with immense sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved father, Louis "Lou" Joseph Freedman who left us peacefully on October 3, 2025, at the age of 89.

Born August 19, 1936 in Glendale (Queens), New York to the late Bernard & Beatrice Freedman, Lou was a principled man, who lived his life with unwavering strength, fortitude, and dignity.

Predeceased by his beloved wife, Sandra "Sandy" (nee Zupinsky), he will be lovingly remembered by his children, Scott (Wendy) Freedman, Deborah (the late Douglas) Hershman, and Robert (Diane) Freedman; his cherished grandchildren (to whom he was affectionately known as 'Papa'), Matthew (Amber), Gregory (Emily), Jacob (Megan), Emily (Allen), Benjamin (Danielle), Ariel (Brett), Janie (Kevin), and Julianne; great-grandchildren, Shepard and Hannah; his brother, Herbert (Judy); his cousin, Judi; and also many nieces and nephews.

Lou embodied the values of duty and honor that would remain central throughout his life going on to proudly serve our country in the United States Marine Corps.

He will be forever remembered for his passion for airplanes, world travel, great restaurants, Israel, and his devotion to his loving wife Sandy.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in his name to the Doug Hershman AEPi Leadership Fund by the University of Delaware Hillel.

## **Jeanne (nee Kravetz) Rosen**

On September 16, 2025, age 96, of Bala Cynwyd, PA.

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Jeanne Rosen, the matriarch and heart and soul of our family, who leaves a legacy of love and a life of enthusiasm and accomplishment. Beloved wife of Martin Rosen (z"l), loving mother of Richard (Laura Mirkinson, z"l), Rona (Mark Cohen), and Michelle Glazier (Bradford Glazier); devoted grandmother of Rebecca, Hannah, Elissa, Rachel, and Jenna; and great-grandmother of David, Matan, and Levi. Predeceased by her beloved parents, Edward and Minnie (Satinsky) Kravetz, and brother, William Kravetz.

Jeanne was proud graduate of West Philadelphia High School and West Chester State Teachers College. She was a highly respected and charismatic teacher in Philadelphia for over 30 years, loved by her students and their families and recognized for excellence in teaching by the Philadelphia Board of Education. After retirement from full time teaching, she continued as a substitute teacher in Lower Merion for over a decade. She was also an accomplished pianist, swimmer, avid reader, and great dancer; she was a vivacious, outgoing person who adored her family and many lifelong friends.

Contributions in her memory may be made to Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia or a charity of the donor's choice.

## **Barbara C. Siegell**

Barbara C. Siegell passed away on November 1, 2025. Barbara was born in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania on April 23, 1940.

Barbara enjoyed taking and teaching courses at the University of Delaware's OSHER Lifelong Learning Institute, where she taught such subjects as Wonderful and Wacky Patents, The DADA Art Movement, The History of New York City and Its Boroughs, and The National Parks. She also enjoyed being in book groups, playing mahjong, volunteering at the Delaware Theater Company and traveling all over the world.

Barbara is predeceased by her parents, Beatrice and Milton Schwartz; her brother, George R. Schwartz; and her companion of 20+ years, Dr. Edward H. Silverman.

Barbara is survived by her three children, Dr. Bruce Siegell, Dr. Michael Siegell and Heidi Siegell; her son-in-law, Rolando Gori; and her granddaughter, Océane Siegell-Gori. She will be remembered fondly.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Barbara's honor to Wilmington Hadassah, Congregation Beth Emeth Synagogue, or to a charity of your choice.

## Cecile "Ceci" Shames Ufberg

Age 84, passed away peacefully on October 24, 2025 surrounded by her loving family.

Ceci was born in Wilmington, DE to Samuel and Hilda Shames in 1941. She grew up in a close-knit family and enjoyed a loving relationship with her parents, two sisters, and brother. Ceci once expressed that her years at P.S. duPont High School were some of the best of her life. She met her husband, Dr. Harold A. Ufberg, while in Dental Hygiene School at Temple University. They settled in Wilmington, DE where they made their happy home and welcomed their three children, Judi, Debbie, and Dan.

Along with spending time with her family, Ceci enjoyed baking and playing with and loving her beloved poodles.

She will be dearly missed by her beloved husband of 63 years, Harold A. Ufberg, and her children, Judi Weinstein (Marc), Debbie Hutz (Eric), and Dan Ufberg (Wendi). Ceci was a wonderful Mom Mom to Andrew (Alexandra), Maura (Bre), Alexander, Michael (Jacqueline), Samantha, Sydney, and Zachary. She recently became a great-grandmother to Elizabeth. Ceci is also survived by her siblings, Terry Sokoloff, Charlotte Zimble, and Sam Shames (Joanna).

