

AZOY

"Is that so?"

2015
DECEMBER
5776



**UNION for
REFORM JUDAISM**
האיחוד ליהדות רפורמית

SERVING REFORM CONGREGATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

*The Monthly Newsletter of Temple B'nai Israel
The Reform Jewish Congregation of Bay County
Mailing Address: PO Box 16556, Panama City, FL 32406
Located at: 1910 Frankford Avenue, Panama City, Florida
850-522-8685 / <http://bnaiisraelpc.org>*

🌀 **Save the Date: December 4th - December 6th** 🌀

Our ISJL Fellow – Shira Moskowitz – is coming to Panama City



I am so excited to visit Temple B'nai Israel December 4th-December 6th.

As part of the partnership between your community and the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, I have the opportunity to visit Panama City three times over the course of the year. It will be such a treat for me to celebrate Chanukah in Panama City and to share the festival of lights with each of you.

I will be leading services December 4th Friday night at 7:00 pm. I will also lead programming for the students of the religious school on Sunday December 6th at the Chanukah party!

I hope to see you at these events and look forward to meeting you!

Chanukah Celebration | News from Religious School by Cynthia Gingold

On Sunday, December 6th, our annual Chanukah celebration will begin at Noon, with a performance by the Religious School children of a story from Chelm. ISJL Fellow Shira Moskowitz will work with the children during the preparation of lunch. The children will complete a Chanukah craft.

If you do not have children in religious school, please make a reservation with Cynthia or Alvin Gingold

at 850-855-8734, cynthia_gingold@yahoo.com or bigal1774@yahoo.com.

The cost will be \$5.00 per person, which can be paid at the door. We will have an assortment of latkes, salad, tuna fish salad, jelly doughnuts and drinks. Please make a reservation so that we have enough food for everyone. Thank you!



❧ The President's Message ❧

The Festival of Lights begins in a few days and I want to wish each of you a Happy Chanukah. Even though Chanukah is considered a minor holiday in the Jewish year, it's still significant in that it commemorates a miraculous victory by the Maccabees against a much larger and stronger foe. It's a happy celebration marked by candlelight, gift giving and that most wonderful fried delight called *latkes*. And even more delight in the form of *sufganiot*, fried donuts!

The gift giving part is a rather new Jewish tradition starting in the early 20th century to appease Jewish children who felt left out of the Christmas bonanza of gifts from Santa. (I was one of them!) Because we are an inclusive community comprised of families with mixed traditions, I want to send Christmas wishes to our members and friends who celebrate.

Here's hoping each of you enjoys the lights and delights of Chanukah!

L'shalom - Sarah

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Chanukah starts Sunday, December 6th and ends Monday, December 14th

FRI	12/04	7:00 pm	Shabbat Service with Shira Moskowitz, ISJL Fellow
SUN	12/06	NOON	Chanukah Party hosted by Religious School students and teachers <i>Join us for homemade latkes and lots of fun!</i>
		4:42 pm	First Light of Chanukah
WED	12/09	6:00 pm	Monthly Temple Board of Directors Meeting
FRI	12/11	6:00 pm	Shabbat Dinner
		7:00 pm	Shabbat Service with Rabbi Baroff
SAT	12/12	12:00 pm	Yiddish Class with Rabbi Baroff
		6:00 pm	Havdalah with Rabbi Baroff at Oaks by the Bay Park in St Andrews <i>followed by dinner out at a local eatery</i>
SUN	12/13	9:30 am	Religious School
		NOON	Stump the Rabbi over Lunch
WED	12/16	6:00 pm	Sisterhood Meeting
SUN	12/20		No Religious School this week
FRI	12/25		No lay-led service <i>Merry Christmas to our friends who observe it</i>
SUN	12/27		No Religious School this week
THUR	12/31		New Year's Eve <i>Happy 2016 y'all</i>

Shabbat Candle-Lighting Times for December 2015

Take a break from the hectic work week and mark the Day of Rest with lighting of the candles.

12/04 | 4:24 pm 12/11 | 4:25 pm 11/18 | 4:27 pm 11/25 | 4:31 pm

My Florida friends,

Our entire civilization runs on electricity – that is, the flow of electrons. The human brain and body – as well as that of most animals – similarly requires the movement of electrons.

But what exactly is an electron? Physicists know a great deal about how an electron behaves, and of course electrical engineers know how to manipulate their flow for human benefit. But what precisely is an electron? What is it made of? What does an interior of an electron look like?

An electron has mass (albeit very tiny) so it must be composed of something – it must have an inside. But scientists don't know what it is. That is why it is called an elementary particle. The "stuff" out of which the electron is composed is a mystery. An object of mysticism?

