

השופר haShofar

of DeKalb and Sycamore

Congregation Beth Shalom

820 Russell Road

DeKalb, IL 60115



<https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/hanukkah>">Hanukkah Vectors by Vecteezy

CALENDAR

Friday, November 1	Religious School	5 PM
	Shabbat service	7:30 PM
Tuesday, November 12	Board meeting	7 PM
Saturday, November 16	Thanksgiving Food Bag Assembly	10 AM
Friday, November 22	Religious School	5 PM
	Shabbat potluck (meat)	6:30 PM
Friday, December 6	Religious School	5 PM
	Shabbat service	7:30 PM
Thursday, December 12 <i>[new date]</i>	Book Group	7 PM
Saturday, December 14	Shabbat service	10 AM
Sunday, December 15	Hanukkah Shop	4 PM
	Film & Food Night	5:30 PM
Tuesday, December 17	Board meeting	7 PM
Sunday, December 22	Hanukkah Shop	4 PM
	Hanukkah Party	5 PM

November-December 2019 Cheshvan-Kislev-Tevet 5780

Jackie Laks Gorman, editor

From the President

Unto the members of Congregation Beth Shalom come these greetings from your president:

Thanks to one and all who labored so hard to make our recent High Holidays and Sukkot such a wonderful time! I write in the hope that this message finds you refreshed from the High Holidays and prepared to join us in the cold months to come for a variety of events and services this month and next. All events are listed on the first page of this issue of *haShofar* as well as within the pages to come.

Thanks to all who contributed during the holidays to our drive to feed those who hunger in our community with either food or bags; they were deeply appreciated. This year as in years past, we will be participating in the Salvation Army's Thanksgiving food drive. We are now collecting money and will soon ask for volunteers to help with packing and delivering the bags to the Salvation Army (on Saturday, November 16). ***Please send your check, made out to Congregation Beth Shalom, to David and Karen Sinason, 1530 Crayton Circle W, DeKalb, IL 60115, by November 14.*** Your gift is tax-deductible. Together, we can ease the burden of hunger in our community and provide a meal for those with limited means to celebrate, as we would wish to.

As the year begins we will be updating our method of reaching out to the congregation by email. Please watch for announcements via email to make sure you continue to remain in contact with the congregation. In addition, if you have not already done so with your annual dues, send your preferred email address to Jeff Hecht at Treasurer@BethShalomDeKalb.org.

For any questions about our activities, you can consult our congregation website at <http://bethshalomdekalb.org>. If you have questions or concerns not addressed on the website, please email me at President@BethShalomDeKalb.org or call me at (815) 762- 0204.

Shalom,
Rob Feldacker, President

From the Rabbi

Friends,

It was a joy to spend the autumn holidays with you for the first time. Sharing this season with the Beth Shalom community enriched my own holiday experience and helped me to grow closer to and better understand this unique and wonderful group of people.

Some of you know how much I love the holiday of Sukkot. It is my favorite for many reasons (some of which are described below), and a few of you heard a bit about a Jewish teaching I developed comparing the holiday and its predecessors, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, with a

favorite childhood song. I shared an abbreviated version of this teaching with some of you during our potluck lunch in the sukkah, but I want to share it with you in its entirety. Even if you heard the abbreviated version, I hope you'll enjoy it in its fullness here. It's much deeper than a fun comparison between a song we know and the season we've just completed. It's a reflection on what it means to be human and it's a challenge to put into practice many of the hopes and dreams we prayed about during the High Holidays.

What if the hokey pokey *is* what it's all about? I saw this saying on a bumper sticker, and ever since then, I've been certain that this is a very wise, very "Jewish" idea.

Think about it:

*You put your whole self in,
You put your whole self out,
You put your whole self in,
And shake it all about!*

On Rosh Hashanah, we put our whole selves "in": We reflect on our thoughts, behaviors, and relationships—we take an inventory of our "whole selves." Then, on Yom Kippur, it can be argued that we take our whole selves "out": We don't eat, we don't drink, we don't bathe or anoint ourselves, we don't engage in physical or sexual activities. And then—almost immediately thereafter—comes Sukkot, the next holiday in our busy autumn of Jewish festivals. Sukkot is all about turning ourselves around, shaking ourselves about.

