



Beth Ami

Colorado Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

Volume 5; Issue 12

Beth Ami is a welcoming community where we connect to Jewish past, celebrate Jewish present, and link to Jewish future through a humanistic philosophy.

December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Beth Ami Event Schedule

Friday 12/5 – Storytime dates at the Boulder JCC (1:15-2pm – see more below)
Sunday 12/7 – JCFS session (Chanukah celebration at a Beth Ami member's home in Denver. New families are welcome! RSVP to bethamicolorado@gmail.com)
Sunday 12/14 – Beth Ami community and guests celebrate Chanukah at the Boulder Dinner Theater and see *Fiddler on the Roof* (12pm – RSVP to bethamicolorado@gmail.com – see more below)
Wednesday 12/31 – Annual Beth Ami New Years Party (8pm at the Hirsch Family home in Boulder – see more below – direct questions to marti.hirsch@mail.com)

Other Community Events

Sunday 12/7 – Research around the Pale JGSCO Event (10am – see more below)
Thursday 12/11 – Boulder JCC Community Groundbreaking (4pm – at the new Boulder Jewish Commons, Corner of Cherryvale & Arapahoe – see more [here](#))

Celebrations

Anniversaries

12/8 – Gordon & Grace Gamm
12/27 – Sheila & John Malcolm

Birthdays

12/1 – Ashlynn Anderson
12/4 – Michelle Davis
12/6 – Evan Wilson
12/12 – Herb Josepher
12/13 – Michael Hirsch
12/20 – Calla Stafford, Laura Moin
12/21 – Bill Baum
12/25 – Don Griss, Vic Goldberg
12/29 – David Stafford

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Submission Deadline 11:59pm, Fri 12/26



Upcoming Events

January

Wednesday 1/7 – Beth Ami Book Club discusses *My Promised Land, The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* by Ari Shavit (11am at Brio's near Cherry Creek Mall – see more below)
Sunday 1/11 – JCFS session (at Countryside Rec.)
Saturday 1/17 – Havdalah/Adult Ed Evening (more info below)
Sunday 1/18 – *Charles Ives Take Me Home* by Jessica Dickey (1pm, Curious Theater)
Sunday 1/25 – JCFS session (Mitzvah project – location TBD)

February

Wednesday 2/4 – Sunday 2/15 – Denver Jewish Film Festival
Sunday 2/8 – JCFS session (at Countryside Rec.)
Sunday 2/15 – *Traveling the Silk Road* (1pm, Denver Museum of Nature and Science)
Saturday 2/21 – Havdalah/Adult Ed Evening (more info below)
Sunday 2/22 – JCFS session (Mitzvah project – location TBD)

The Paradox and Modern Miracle of Chanukah

By Peter Schweitzer, Rabbi, City Congregation of New York

It may be hard to believe, considering the fanfare it gets, but Chanukah is technically a minor festival. In fact, it is the only Jewish holiday without any historical basis in the Bible and is barely mentioned in the Talmud. Compared to Shabbat, Passover and the High Holidays, the Chanukah lights barely flicker.

Historically, the story of the oil burning eight days had a quaint appeal, but in an age of science and skepticism, miracle tales have fallen into disrepute and lost their luster. However, with the rise of political nationalism in the 19th century, the military message of the holiday gained popularity. This theme captivated the early Zionists as well. Pioneers reclaiming the land and soldiers of the early Haganah were naturally regarded as Maccabean descendants. Then, faced with the tempting tinsel and bright lights of Christmas, American Jews asserted themselves with Maccabean vigor and elevated Chanukah to a celebration of major import. If there's any doubt about this, ask any child.

So perhaps the real miracle of Chanukah is its own rebirth and renewal. What might have become a historic footnote was given new life. Yet, at the same time, while

Chanukah celebrates the Maccabean refusal to succumb to the lure of Hellenism, Chanukah Reborn in the 20th century is, paradoxically, saturated with commercialism and materialism. It now is at risk of adopting the very notions that it was meant to crush. Yet if we attempt to contain the excess that our children especially have come to expect we equally risk their own Maccabean uprising.

What, then, can be the message of Chanukah for us today? Surely it is not about resisting modern culture, which we embrace rather whole-heartedly. Nor can it be about asserting our religious identity, which we don't feel is endangered. And certainly it is not about demonstrating military prowess, which isn't a particularly popular position these days.

But Chanukah is about giving warmth to one another through the cold winter. It is about bringing back the sun as the short days of the year grow longer again. It is about the victory of hope over despair, of joy over sorrow. In the end, Chanukah is all about light, which is what the holiday was all about in the very beginning.

