

# Shlomo Levinger mesmerizes at the Jewish Federation Campaign Opening Event



“How does he do it?”  
“Wow!”  
“He’s amazing!”  
“I hope he comes back again.”  
Shlomo Levinger, magician and mentalist, came to Scranton on October 19 and engaged, beguiled and bewildered young and old with his performances at the Jewish Federation’s Major Donor reception and communitywide event at the Scranton Jewish Community Center.

Rhonda Fallk and her committee prepared a beautiful reception of fine pastry, wine, cheese and fruit in the Goodman Lounge. Donors of gifts \$1,200 and higher enjoyed Shlomo’s “up close” magic, enthralled by the ease of execution

and his lovely personality. Everyone was invited to join the communitywide show held in the Koppelman Auditorium where Shlomo’s family friendly show took place. Dr. Daniel Chejfec, executive director of the Jewish Federation, See “Shlomo” on page 7



## Commemorating October 7

Because October 7 was, this year, on the first day of Sukkot, we felt that the most appropriate way to commemorate the day and to advocate for the release of those

hostages still in Gaza was to erect a symbolic sukkah inside the Jewish Community Center’s Goodman lounge with signage referring to October 7. Since then, the living

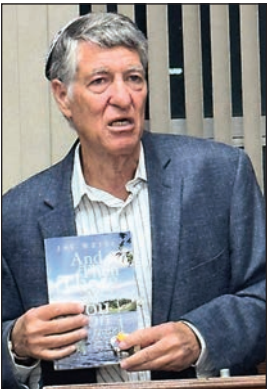
hostages have been returned to their love ones, and the remains of some of those hostages who were killed on October 7 or in captivity have also been returned to their families,

allowing them a measure of closure. The remains of most of the dead hostages remain still in Gaza. We will continue our advocacy until the last of them is brought back home.



## Jay Weiss discussed his new novel at JCC

Jay Weiss, a longtime Scranton resident who grew up just two blocks from the Jewish Community Center, returned home on September 16 for an engaging author discussion and reading of his new novel, “And Then There Was You.” The free event drew local book lovers eager to hear from Jay and learn about his creative process. Attendees also had the opportunity to purchase signed copies of the book at the conclusion of the program.



The doctor has ordered a relaxing vacation far from the stresses of his whirlwind life. But showing up on a beach somewhere is likely to be the least relaxing activity possible. All it’ll take is for one teenage girl to go ballistic and recognize him, and any semblance of resting will

be over in an instant. What’s an exhausted megastar to do? Enter one ingenious accountant who suggests a location so implausible it’s perfect. And Paul is set for the most relaxing summer of his life, free to be himself for the first time See “Novel” on page 10

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

#### New Sefer Torah

Congregation Beth Shalom has welcomed a new Sefer Torah.  
Story on page 4

#### History

The latest history column looks at Jewish fighters in WWII.  
Story on page 5

### CANDLE LIGHTING

|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| November 7.....  | 4:32 pm |
| November 14..... | 4:25 pm |
| November 21..... | 4:20 pm |
| November 28..... | 4:17 pm |
| December 5.....  | 4:15 pm |

### PLUS

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# Mayor Paige Cognetti Visits Beth Shalom Academy

BY DR. RUTH LEITER-ITZKOWITZ,  
PRINCIPAL, BETH SHALOM  
ACADEMY

Beth Shalom Academy was honored to welcome current mayor and mayoral candidate Paige Cognetti for a special visit to the school this week. Mayor Cognetti spent more than two hours touring the BSA campus, engaging with students from preschool through high school in lively discussions about leadership, education and public service.

The mayor began her visit by meeting with elementary students, asking them questions about what they are learning and encouraging them to think about the importance of being active, responsible members of their community. Students eagerly asked the mayor about her career and what inspired her to go into politics.