On Sukkot, we leave the comfort of our daily lives and literally dwell outside in flimsy sukkot, intentionally temporary and fragile compared to the temperature controlled, well-lit, and insulated houses we normally choose. On Sukkot, we invite neighbors and guests to our table. (There is even a tradition of *ushpizin*—inviting unseen guests like our ancestors, people from our collective and personal histories who are not physically alive anymore, into our sukkot.) On Sukkot, we move from introspection, solitude, fasting, and theoretical new year's resolutions to the realm of action. We go outside to build a sukkah.

We are commanded to "gather together" the four different species of plants into our hands: The three branches of the leafy lulav are pressed against the skin of the etrog and (as we just did in the sukkah outside the temple) we shake it all about!

Tradition teaches that the etrog and lulav represent a person. The palm looks like a backbone, a spine. The myrtle leaves remind us of our eyes. The willow leaves appear like a mouth. And the etrog is shaped similarly to a heart.

In the hokey pokey, we take one part of our bodies at a time—first one arm, then the other, then our legs, our front sides, our back sides, our heads, then finally our whole selves—and put them in. If we were to follow the order of the spiritual interpretation of the significance of the parts of lulav and etrog, we would instead put our backbones in, then our eyes, our mouths, and our hearts, before we'd shake it all about.

What would it mean to participate in life and in community with each of these parts of our bodies? To really put our backbones, our eyes, our mouths, and our hearts “in” as we lived our daily lives?

What might it mean to put our backbones “in”?

- We would better decisions.
- We would have better boundaries with ourselves and those we love.
- We might give more to our community (or we might give less!).
- We would use our strengths—that part of us which holds things together, our literal backbones—for good in the community.

What might it mean to put our eyes “in”?

- We would use our special skills to “see” things in a new way, enlightening those around us with our unique insights.

What might it mean to put our mouths “in”?

- We would be more thoughtful about the words we speak, and the words we refrain from speaking.
- We would avoid gossip, reach out to those in need, offer words of kindness and support to our friends and neighbors.

What might it mean to put our hearts “in”?

- We would love with our whole hearts, “dance like no one was watching,” love like we’d never been hurt. □
- We would give only as much as we received, respect our emotional selves, and care for our own hearts, never being reckless with our own hearts or the hearts of others.

What would it mean to “shake them all about”?

- We would do everything completely differently than is usually our pattern! I really think the hokey pokey *is* what it’s all about.

Other people seem to agree with me. Down the street from where I used to live, there is a recovery house for people struggling with addictions. Every morning as I walked by, I could hear them singing the hokey pokey. At first I thought it was just a kitschy part of their morning routine or, as a fellow passerby remarked, “it must be an exercise in playfulness, or a way to get them all to practice following directions.” But I now believe that these recovering addicts are coming to understand a fundamental truth about life, about change, about teshuvah.

*You put your whole self in,
You put your whole self out,
You put your whole self in,
And shake it all about!*

— Rabbi Julie Adler

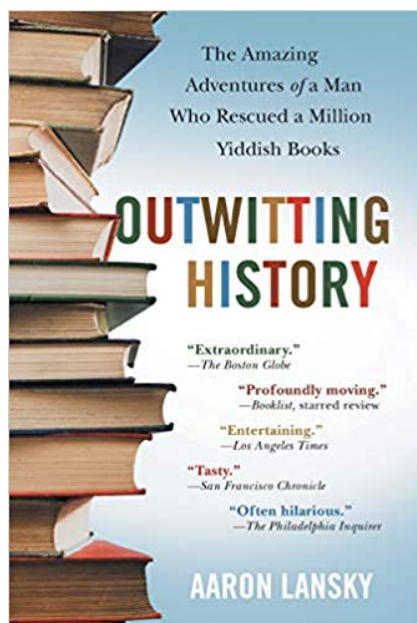
Thanksgiving Food Bag Assembly

We are still collecting money to fill Thanksgiving Bags. The list of requested items is from the Northern Illinois Food Bank, and as in years past we hope to continue donating a large portion of the needed food. ***Please send your money as soon as possible*** to David and Karen Sinason, 1530 Crayton Circle W, DeKalb, IL 60115. Make your check payable to Congregation Beth Shalom, and note “Thanksgiving Bags” in the memo section.



We will be assembling the bags at the above address on Saturday, November 16, at 10 AM. Dress warmly if it is cold outside, and plan on two hours, a little bit of bending, and maybe using your car to transport the filled bags to the Salvation Army building.

