

Hanukkah, Jewish Festival of Lights draws to a close as eighth candle lit

By Pat Gentzler

As the season to be jolly and for giving presents approaches, Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, has drawn to a close.

The date of Hanakkah is different every year according to the Jewish calendar. This year Hanukkah was Dec. 5-12.

"It's not as commercialized as Christmas," said Deb Anon, a junior at UNL who is Jewish, but she added that it has its share of tradition.

The festival commemorates the rededication of the Jewish Temple by the Maccabees following a military victory over the Syrians. In the temple, a flask was found with only enough oil in it to last a short time. It was lit, and miraculously burned for eight days.

From this came the tradition of the eight-day Hanukkah festival which is celebrated today. At sundown preceding each of the eight days of Hanukkah, candles are lit, one on the first day, two on the second, and so on. The special candle-holder, called a menorah, holds eight candles, one for each day, and another candle that is used to light all the others.

A bracha, or blessing, is said each evening, and gifts are exchanged.

Anon, who is from Cheyenne Wyo., was among the Jewish students at UNL who were unable to go home for the holiday.

"My parents are saving all my presents for me at home," she said.

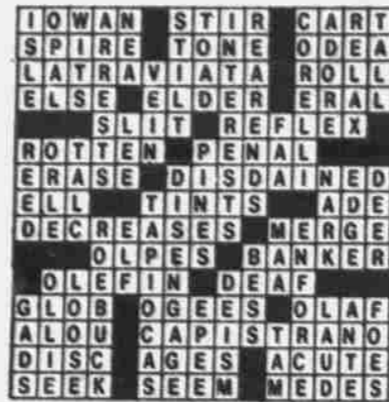
Latkas, or potato pancakes, served with apple sauce are among some of the special food served during Hanukkah, Anon said.

She described a game played by the children during Hanukkah. A top, called a dreidel, spins and depending on what letter is up when the top stops, a child must either put money or candy in or out of the top.

The brachot, or blessings, are many times the children's responsibilities, too, Anon said.

She said that when she is home for Christmas vacation, he family really does not do anything special.

"We usually go out to eat on Christmas," she said, "but that's because it's my grandmother's birthday."



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