In the middle school session, students continued the conversation with thoughtful and mature questions about how government functions. Sixth-grader Lani Itzkowitz asked the mayor about the legality of running for two offices at the same time and how such a situation would play out. Mayor Cognetti was clearly impressed by the depth of the students' curiosity and their



understanding of local government. During the high school roundtable, students explored topics of leadership and civic collaboration. Ninth-grader Leah Harkavy asked, "Do you talk to other mayors about issues in their communities?" The mayor smiled and responded enthusiastically, "Of course! We discuss the issues facing our communities and share new ideas to improve things." She praised the students for their insightful questions and expressed how inspiring it was to see young

people so engaged in public affairs. The mayor's tour also included a stop in the preschool, where she was greeted by songs and smiles. Together with pre-k student Naomi Goldstein, she sang a joyful duet of "Dip the Apple in the Honey," celebrating the excitement of the Jewish holiday season.

Regardless of political affiliation, Beth Shalom Academy welcomes leaders from across the political spectrum, providing students with meaningful opportunities to expe-



rience democracy and civic responsibility in action. Mayor Cognetti's visit reminded everyone present that leadership begins with curiosity, learning and a desire to improve the world around us.

*Beth Shalom Academy is a vibrant independent Jewish day school dedicated to academic excellence, character development, and joyful learning for students preschool through high school. For more information, visit [www.bethshalomacademy.com](http://www.bethshalomacademy.com).*



## The Reporter

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## Join the Great American Smokeout

# Break the habit: Quitting smoking for seniors

BY DR. KEN SEBASTIANELLI,  
MEDICAL DIRECTOR, ELAN  
SKILLED NURSING AND REHAB

Quitting smoking is one of the best things anyone can do for their health, but for seniors, the decision

to stop smoking can bring about significant health benefits and dramatically improve overall quality of life. November 20 is the annual Great American Smokeout and, in this month's blog, we explore some benefits and tips for seniors who want to quit smoking for good.

## WHY QUITTING SMOKING MATTERS FOR SENIORS

There are numerous health benefits to quitting smoking for seniors, primarily since quitting smoking improves overall cardiovascular health, and reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke, which are more common in older adults. Seniors who quit smoking can see improvements in lung function and a decreased risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer. Additionally, quitting smoking can bolster the immune system, making seniors less susceptible to illnesses and infections.

Studies have shown that quitting smoking, even later in life, can add years to a person's life expectancy. The sooner a senior quits, the greater the potential increase in lifespan. Quitting also improves the overall See "Seniors" on page 11



Helping children & families this holiday season!

Dear Friends,

We would once again like to thank you for your generous support of last year's Project Joy. During the Christmas and Chanukah holiday season, Project Joy provides toys, books, stuffed animals, and other gifts to many children who are in need throughout our area. Sadly, statistics show that one in five children in Lackawanna County lives below the poverty line.

Each year, local agencies submit wish lists to our committee, which we then strive to fulfill to the best of our ability. Thanks to your generosity, over 150 children affiliated with several nonprofit organizations experienced a brighter holiday season last year.

This year, we'll be wrapping gifts in the JCC Auditorium with our incredible team of dedicated volunteers on Thursday, December 11th, at 9:00 AM. The more the merrier—feel free to bring friends!

We kindly ask for your continued support. Donations can be made payable to JCC Project Joy and sent directly to the JCC. As in past years, we are also accepting new, unwrapped toys. Please note: This year's deadline is December 3rd, as agencies require the gifts ahead of both Chanukah and Christmas.

Thank you for your continued support of this meaningful initiative. These agencies count on us each year, and your generosity is deeply appreciated.

Finally, we would like to take a moment to recognize and thank Carol and Jeff Leventhal, whose family led Project Joy for over 30 years. Though they have recently moved out of the area, their legacy continues to inspire us. We are honored to carry the torch and continue this important work in our community.

With gratitude,

**Project Joy 2025 Committee Members:**  
Ann Lebowitz Monsky  
Amanda Sagona  
Alma Shaffer Mullin  
Susan Blum Connors

\*For questions or additional information please email [annlmonsky@gmail.com](mailto:annlmonsky@gmail.com)  
\*Donation checks may be payable to JCC Project Joy, and mailed to the JCC at the address below:

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COMMUNITY NEWS

DARVO and the cease-fire

As I write these lines, Hamas and Israel have signed a cease-fire deal that may bring our hostages home. *Pidyon sh'vuyim* (the rescue of hostages) is an important Jewish value and we welcome the possibility of an end to the violence. Of course, by the time you read this the deal may have fallen through or may be holding. I hope for the latter, but prepare for the former.