Next Book Group



Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books by Aaron Lansky is our December Book Group selection. It's a fast-paced memoir by the founder of the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, about his original adventures collecting books for the Center. Lansky has been a recipient of a MacArthur “genius” fellowship.

Publishers Weekly describes the book as “both hilarious and moving, filled with Jewish humor, conversations with elderly Jewish immigrants for whom the books evoke memories of a faraway past, stories of desperate midnight rescues from rain-soaked dumpsters, and touching accounts of Lansky’s trips to what were once thriving Jewish communities in Europe.”

When he started, Lansky thought fewer than 70,000 Yiddish books existed. Now, the Center has over 1.5 million books and sends volumes out to libraries all over the world for their collections.

Our discussion will be at 7 PM on Thursday, December 12. *Note that this date is a change from the previously announced December 5.*

— Elizabeth Bass, Adult Ed chair

Next Film: Lonely and Loving in '60s Israel

The Matchmaker, a bittersweet 2010 Israeli comedy, will be featured at our December 15 Film & Food night. It takes place in Haifa, where it was filmed, as the swinging '60s come to an Israel that is still grappling with the impact of the Holocaust on its citizens.

Imaginative teenaged Arik is hired by a matchmaker, Yankele, to gather information and spy on potential mates for clients. The story is told in a flashback to 1968, with real news from military fronts being heard on TVs and radios. Arik knows little about love and longs to go to war. Yankele is a Holocaust survivor with a mysterious past. We also meet and see a melting pot of Israelis and see some of the differences between Sephardim and Ashkenazic immigrant families.

The movie was nominated for seven Israeli academy awards and won for lead actor and lead actress.

The movie will be preceded by a Middle Eastern buffet, once again catered by Jamrah. There will be chicken shawarma, falafel, hummus, and more. Advance reservations for dinner are required and may be made by sending a check for \$12 per person, made out to Congregation Beth Shalom, to Elizabeth Bass, 224 Rolfe Road, DeKalb, IL 60115. ***Checks must be received by December 9.***

Dinner will be at 5:30 PM. (If you come a bit earlier, the Hanukkah Shop will be open beginning at 4 PM.) You are welcome to join us for the movie only; it should start around 6:20. Friends are welcome too.

— Elizabeth Bass, Adult Ed chair

Hanukkah Celebration: Mark Your Calendars

Congregation Beth Shalom's annual Hanukkah party will take place on Sunday, December 22—the first night of Hanukkah. Children's crafts and games will begin around 4 PM, with the potluck meal beginning at 5. Please bring a dairy dish (no meat) to share. Latkes, applesauce, sour cream, and drinks will be provided. Please RSVP to Jason Hanna (jasonkhanna@yahoo.com) by Monday, December 16, so that we can be sure to have enough latkes. We will begin setting up and decorating at 3 PM, and the Hanukkah Shop will be open from 4 to 5 (as well as a brief time toward the end of the party).



Be sure to bring your own menorah so we can light candles together. Candles will be provided.

Continuing a tradition begun by the late Rabbi Barb Moskow, we will once again hold the Great Menorah Showcase. The rules:

1. Build a menorah (a Hanukkiah) out of any materials you can find. The more unusual, the better!
2. The Hanukkiah must be kosher. (A kosher Hanukkiah must have eight branches with the candle or oil holders on one level in a straight line. The shamash—the candle used to light the others—should either be out of line or on a different level than the other eight candles.)
3. Most importantly, you must be able to light the Hanukkiah without putting it, or the synagogue, on fire.

Finally, we will again be collecting toys for the Children's Learning Center. Please bring a new, unwrapped toy for children from birth to age 10.



Hanukkah Shop

Congregation Beth Shalom's Hanukkah Shop will be open two days this year. The shop will be open for business on Sunday, December 15, from 4 to 5:30 PM (before Film & Food Night begins). The shop will then be open again on December 22 at 4 PM, before the Hanukkah Party. We'll open briefly during the party itself as well. We'll be fully stocked with dreidels, gelt, menorahs, and candles, as well as general Judaic items.

If you have any questions, contact me at jgorman7@juno.com. In addition, let me know as soon as possible if you will be needing large quantities of dreidels, gelt, or anything else so I can make sure we have enough merchandise on hand in the store.

