

Reno lights giant menorah to begin Hanukkah celebration



Marcella Corona, mcorona@rgj.com 11:37 p.m. PST December 6, 2015



(Photo: Marcella Corona/RGJ)

The annual lighting of the giant menorah on Sunday in downtown Reno meant different things to different people and marked the first day of Hanukkah and winter.

The lighting occurred at Reno City Hall with the giant Christmas tree as the backdrop for the event, which attracted a mix of residents. At least 100 people showed up despite the bitter bite of the cold air.

Joe Gorman and his 4-year-old son, Moses, held on to each other throughout the hour-long ceremony that newly featured several fire dancers, music and food.

“My children are the center of Hanukkah,” Gorman said. “A lot of the times the lighting part of it you do for the children.”



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Reno resident Joe Gorman, 35, holds his 4-year-old son, Moses, on Sunday just before the annual lighting of the giant menorah at Reno City Hall. *(Photo: Marcella Corona/RGJ)*

Linda Duffié of Sparks took her Reno friend, Don Burt, 55, to the ceremony as a way to teach him about her Jewish religion.

“I think ignorance causes fear,” Duffié, 57, said. “I think it shows that you are able to choose and practice your religion, and I don’t want to have to be fearful.”

“I hope there are people here who came who aren’t Jewish so they can learn about it,” she said.

Linda Duffié, 57, of Sparks, and her friend, Don Burt, 55, of Reno, sit on lawn chairs on First Street in downtown Reno. A crowd of at least 100 residents attended the annual lighting of the giant menorah on Sunday at Reno City Hall in celebration of the Jewish holiday Hanukkah. *(Photo: Marcella Corona/RGJ)*

The menorah lighting is part of the celebration of the Jewish holiday Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. The lighting honors a moment in ancient time when a day’s supply of consecrated oil burned for eight days during the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Reno’s event started in 1997, said Rabbi Mendel Cunin, of the Chabad of Northern Nevada.

“Every year, it takes on new meaning,” Cunin said just before he lit the menorah on Sunday. “This year it’s coming during a sad period, but we are celebrating our religious freedom.”

“What we’re celebrating is the light and the miracle of the oil,” he said. “We are spreading the light and good deeds, and each day we’re adding to the deeds and adding to the light.”



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Daniel Farahi, 27, of Reno claps as he watches fire dancers perform on Sunday during the annual lighting of the giant menorah at Reno City Hall. (Photo: Marcella Corona/RGJ)

Daniel Farahi, 27, of Reno has been attending the event every year.

Farahi said the ceremony represents an open celebration of the Jewish religion without fear.

“Thank God that in this beautiful country and amazing city we are able to celebrate without fear with Jews and non-Jews alike together,” Farahi said. “We’re bringing some light from the holiday to everyone, whether it’s Hanukkah or Christmas or Kwanzaa or anything else this time of year.”

Marcella Corona covers breaking news for the Reno Gazette-Journal. Contact her at 775-788-6340, online at mcorona@rgj.com or follow her on Twitter at [@Marcella_Anahi](https://twitter.com/Marcella_Anahi) or on Facebook at Facebook.com/Marcella.Anahi