The conflict with Hamas and the early reactions to the cease-fire deal do not give a guarantee that the deal will hold. In an early communique, Hamas

announced that specific longtime prisoners in Israeli jails were included in the exchange, such as Marwan Barghouti – an Arab leader from the West Bank serving several consecutive life sentences who was responsible for the organization of terrorist attacks during the first Intifada. Israel's announcement, by contrast, clearly states that neither Barghouti nor any of the other names announced by Hamas will be included in the exchange. So what is going on?

It would not be the first time that Hamas makes

false announcement in preparation to create a situation in which they can blame Israel for the violation of the agreement. Israel, for once, met this upfront by clearly saying these prisoners will *not* be in the list of Palestinian prisoners to be released. Considering that in the Gilad Shalit exchange one of the prisoners released was Yahia Sinwar, Israel unwillingness to release these murderers is quite understandable – to us.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.



The Hamas announcement fits into a larger strategy that the Palestinian side has been using for many years, and that it parallels very closely with the concept of DARVO.

DARVO is an acronym for “Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender.” The concept is most commonly used to describe a strategy used by abusers to escape responsibility, but research indicates it is a common and effective manipulation strategy as well. So how does this apply to the issue at hand?

Deny: For several decades, the Palestinian and Arab leadership, supported by the Soviets while there was a Soviet Union, denied Israel's right to exist, denied the role played by Palestinian leadership – especially Amin al Hussein – in the Nazi Genocide, denied the pressure exerted by Arabs for Britain to block Jewish immigration (a U.S. representative of Palestinian origin even went to the extreme of saying how “her people” welcomed the Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis). They also denied there ever was a Jewish Temple and denied the connection of Jews to the land. I could go on, but I think *deny* applies here.

Attack: Not only have Arabs been attacking the Jewish state since the day it declared Independence, but they also blamed Israel for everything that went wrong for them. All their inefficiency and failure in setting up their own institutions and governance has been blamed on the “Zionist occupation.” They also blamed Israel for “oppression” and current Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas went as far as blaming Jews for the Holocaust in his Ph.D. thesis. Israel is attacked for everything they do, for everything they don't do and for everything that looks convenient in the Palestinian political agenda.

Reverse victim and offender: Of course, since Israel is responsible for everything that goes See “DARVO” on page 9

JCC Early Learning Center celebrates Sukkot with a beloved tradition

Our cherished Sukkot tradition continues at the Jewish Community Center's Early Learning Center! Jimmy and Carole Cader brought sweet treats to our preschoolers and joined them in



celebrating the holiday inside the JCC Cader Family Sukkah, a family tradition that has been lovingly passed down since the 1960s.

Cantor Aronzon from Temple Israel shared the meaning of Sukkot with the children, teaching See “Sukkot” on page 11



DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming Reporter issues.

| DEADLINE                  | ISSUE    |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Monday, December 12 ..... | January  |
| Monday, January 12 .....  | February |
| Monday, February 9 .....  | March    |
| Monday, March 9 .....     | April    |

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# A joyous celebration: Hachnasas Sefer Torah at Congregation Beth Shalom

On September 28, between the excitement of Rosh Hashanah and the sincere holiness of Yom Kippur, the Beth Shalom community experienced a day of pure joy and unity as Michael and Sheila Cutler hosted a magnificent Hachnasas Sefer Torah at Congregation Beth Shalom.

The day began at the new Beth Shalom Academy High School building, located adjacent to the synagogue, where friends, families and community members gathered

for the moving mitzvah of letter writing in the new Torah scroll. The atmosphere was filled with warmth and anticipation as the Cutlers, together with Sofer Rabbi Doniel Goldstein, helped participants inscribe the final letters that would bring the sacred Sefer Torah to completion.

