

# Stories Beneath the Shell



## FEATURES

# The festival of lights: How UMD students are celebrating Hanukkah this year

*by Natalie Davis*

Hanukkah ends Monday evening, concluding eight days of celebration for Jews across the world — including Jewish students at the University of Maryland.

Senior psychology major Jolie Chaleff said that she loves making latkes — Jewish potato pancakes — with her family each year and celebrating Hanukkah with her loved ones and friends.

“I will be celebrating the first night at home with family, then celebrating another night at school with friends,” Chaleff said.

Unlike Chaleff, Zoe Sokol doesn’t have family in Maryland.

“I am not able to be with my family over the holidays because of being on campus,” said Sokol, a sophomore bioengineering major.

She’s celebrating Hanukkah alongside her roommates instead, singing Hanukkah songs and eating latkes and attending some of the Hillel’s Hannukah events.

Hillel hosted events all throughout the week for students to celebrate and light candles together.

Sarah Molot, a freshman cinema and media studies and public policy double major, said that she enjoys playing the dreidel game, a game which involves spinning a top in an attempt to win chocolate candies depending on which Hebrew letter the top lands on.

“I light the candles every night, say the prayers, and play dreidel with my friends,” Molot said.

Molot said she really appreciates everything that the Hillel has organized this year and the opportunities and resources that they provide for students to be able to gather and celebrate Hanukkah.

Hillel wasn't the only organization hosting Hannukah events on campus. Jewish students have many more opportunities to celebrate Hanukkah on campus this year than last. Chabad hosted a community candle lighting on McKeldin Mall last Monday and Meor Maryland, another campus-affiliated Jewish organization, hosted a Hanukkah cookie decorating party on Wednesday.

Jordan Osterweil, a sophomore neuroscience major, said her family has been able to connect over FaceTime to say the Hanukkah blessings for the candles together.

Osterweil believes that Hanukkah is a significant holiday because it serves as a yearly reminder of "Jewish strength and survival," she said.

To Brianna Loshin, a sophomore biology major, the holiday of Hanukkah means "lighting up the world."

Loshin participates in a gift-giving game called "Mystery Maccabee" with her friends, in which they choose gifts for one another anonymously — like Secret Santa but for Jews.

"It's amazing to be able to be with my friends in person," Loshin said.

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