— Jackie Gorman, Gift Shop coordinator

Upcoming Shabbat Services and Potlucks

Friday, November 1: Shabbat service at 7:30 PM, followed by an oneg.

Friday, November 22: Shabbat potluck dinner at 6:30 PM. This is a meat meal.

Friday, December 6: Shabbat service at 7:30 PM, followed by an oneg.

Saturday, December 14: Shabbat service at 10 AM.

High Holy Days Thanks

Many thanks to the congregants and community members who contributed to the success and meaningfulness of our High Holy Days services, led for the first time by Rabbi Julie Adler. As always, music added to our experience of the holidays. Thanks to Zach Weiss, who once again joined us as cantorial soloist; to Emma Cohen, who beautifully played the cello for Kol Nidre; and to our congregational choir, Koleynu, under the direction of Harvey Blau. The choir's performance attested to all the work and practice put in by its members.

Special thanks also go out to Roberta Maxfield and Barbara Kaufmann, who chanted Torah on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, respectively. (Barbara also baked the treats served on Erev Rosh Hashanah and after Neilah.) Haftarah was read by Rivka Baker on Rosh Hashanah and Carol Zar on Yom Kippur. Jerry Zar once again blew the shofar and ended Yom Kippur with a truly impressive blast. And Jeff Hecht, in addition to serving as Gabbai, installed a new sound system to enhance our experience of the service.

Thanks also to the many congregants and community members who accepted an honor by coming to the bimah for an aliyah or carrying, lifting, or wrapping a Torah. Several congregants—including Elizabeth Bass; Rob Feldacker; Caitlin, David, and Jackie Gorman; Jeff Hecht; and Karen Sinason—also helped to set up the synagogue for our most well attended services of the year.

To everyone who helped, including those I may have forgotten—*toda raba!* You are appreciated.

— Jason Hanna, Ritual Chair

What's Happening at Religious School

Our Religious School is becoming something truly special. Our students are having an immersive experience with the Hebrew language: After encountering a new letter in the Hebrew alphabet, we immediately learn a few words in modern Hebrew that begin with that letter. The students are also really enjoying working through a book with skits for each of the Torah portions. As such, we are learning the stories in the Torah one by one as we act out the parts and imagine what it would feel like to *be* each of the characters (including God!).

In our Jewish holiday cycle, we just celebrated Simchat Torah and began our reading of the Torah anew in the book of Genesis. We in Religious School (or “Friday School,” as one of the students calls it!) are also acting out the skits for these evocative stories in Genesis and asking important questions about the nature of good and evil, human free will, and the often complicated and sometimes troubling dynamics of family relationships in these early stories of our people.

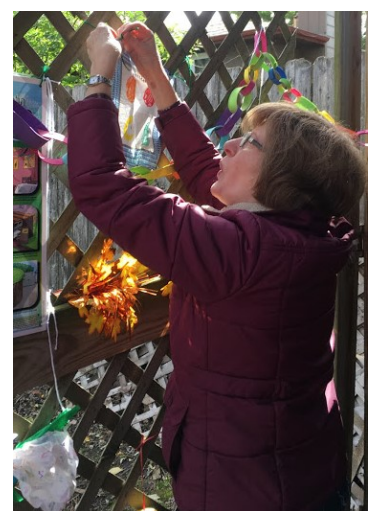
— Rabbi Julie Adler

Celebrating Sukkot

Having recovered from the High Holy Days, we built our congregational sukkah on October 13. The following Shabbat, we celebrated Sukkot with a Yizkor service, in which Rabbi Adler led us in a brief meditation on those we have loved and lost. We then ate a potluck lunch. Both the service and the lunch took place in the sukkah. We enjoyed ample sun and crisp fall air as we shook the lulav.

Thank you to everyone who helped construct the sukkah, including James Cohen, Rob Feldacker, David Gorman, Josh Rodriguez, and Nahum Shemi. (Rob did double duty, as he also helped to take the sukkah down.) And thanks to everyone who helped to decorate the sukkah (and who helped Rabbi Adler as she supervised the children in making decorations): Emma and Lady Cohen, Rachael and Eowyn Feldacker, Caitlin and Jackie Gorman, Lorelei and Phoebe Hanna, and Nora London. And thanks again to Lady Cohen for the tapestries that really help to spruce up the sukkah.