From there, more than 250 community members, from near and far, joined in a spirited Torah procession through the streets of Scranton. The





air was alive with music, dancing and heartfelt celebration as men, women and children rejoiced together, escorting the new Torah with singing and clapping in a beautiful public display of faith and pride.

See “Sefer” on page 7




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# Jewish fighters in World War II

(Tenth article of history series)

BY DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

The best known story of Jewish fighters in World War II is the story of the Warsaw Ghetto rebellion that started on the eve of Passover in April 1943. While the rebellion was doomed to fail from its very inception, and the fighters knew it, it allowed many Jews to escape the ghetto through the sewers during the fighting. Their courage, along with the connection with Passover, made the story of the uprising a very important part of the Jewish narrative, becoming a symbol for generations to come and an important element that became a part of the Jewish military ethos.

It is a poorly known fact that, during World War II, the British Army included a Jewish Brigade. But how did it come to be created?

The leadership of the Jewish Agency for Palestine (yes, that was its name then), including Ben Gurion, determined early on that it was in the best interest of the Jews to support the Allies' efforts against Nazi Germany, even if that meant suspending the fight for an independent Jewish state. The Agency offered the British government to form a Jewish battalion to fight in Europe as part of the British army. London, however, was reluctant to form an exclusively Jewish Palestinian battalion. It tried, instead, to form a Palestinian battalion including both Jews and Arabs. When many Jews volunteered for the battalion while very few Arabs did, the British opted for recruiting Palestinian Jews into the regular army rather than as a distinct colonial battalion. This policy held for most of the war.

In 1944, however, London came under pressure to reconsider the formation of a Jewish battalion and, toward the end of 1944, the Jewish Brigade was officially formed. The Colonial office, however, feared that the Brigade could become the origin of a Jewish force strong enough and experienced enough to challenge the control over Palestine. They put Brigadier Ernest Benjamin (a British Jew) as commanding officer, and they integrated the Brigade into the 15<sup>th</sup> Army group. The Arabs of Palestine saw the formation of the Jewish Brigade as a British betrayal. London kept the Brigade stationed in North Africa away from military action until the end of 1944, when it transferred them to Italy, but they were not sent into action until the spring offensive of 1945. They were stationed in northern Italy near the Yugoslavian border.

Some of the Brigade's officers were in fact members of the Haganah and they helped organize what came to be known as "the Brichah" ("The Escape"), an operation intended to bring Holocaust survivors from Europe into Palestine by breaking the British blockade. While the brigade was disbanded in 1946, some of its officers were instrumental in sustaining the transfer of Jews to Palestine afterwards; they also organized the famous "Exodus 1947" operation, which became an important element in the fight for the establishment of a Jewish state.

But the brigade also had a darker side. Some brigade members, incensed at what they saw as a lack of will on the part of the Allies to pursue and punish Nazi war criminals involved in the execution of the Holocaust, took justice into their own hands. Based on survivors' testimonies, they pursued, arrested and tried in kangaroo courts Nazi officers and soldiers. They functioned as judges, jury and executioners.

But there was also a brighter side to the brigade. Many soldiers wrote in their diaries of the reaction of Holocaust survivors when they saw the jeeps of the brigade with the Star of David on it: their eyes would light up at the idea of a Jewish army. Many of these survivors related years later how the sight of the brigade helped bring hope back into their lives.

There is also the story of the Jewish volunteers who jumped behind enemy lines to try to establish communications with the anti-Nazi resistance in several European countries. One of them was Hannah Szenes, who parachuted in Hungary and helped rescue Hungarian Jews bound for Auschwitz. She was eventually caught and executed by firing squad. There was also Enzo Sereni, an Italian Jew who parachuted into Italy and helped connect the Italian resistance with the Allied troops. He was eventually caught by the Nazis in November 1944 and sent to Dachau.

After the war, their fighting experience – especially of the members of the Jewish brigade – was an important asset to the Yishuv (Jewish community in British Palestine) because of their experience of functioning in a modern army. They were central to the development of tactics and logistics for the newborn IDF, and thus were instrumental in giving the Jewish army an advantage over the Arabs in spite of the great initial numerical disadvantage.