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to Faithful Friends Animal Society or The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

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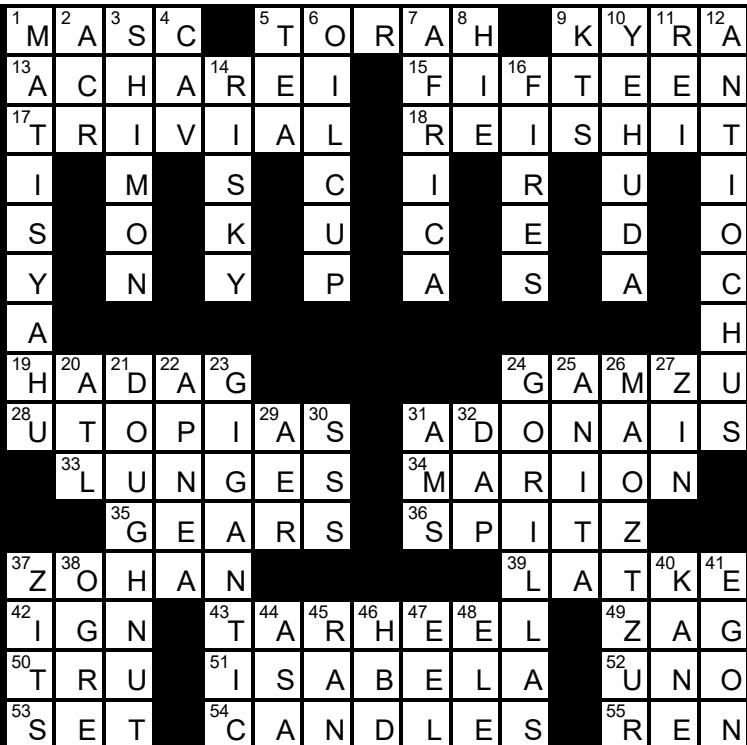


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## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Puzzle on page 36



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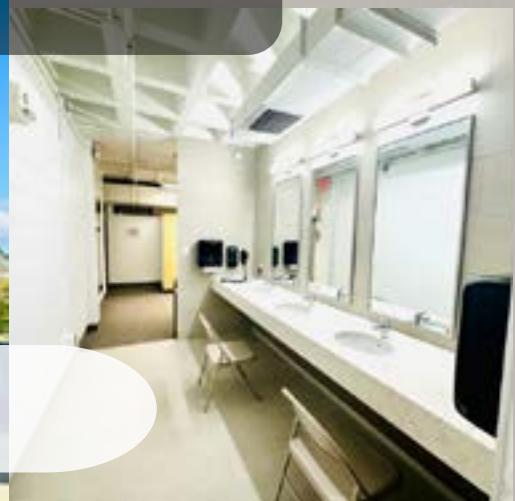
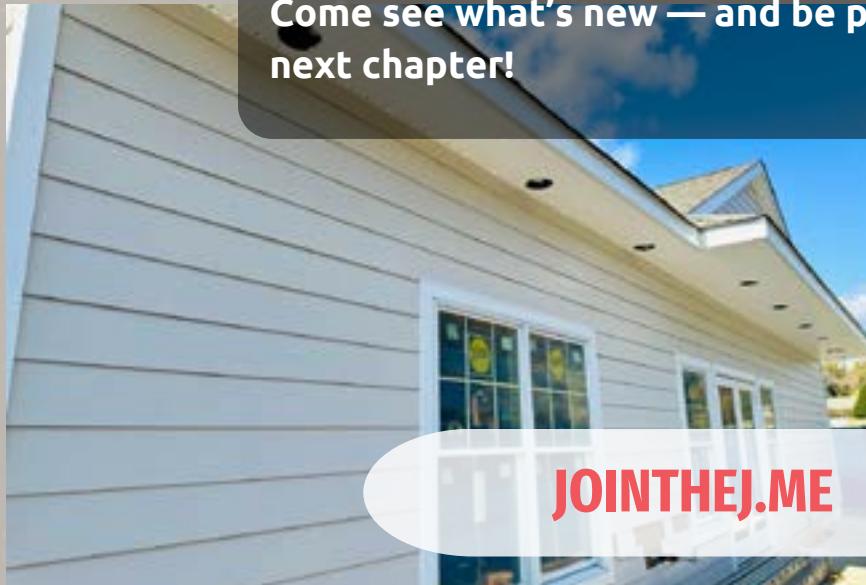


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*Thank you for celebrating 90  
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