— Jason Hanna, Ritual Chair





Social Action

Thank you to all who brought donations of non-perishable food, cleaning supplies, and personal care products to Yom Kippur services. The Salvation Army Food Pantry was appreciative and stacked the items directly on the shelves to be distributed. Remember that there is always a need there for plastic, paper, or cloth bags to hold the groceries.

Thank you to Steve Greenfield for volunteering at the pantry, and to Carol and Jerry Zar for providing and delivering a hearty, warm meal to the residents of Hope Haven Shelter.

— Karen Sinason, Social Action Chair

Toda Raba

Thank you to the following people who made donations to the congregation (this does not include dues payments) through late October. All donations received after that date, and those specifically for the Thanksgiving Bags food drive, will be printed in the next issue of *haShofar*.

Elizabeth Bass
Harvey and Liz Blau
Derryl Block and Steven Greenfield
Deborah Booth
Barry Dredze
David and Jacqueline Gorman
Jeffrey and Leslie Hecht
Barbara Kaufmann
Ilya Krishtal
Robert and Anna Dee Lastick

Nora London
Eric and Linda Mogren
Dennis and Phyllis O'Connell
Rochelle and Frederick Quade
Laurie and Josh Rodriguez
Herb and Irene Rubin
Linda Schwarz
William and Gail Shaw
David and Karen Sinason

Dues/Donation Reminder

If you have not yet sent in your Congregation Beth Shalom dues for the 2019-2020 year, please do so as soon as possible. Dues and donations can be made either by check or credit card/PayPal (online). You can choose to send in the full amount in a single payment or spread your dues/donations out over several payments. Several members have also arranged with their banks to have dues/donations automatically debited each month—a convenient option! Please remember that, for tax purposes, only those donations received by the end of December 2019 will be eligible to be included in your donation tax deduction letter for 2019. If you have questions, or would like to make any special arrangements, please contact Jeffrey Hecht, the CBS Treasurer, by email:

Treasurer@BethShalomDeKalb.org.

An Important Message About Our Mailings

The congregation will soon be changing the system we use for our mailing list, which will affect how we send out *haShofar* and all email announcements. We hope to have it running early next year.

If you are *not* currently a member and have been receiving *haShofar* and other electronic messages and ***wish to continue receiving them***, you must email Jackie Gorman at jgorman7@juno.com with your current email address. If you do not send her your information, you will not be placed on the new list.

How Hanukkah Came to DeKalb

Elizabeth Bass recently found this story among Avi's papers about an earlier time in DeKalb (and Beth Shalom) history. We're not sure of the exact year but it was probably about 40 years ago—at any rate, before Koleynu was organized, and when Hillel was in charge of what's now the Hanukkah Shop. Here is Avi's story:

Just before Chanukah, I received a phone call from Dan Coonce of the city's committee on improving the city's holiday activities.

He knew I might have wall banners at Hillel's Chanukah Store. Could he purchase some? And might there be some group interested in doing something similar to caroling on Lincoln Highway? And did I know where to get something Jewish to put up on the Lincoln Highway lamp posts between the new Christmas trees?

The city purchased seven banners and placed them at the DeKalb Bank, Schultz Brothers, Hall of Cards, the University Shop, Malone's, Art Munson's, and City Hall. That's how the banners got there.

I reported back that we had no choir, and that there was no tradition of "Chanukah caroling," and I gave Dan a few suggestions as to where to look for lamp-post menorahs for next year.

And that's the story of how DeKalb found Chanukah.



Odds & Ends

Don't forget that the synagogue has a library full of books on many areas of Jewish interest, including fiction, history, holidays and celebrations, biographies, cookbooks, and children's books. Everything is done on the honor system. Borrow a book or two and bring them back when you're done.

The congregation's website has a page just for "Pictures." Make sure you check it out to see photos of congregational events.

Against all odds, the Israeli national baseball team qualified for the 2020 Olympics. There will be six teams competing in all; so far, only Israel and Japan have been named. Right now, the 24-member Israeli team has four native-born Israelis. Many of the others are American Jews who were required to become Israeli citizens in order to participate.

Chatter

At Malta Elementary School's fall assembly, **Phoebe and Lorelei Hanna**—Courtney and Jason's daughters—each received an award for achievement in reading.

If you have information you'd like to share with the congregation in the next issue of haShofar, email Jackie Gorman at jgorman7@juno.com.