## Jews in Hanukkah celebrations Holiday began sundown Friday

## **BY MEGHAN V. MALLOY** Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — Holiday lights of different kind started appearng in windows last night, gently winkling against the winter now.

But they aren't for Christmas. lather, the light comes from the irst candle lit on the menorah or Hanukkah.

The holiday is not as widepread as Christmas, but that is nore reason for Jews to celeorate it, said Rabbi Susan Bulba Carvutto, of Augusta's Temple Beth-El.

"We're a minority. We're differountry's Jewish population, "but the birth of Jesus. ke the Maccabees, we should elebrate our differences."

The celebration has expanded n the last few years. Christmas n Old Hallowell now includes a Ianukkah celebration and chilren's activities. This year, the A1 o Go in Gardiner will host a atke cafe from 12:30 to 2 p.m. unday. Families are invited to ring their menorah and Ianukkah music.

ot believe there has been a comunity Hanukkah celebration ere. Every community should e able to do something."

Montell, a mother of four, said

she hopes the latke party will draw Jewish families and those of other faiths, too. She also would like the event to become an annual tradition.

"You don't want your children to be upset and ask, 'Why can't we have a tree?' or 'Why can't we celebrate Christmas?" Montell said. "You want them to be proud of their heritage and traditions, and the only way to do it is to live it."

Hanukkah — derived from the Hebrew word "dedication" — is a Jewish celebration commemorating the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem after it was destroyed by Syrian King nt," Bulba Carvutto said of the Antiochus IV, 200 years before

The Jews mobilized a liberation movement called the Maccabees who successfully deposed Antiochus and regained control of the temple. Despite having only enough oil to light the temple for a day, the flame burned for eight days; hence, Hanukkah is an eight-day celebration referred to as "the festival of lights."

"I've lived in Gardiner all my parties with friends, observe the fe," cafe organizer Susan significance of the Temple of fontell said. "In that time, I do Jerusalem's rededication and some will exchange small gifts each of the eight nights.

But don't call Hanukkah a Christmas," Bulba Carvutto said. "Jewish Christmas." "That's not necessarily a bad Meghan V. Malloy — 623-3811, ext. 431 "This is, rabbinically speaking, thing, I suppose, but I think the mmalloy@centralmaine.com

Get ready Festival of Lights with these basic tor the Festival of Lights Hanukkah terms:

HANUKKAH (can also be spelled Hannukah, Chanukah or Chanukkah): Eightnight Jewish observance meaning "dedication." The holiday observes the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem and the eight nights the Temple's eternal flame stayed lit, though there was only enough oil to light the flame for one night.

GELT: Yiddish for "money," gelt is usually given to children in the form of small coins, or chocolate coins.



## MENORA:

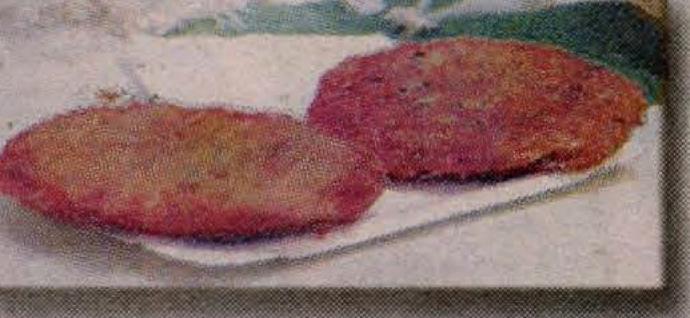
Nine-branched candelabrum lit nightly to recall the eight nights the flame in the Temple of Jerusalem burned. One candle is lit the first night, two the second night, and so on until all eight are lit at the end of the holiday. A ninth candle is lit nightly to light the others.

MYZVAH: A good deed. Many U.S. Jewish congregations will celebrate "Mitzvah Day" on Christmas Day by volunteering at soup kitchens or other organizations. Staff graphic by Sharon Wood

holiday," Bulba gift-giving aspect could be deminor a Carvutto said. "It's not a reason emphasized." Jewish families often attend to miss work or school."

As Christians observe the As cultures change, however, birth of Christ on Christmas, many Jews in the United States, "Hanukkah has become more important because we do live in will practice Mitzvah Day a Christian society and it occurs "mitzvah" the Hebrew word for around the same time as "good deed."

DREDEL: Derived from the Yiddish phrase "to turn," this is a four-sided top used as part of a game. Gelt is sometimes used as currency, though candy is popular with children. Hebrew letters representing "all," "nothing," "half" and "put" tell the player what they must do with his or her gelt. For example, a person who rolls "half" would place half of their currency in a "pot." Once a person loses all their gelt pieces, they're out of the game.



LATKES: Shallow-fried pancakes of grated potato and egg, often flavored with grated onion. May be topped with a variety of condiments, ranging from sour cream to applesauce or sugar, or they may be served plain. The oil for cooking the latkes is reminiscent of the oil in the Temple's eternal flame.