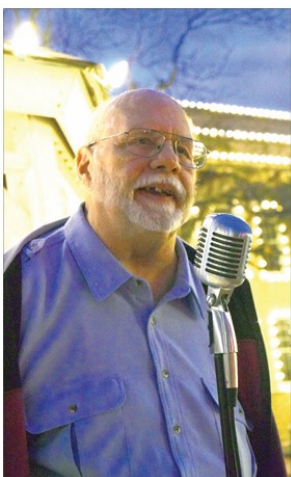




JEWISH COMMUNITY OF THE HILL COUNTRY

January—February 2025

Hanukkah at the Courthouse, December 15, 2024



Many thanks to the Kerrville Daily Times for the photos



Shabbat Services

Friday, January 10, 2025 at 6:00pm

Friday, January 24, 2025 at 6:00pm

Friday February 14, 2025 at 6:00pm

Friday February 28, 2025 at 6:00pm



Torah Study

Saturday, January 4, 2025, 11:30am to 1:00pm

Saturday, January 18, 2025, 11:30am to 1:00pm

Saturday, February 8, 2025, 11:30am to 1:00pm

Saturday, February 22, 2025, 11:30am to 1:00pm

Holidays for 2025



Tu B'shevat: February 14th (Friday)



Purim: March 14th (Friday)



Passover: April 12th (Saturday)



Rosh HaShana: September 22nd (Monday) & 23rd (Tuesday)



Yom Kippur: October 1st (Wednesday) & 2nd (Thursday)



Sukkot: October 10th (Friday)



Hanukkah: December 14th (Sunday)

If We're Here, We May as Well Dance!

By Don Burda



Recently, I was reading the World Happiness Report for 2024. Yes, there really is such a thing; see for yourself: <https://worldhappiness.report/>. As they have done for many years, the Scandinavian countries comprised the top four places. And in fifth place—Israel!

What? Israel? In a country currently in conflict and surrounded by countries who are more enemies than friends, it didn't make sense. Yet, there it was in black and white. But wait—there's more!

In a survey taken within a week after the Hamas attack, optimism increased—a lot! Yes, you read correctly. It seems to defy reason. Something horrible happens, pessimism increases, right? Not in Israel. Indeed, within days of the attack, the phrase on the lips of the Israelis was “We will dance again,” and the song, “*Am Yisrael Chai*” (“The People of Israel Live”) was heard night and day throughout the country. As one Israeli commented, “We are in the midst of it; this is our home and there is nowhere else we wish to go. So, the way I see it is this: if we're here, we may as well dance.”

It may be difficult for those living in the United States or, indeed, Western countries in general, to comprehend this. In those countries, especially the United States, we are taught from our earliest years to cherish our individuality and that this concept is the

best of all possible worlds. Why, then, is our country ranked 23 out of 39 in the Happiness Report and Israel is number 5? A quick search took me to the “Unpacked” website and the following:

“In a region fraught with conflict, Israel consistently ranks as one of the happiest nations on earth. Bound by family, united through community, and strengthened by a shared resilience, Israelis embrace life amid adversity. Choosing hope over despair, their happiness endures not because life is easy, but because choosing happiness is a defiant act of faith in a place where life is cherished, even in the toughest of times.”

A trip to their YouTube channel expands on this topic in a video and it is definitely worth the 17+ minutes you'll spend there (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLVZzRrcM-c>). In a word, the answer is “COMMUNITY.” Community is the lifeblood of the Jewish people. To paraphrase Christian Scripture (Acts 17:28), “in it we live and move and have our being.”

And this is why the JCHC exists, to bring the joy of community into the lives of our members. If you haven't been to services in a while, perhaps it's time to return. The investment of time is small, 2 hours out of 720 a month. But the reward is great. Come and see!

The Way We Were . . .

Here's another peek into the early days of the JCHC through the eyes of our Historian, Esther Jordan. I'm writing this on December 26, 2024 and Hanukkah began yesterday. So, let's return to 1983 and 1987 to see what Hanukkah remembrances Esther left us for those years in the pages of her scrapbooks.



And some photos from 1987. Esther noted that there were over 50 people in attendance!



Hey— who's the guy with all the hair?

