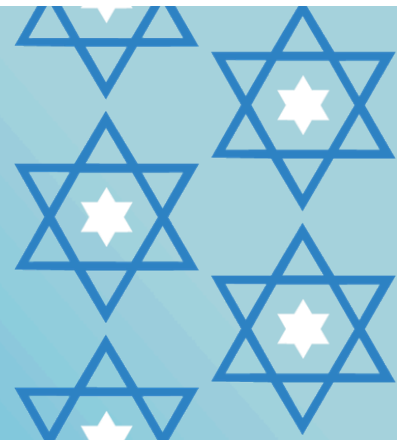


Jewish American Heritage Month

Community Voices: Judy



My name is Judy and I was born in Shanghai, China just after the end of World War II. As Jews, my parents and sister were extremely fortunate to be able to escape Nazi-occupied Europe in 1940 and they spent the war under Japanese occupation in Shanghai. We came to the United States in April 1948 and I grew up in New York City. We lived in a neighborhood that had many Jewish families and also many people who had survived ghettos and concentration camps in Europe.



My family in Shanghai in 1947.

I attended public schools but I also went to Jewish after-school and Sunday programs that taught Jewish history, culture, and religion. In these classes — and from my parents — I learned to be very proud of my heritage. I also learned that, though Jews are a small part of the population, they have made enormous contributions to world society in science, literature, the arts, politics, and many other fields.



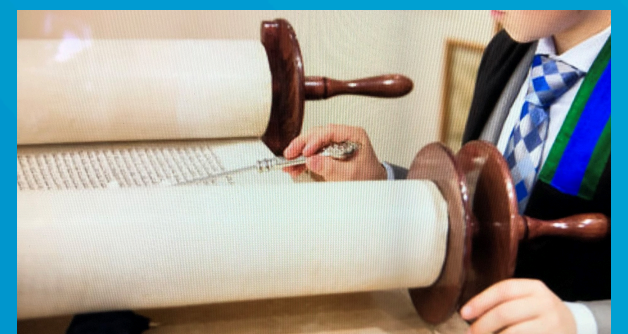
The Passover table just before the *Seder* - the Passover meal - and the story of the Exodus from Egypt is read from a booklet called the *Hagaddah*.

In my family we celebrate all the Jewish holidays such as Chanukah, which commemorates the Jewish victory in Jerusalem over the Syrian Army over 2,000 years ago, and Passover, which celebrates the Jews' exodus from Egypt where they had been slaves.



Our Chanukah Menorah on the eighth night.

My family also held Bat and Bar Mitzvahs for our children and grandchildren. These ceremonies celebrate the passage into adulthood at age 13 and require months of study to be able read from the Torah — the scroll with the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.



Our grandson reading from the Torah at his Bar Mitzvah.

There are still many instances of antisemitism — hatred of Jews — in the United States, and it is only through education that people can learn that everyone should be able to practice their religion openly and without fear.

Judy is Chairperson of the Nevada Governor's Advisory Council on Education Relating to the Holocaust.