There were numerous other uprisings in concentration camps and mass escapes from death camps, as well as Jewish resistance groups all over occupied Europe. The best known of the resistance groups was that of the Bielski brothers in the marshes of Belarus. This group not only fought the Nazis, but sustained a population of over 1,000 Jews


hiding in the forest. The history of Jews in World War II is a history of resistance and a struggle to preserve life. When the Israeli Knesset voted to establish an official day to commemorate the Shoah, it named it – appropriately – Yom HaShoah V'HaGvurah (The day of commemoration of the Holocaust and Heroism).

## Judaic lecture at U. of Scranton

Professor Azzan Yadin-Israel of Rutgers University will present a lecture on "Solving the Mystery of Adam and Eve's Forbidden Fruit" on Thursday, November 13, at 7:30 pm, at the University of Scranton, Brennan 228. All are welcome. For further information, contact Dr. Marc Shapiro at 570-941-7956.



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# Beth Shalom Academy unveils innovative Makerspace for hands-on learning

Beth Shalom Academy has launched a state-of-the-art Makerspace, ushering in a new era of hands-on, experiential learning for its students. The new creative hub allows children to bring their classroom lessons to life through exploration, experimentation, and innovation using a variety of materials and tools.

Designed to connect theory with practice, the

Makerspace encourages students to apply what they learn in math, science and the humanities through projects that engage multiple learning modalities: visual, kinesthetic and tactile. From engineering simple machines to constructing artistic models, students gain an enriched understanding of subject matter by creating, building and problem-solving in real time.

The space also emphasizes creativity and practical application. Students discover that knowledge is not just something absorbed; it's something that can be shaped, molded and transformed. The school hopes to further expand the Makerspace by adding a 3-D printer, giving students the ability to design and fabricate their own models and inventions. Beth Shalom Academy is currently seeking sponsorships to help bring this exciting addition to fruition.

The vision and development of the Makerspace are credited to Mr. John Sakson, the director of general studies for the Elementary Department at Beth Shalom Academy. Mr. Sakson's passion and dedication have been the driving force behind this initiative. He spent the summer meticulously planning, designing and assembling the space – transforming a concept into a thriving learning environment.

Mr. Sakson brings a wealth of experience from both the private and public education

See “Unveils” on page 9

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Shlomo. . . . . Continued from page 1

welcomed everyone and introduced David Hollander and Alex Itzkowitz, 2025-26 Campaign co-chairs, who illuminated the mission of Federation and our fund-raising. Finally,



Alex introduced Shlomo Levinger! The audience roared with laughter, wonder and appreciation at the combination of skill, fun and, of course, *magic*!

If you enjoyed the show,  
If you appreciate the Federation’s mission,  
Then go to our website and donate to this year’s campaign.  
Help us do some more magic of our own by supporting the Community Campaign!  
We can’t do it without you.



Sefer. . . . . Continued from page 4

The procession culminated in a lavish catered luncheon, where the festivities continued. The social hall and sanctuary were filled to capacity, overflowing with *ruach* (spirit), gratitude and communal pride. Laughter, song and heartfelt words of blessing echoed throughout the afternoon as participants celebrated not only the gift of a new Torah, but also the unity and vibrancy of the Scranton Jewish community.

Beth Shalom Academy and Congregation Beth Shalom extend heartfelt blessings and gratitude to the Cutler family for sharing their

joyous occasion with the entire community. The sustaining strength and new life of the Scranton Jewish community are only possible through the devotion and generosity of long-standing members such as Michael and Sheila Cutler, whose dedication continues to inspire and uplift all who know them.

May the merit of their generosity and devotion to Torah bring them and their family continued health, happiness and *nachas*, and may the new Sefer Torah serve as a source of inspiration, connection, and holiness for generations to come.





# THE MAGIC OF CUBA

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The Jewish Federation of NEPA is excited to offer local, community organizations the opportunity to post events to our Community Calendar. Published events will be included in our weekly Ma Nishma NEPA email.