If it were found to be composed of even smaller parts, the same problem would remain. Either they

too would need to be composed of even smaller parts, or we must concede that they must be composed of mysterious stuff. And so on, forever.

There is embedded here a theological idea of great importance. There is at the heart of everything – even in the hard sciences – mystery.

Mystery by its nature allows the possibility of the life of the spirit. The presence of God lurks everywhere, even in the interior of the electron.

In the Torah Jacob says: behold God is in this place but I did not know it.

What place? Wherever we think and feel deeply about the world around us. There we can find the divine.

B'shalom uv'yididut (the spirit of peace and fellowship),

Rabbi Richard Baroff

The word "thanksgiving" is central to the Jewish and Christian value system. How grateful should we be – all of us – to Almighty God for the myriad bounties bestowed upon us daily. Therefore we need to express our gratitude for the grace which the Holy One shows us all the time.

Should we not show our gratitude in a formal way? Jewish people, following the ancient Israelites, celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles – called in Hebrew, *Sukkoth*.

Partially based on that biblical festival, found in the Book of Leviticus, the Pilgrims of Plymouth held the very first Thanksgiving in 1621. As we know, they invited the Wampanoag Indians, to whom they were grateful for helping them learn what crops to grow and how.

Thanksgivings were held intermittently for the next century and a half in various parts of the country. George Washington announced the first national Day of Thanksgiving on November 26 in 1789. Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national Day of Thanksgiving in 1863. Franklin Roosevelt signed a congressional law in 1941 making the fourth Thursday of November Thanksgiving Day. There it stands. Canada also has a Thanksgiving

Day – the second Monday in October.

William Bradford, the governor of the Plymouth colony in the 1620s, understood that the settlers should take nothing for granted. This was true especially after the first winter at Plymouth where so many starved. The Pilgrims were grateful for the advice of the Wampanoag, to be sure, regarding the proper seeds to plant in their due season. That is why the Indians were invited. But they also knew – as the ancient Israelites knew – that without God's blessings no human endeavor can succeed.

And so behind the American (and Canadian) Thanksgivings is a specific theology based in the Bible – the theology of gratitude. This concept became central to the Judeo-Christian value system, and so became wisely a very well established American tradition.

As you celebrate with family and friends be grateful for it all: for freedom from want, for people we care about, and for the liberties we enjoy as Americans.

May God bless you, your families and our country.

With warmest regards,

Rabbi Richard Baroff

DECEMBER JOYS & REMEMBRANCES

Y A H R Z E I T S — THEIR MEMORIES ARE FOR US A BLESSING

12/01 ANNE ALPER — MOTHER OF SARAH FELDSTEIN

12/14 DELOY KELLY — FATHER OF MARSHA KRASELSKY

12/19 WILLIAM ALPER — FATHER OF SARAH FELDSTEIN

12/24 ARTHUR SKOULA — HUSBAND OF ANITA SILVER SKOULA

KISLEV 25 MAURICE STARKMAN — FATHER OF MICHAEL STARKMAN

TEVET 4 ZELIG WAJSFELNER — GRANDFATHER OF MICHAEL STARKMAN



BIRTHDAYS

12/03 ANNE MILLER
 12/09 JOHN OSWALD
 12/19 MARILYN NATIONS
 12/22 ROBERT GOETZ
 12/31 MIKE GINIGER

ANNIVERSARIES

12/02 DARREN & BRANDY HAIMAN
 12/07 LISA RAHN & STEVE THEBERGE
 12/07 GEORGIE & TERRELL HARTZOG
 12/21 AVIVA & JOHN MALLARY



HAPPY CHANUKAH to our TBI family & friends.
 Enjoy the festivities and may all your latkes be crispy and delicious!

The Temple B'nai Israel Board of Directors

CONTACT US

Richard Baroff
 Sarah Farkas
 Stephen Theberge
 Michael Starkman
 Stephen Sickerman
 Robert Goetz
 Marsha Kraselsky
 Lori Zipes
 Mary Starkman
 Cynthia Gingold
 Shira Moskowitz

Rabbi
President & Azoy co-Editor
Vice-President
Treasurer
Secretary & Azoy co-Editor
Trustee
Trustee
Trustee
Sisterhood co-President
Sisterhood co-President
ISJL Fellow

richardbaroff@yahoo.com
farcott@gmail.com
fishhead51@gmail.com
mstarkman@comcast.net
sickerman@comcast.net
RobertJayGoetz@gmail.com
marsha.kraselsky@yahoo.com
lorizipes@gmail.com
mary_starkman@comcast.net
cynthia_gingold@yahoo.com
smoskowitz@isjl.org