Beth Ami Celebrates Chanukah at the Boulder Dinner Theater

Fiddler on the Roof Summary

In the little village of Anatevka, Tevye, a poor dairyman, tries to instill in his five daughters the traditions of his tight-knit Jewish community in the face of changing social mores and the growing anti-Semitism of Czarist Russia.

Rich in historical and ethnic detail, *Fiddler on the Roof* has touched audiences around the world with its humor, warmth, and honesty. The universal theme of tradition cuts across barriers of race, class, nationality, and religion, leaving audiences crying tears of laughter, joy, and sadness.

With a celebrated score by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick, *Fiddler on the Roof* features songs loved the world over: *Sunrise, Sunset, If I Were A Rich Man*, and *Matchmaker* to name a few. *Fiddler on the Roof* is simply Broadway at its very best.

Where: 5501 Arapahoe Ave. Boulder 80303

See more at: <http://www.bdtstage.com>

Our Chanukah party is Sunday, 12/14 at 12:00pm.
RSVP to bethamicolorado@gmail.com.

Beth Ami Book Club Reads My Promised Land by Ari Shavit

Ari Shavit is a columnist who serves on the editorial board of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. Shavit begins Israel's story at the beginning with Zionism in the late 19th century. He knows how to express solidarity and criticism simultaneously.

From the beginning, Shavit says Zionism skated on

thin ice; there was another people living in the same land. The miracle of Israel is based on denial. The book condemns the perpetrators of crimes in 1948 yet he says if it wasn't for them, the state of Israel would not have been born. A New York Times reviewer says that Shavit is a dreamer with an addiction to reality.

Hebrew Story Connections at the Boulder JCC

For 2 – 5 Year Olds

This class is posted in the Fall BJCC catalog and was encouraged by Beth Ami friend Beth Litz! It will be taught by Sheila Malcolm, a lifelong educator who's passionate about sharing good children's books!

Gather 'round for an inspiring Hebrew and English PJ Library story-time with movement, props and a focus on meaningful Jewish values. Sheila will follow each

beautiful book with an activity, a healthy snack and a goodbye song. We'll learn about our beautiful world, recycling and sharing our love! No prior knowledge of Hebrew necessary.

December 5, 1:15 – 2 pm.

No cost to attend, but please register online so we know you're coming. Drop-ins ok. beth@boulderjcc.org

Havdalah/Adult Ed Evenings – Save the Dates!

Each gathering will include a brief Humanistic Havdalah Service, light dinner and drinks and a lifelong learning presentation to feed our minds!

We'll begin at 5 pm. Locations and topics will follow in newsletters and emails.

Dates: Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21 and Apr. 18 in Denver and Boulder.

Welcome in 2015

Don't miss the Hirsch Family New Years Party and it's famous silver clad ball drop from the second floor. Come for a few minutes or stay for hours. The whole family is invited!

Bring some festive food or drink to share. Beth Ami members and friends, look for an Evite in your in box coming soon. RSVP via Evite or email

marti.hirsch@mail.com.

Jewish Genealogical Society of Colorado (JGSCO)

The Jewish Genealogical Society (JGS) of Colorado provides an opportunity to be associated with those who share a common interest in Jewish Genealogy. Meetings and workshops are a forum to exchange information, to share resources and experiences, and to learn new techniques for research. Expertise and topical areas of interest span the globe and spectrum of Jewish history, including Colorado-based family history, but also for roots in Europe, South America, South Africa, Canada,

and elsewhere. Origins can be Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Israeli, and Mizrahi. The Society is a nonprofit and run 100% by volunteers. Annual dues are \$30 per individual or \$40 per household and includes personal mentoring.

Visit www.JGSCO.org for a current schedule of upcoming programs or to join today.

Contact info@jgsco.org with questions or to be added to the email list.

News From National

Watch podcasts of Colloquium 2014 Evolution or Revolution: Intermarriage, Jewish culture and the future of Jewish community.

Follow this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/IISHJvid>

Support Beth Ami With An Honorary Donation

To donate to honor or remember a family member, friend, or Beth Ami member, please email our treasurer at treasurer@bethami.com. A notice of the contribution will be sent to the honoree or family of the person. Our congregation expresses its gratitude to the following individuals whose donations were received in the last month.

- Kathy Kane honors Gerrie and Len Karasik who recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary

Contact Information

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for Humanistic Judaism**

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Hi, all. I'm Rachel Hirsch. I was a student at the Beth Ami JCS until my Bat Mitzvah in 2008.

I am the editor of the Beth Ami newsletter this year, and plan on continuing for as long as possible (I am currently a student at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA).

I welcome any input you have, so feel free to email me any articles or information you want to see in next month's newsletter.

-Rachel