## How to Submit a Community Event

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**Step 2**

Click the button (top right)

[SUBMIT YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT](#)




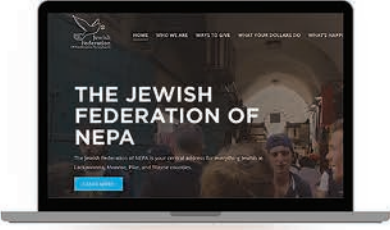
**Step 3**

Register or log-in


**Step 4**

Include your event details and submit the form. Events will be published once approved.

We reserve the right to edit the content of the event submissions and approve or deny publication of events.



[jewishnepa.org](http://jewishnepa.org)

 570.961.2300



• Regular Schedule of Services •

ABINGTON TORAH CENTER

Rabbi Dovid Saks  
President: Richard Rutta  
Jewish Heritage Connection  
601 Jefferson Ave., Scranton, PA 18510  
570-346-1321 • website: [www.jewishheritageconnection.org](http://www.jewishheritageconnection.org)  
Sunday morning minyan 8:15 am at Elan Gardens,  
465 Vernard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA

BETH SHALOM CONGREGATION

Rabbi Alex Hecht  
President: Asher Grossman  
1025 Vine St., Scranton, PA 18510 (corner of Vine & Clay Ave.)  
570-346-0502 • fax: 570-346-8800  
Weekday - *Shacharit*: Sun. 8am; Mon., Thurs. & Rosh Chodesh 6:30 am; Tue., Wed. & Fri. 6:45 am; Sat. & holidays 8:45 am.  
*Mincha* during the week is approx. 10 minutes before sunset, following by *Maariv*.

CHABAD OF THE ABINGTONS/ JEWISH DISCOVERY CENTER

Rabbi Benny Rapoport  
216 Miller, Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411  
570-587-3300 • [JewishNEPA.com/minyan](http://JewishNEPA.com/minyan)  
Weekly service for Shabbat and all Jewish holidays  
*Kabbalat* Shabbat at sundown (summer at 7 pm)  
Saturday mornings: 9:30 am, *Kiddush* 11:30 am  
Call for more information.

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF THE POCONOS

Rabbi Mendel Bendet  
570-420-8655 • website: [www.chabadpoconos.com](http://www.chabadpoconos.com)  
Please contact us for schedules and locations.

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism  
Rabbi Elliott Kleinman  
President: Liza Roos Lucy  
Contact person: Cheryl Badner, Congregation Administrator  
615 Court St., Honesdale, PA 18431  
570-253-2222 • fax: 570-226-1105

CONGREGATION B'NAI HARIM

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism  
Rabbi Alan Berlin  
President: Lisa Spector  
P.O. Box 757, Sullivan Rd., Pocono Pines, PA 18350 (located at Rt. 940 and Pocono Crest Road at Sullivan Trail)  
570-646-0100 • website: [www.bnaiharimpococonos.org](http://www.bnaiharimpococonos.org)  
Shabbat morning services 10 am-noon; every other Saturday.

JEWISH FELLOWSHIP OF HEMLOCK FARMS

Rav Shoshana Mitrani Knapp, [ravshoshi@gmail.com](mailto:ravshoshi@gmail.com)  
President: Jean Seltzer  
1516 Hemlock Farms, Lords Valley, PA 18428 (located at 540 Forest Dr., Hemlock Farms, Lords Valley, PA 18428)  
570-775-7497 • e-mail: [jfhf1516@gmail.com](mailto:jfhf1516@gmail.com)  
Friday evening Shabbat service 7:30 pm  
Saturday morning Shabbat service 10 am

MACHZIKEH HADAS SYNAGOGUE

Rabbi Mordechai Fine  
President: Meshulem Epstein  
600 Monroe Ave., Scranton, PA 18510  
570-342-6271

OHEV ZEDEK CONGREGATION

Rabbi Mordechai Fine  
1432 Mulberry St., Scranton, PA 18510

TEMPLE HESED

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism  
Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz  
President: Cheryl Friedman  
1 Knox St., Scranton, PA 18505 (Off Lake Scranton Rd.)  
570-344-7201 • website: [www.TempleHesed.org](http://www.TempleHesed.org)  
E-mail: [templehesed@comcast.net](mailto:templehesed@comcast.net)  
First Friday Shabbat 6pm, other Fridays 7 pm; Chanting Circle Saturdays at 11:30 am

TEMPLE ISRAEL OF THE POCONOS

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
Rabbi Daniel M. Zucker • President: Debbie Smith  
711 Wallace St., Stroudsburg, PA 18360  
(one block off Rt. 191 (5<sup>th</sup> Street) at Avenue A)  
570-421-8781 • website: [www.templepoconos.org](http://www.templepoconos.org)  
E-mail: [tipoc@ptd.net](mailto:tipoc@ptd.net)  
Friday evening Shabbat 6 pm; Saturday morning Shabbat 10:30 am

TEMPLE ISRAEL OF SCRANTON

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
Rabbi Miriam Spitzer  
Cantor: Vladimir Aronzon  
President: David Hollander, [Hollanderx@aol.com](mailto:Hollanderx@aol.com)  
918 East Gibson St., Scranton, PA 18510 (located at the corner of Gibson & Monroe Sts.)  
570-342-0350 • e-mail: [office@templeisraelscranton.org](mailto:office@templeisraelscranton.org)  
Mon. & Thurs. 7:15 am; Tues., Wed. & Fri. 7:25 am; Rosh Chodesh & *Chagim* weekdays, 7 am; Shabbat morning service 9:30 am

# From California to Pennsylvania: JFS welcomes social worker Mendy Kreiman

BY ARTHUR E. LEVANDOSKI, C.M.D.

Mendy Kreiman, L.S.W., is a licensed social worker dedicated to supporting individuals through compassionate, client-centered care. He holds a master’s degree in social work from Daemen University, where he graduated in May 2025.

With more than nine years of experience as a healthcare chaplain and three years serving as a prison chaplain, Mendy has provided spiritual and emotional guidance to people in some of life’s most challenging



Mendy Kreiman, L.S.W.

circumstances. During his internship with Jewish Family Service of the Desert, he offered case management and mental health counseling, drawing on both his clinical training and pastoral background.

Known for his empathy, active listening and trauma-informed approach, Mendy helps clients find resilience and healing through personalized, holistic support. Recently relocated from California to Pennsylvania, he’ll continue

his work at JFS as a social worker committed to fostering emotional well-being and growth.

Outside of his professional life, Mendy enjoys hiking and exploring the outdoors and finding inspiration and balance in nature.

YOGALATES W/MEGAN MIZANTY

## YOGA AND PILATES

Burn calories, fit and tone your body  
A mix of yoga poses and pilates strength training.

Bring a mat and water

Wednesdays 5:15pm-6:00pm  
Begins March 5th  
in the JCC Koppelman Auditorium

FREE for JCC members  
\$10 drop-in fee



Are you on the Jewish Federation's email list?

We send updated announcements and special event details weekly to those who wish to receive them.

Send Dassy Ganz an email if you would like to join the list.  
[Dassy.ganz@jewishnepa.org](mailto:Dassy.ganz@jewishnepa.org)





## Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving

Use this planned giving quick reference guide to help determine the best strategy for achieving your philanthropic and financial goals.  
For more information or to discuss these planned giving options, please contact Daniel Chejfec, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of NEPA, 570-961-2300 (x1) or [daniel.chejfec@jewishnepa.org](mailto:daniel.chejfec@jewishnepa.org).

| If Your Goal is to:   | Then You Can:  | Your Benefits May Include:  |
|---|--|---|
| Make a quick & easy gift  | Simply write a check now   | An income tax deduction and immediate charitable impact                                       |
| Avoid tax on capital gains  | Contribute long-term appreciated stock or other securities   | A charitable deduction plus no capital gains tax  |
| Defer a gift until after your lifetime  | Put a bequest in your will (gifts of cash, specific property, or a share or the residue of your estate)        | Exemption from federal estate tax on donations  |
| Receive guaranteed fixed income that is partially tax-free                                      | Create a charitable gift annuity   | Current & future savings on income taxes, plus fixed, stable payments                         |
| Avoid capital gains tax on the sale of a home or other real estate                              | Donate the real estate or sell it to a charity at a bargain price  | An income tax reduction plus reduction or elimination of capital gains tax                    |
| Avoid the two-fold taxation on IRA or other employee benefit plans                              | Name a charity as the beneficiary of the remainder of the retirement assets after your lifetime                | Tax relief to your family on inherited assets   |
| Give your personal residence or farm, but retain life use                                       | Create a charitable gift of future interest, called a retained life estate                                     | Tax advantages plus use of the property   |
| Make a large gift with little cost to you   | Contribute a life insurance policy you no longer need or purchase a new one & designate a charity as the owner | Current & possible future income tax deductions   |
| Receive secure, fixed income for life while avoiding market risks                               | Purchase a charitable gift annuity or create a charitable remainder annuity trust                              | Tax advantages & possible increased rate of return  |
| Give income from an asset for a period of years but retain the asset for yourself or your heirs | Create a charitable lead trust   | Federal estate tax savings on asset & income tax deductions for deductions for donated income |
| Create a hedge against inflation over the long term   | Create a charitable remainder unitrust   | Variable payments for life plus tax advantages  |
| Make a revocable gift during your lifetime  | Name a charity as the beneficiary of assets in a living trust  | Full control of the trust terms during your lifetime  |



Unveils. . . . . Continued from page 6

sectors, blending innovation with strong academic grounding. His vision for the Makerspace reflects his belief that students learn best when they can explore ideas in concrete, meaningful ways – connecting classroom lessons to the world around them.

Beth Shalom Academy celebrates this exciting



DARVO. . . . . Continued from page 3

wrong, the Palestinian side did nothing wrong. The years of terrorist attacks and wars, as well as the diplomatic offensives at the U.N. and other forums, are not seen by Palestinians as offenses. They are presented (and for many Palestinians they are seen) as a reaction to the perceived offenses by Israel. This plays very well on social media with a audience that is generally poorly educated about the complexities of the conflict, an audience that is also ignorant of history. Under the assumption that the weaker side is always right, it follows that the stronger side is always wrong, so the stronger side cannot, in their mind, be the victim – only the offender.

Arafat’s strategy was cruder and more direct. His approach is referred to in psychology as “accusation in a mirror,” a common hate speech incitement technique, which consists of accusing the other of doing what the offender him/herself is doing. In past years, that Arafat strategy was sometimes referred to as “boomerang speech.”

Both strategies were championed by the Nazis and the Soviets who trained the Arabs on state propaganda. Israel, on the other hand, is guilty of naivete. Convinced that facts are accepted by everybody, Israelis used over time concepts like “everybody is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts,” missing the point on how opinions can become facts, especially in the era of social media.

The American Jewish community has not been better than the Israelis. It is time that we stand up together against the distortion of reality spearheaded by the Palestinians and their allies in the west. (Greta Thunberg comes to mind.) If we want to see where not doing so can lead us, we just need to look at Ireland and Britain.

The Federation is here to do our part. If you are interested in joining the efforts, just let us know.

step forward and invites community members and potential sponsors to join in supporting the Makerspace’s continued growth, helping to empower students to dream, design and build the future.

For more information of the Sean Academy, reach out at [www.bethshalomacademy.com](http://www.bethshalomacademy.com).



Jewish online resources

BY REPORTER STAFF

A variety of Jewish groups are offering educational and recreational online resources. Below is a sampling of those. *The Reporter* will publish additional listings as they become available.

- ◆ The Jewish Grandparents Network will hold the virtual program “Latkes and Laughter: Hanukkah Activities to Make Meaning and Memories with Grandchildren” on Thursday, December 4, from 7-8:15 pm. Educator and performer Andrew Davies will introduce Hanukkah games, stories and other activities. For more information, visit <https://jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org/event/latkes-laughter-hanukkah-activities-to-make-meaning-and-memories-with-grandchildren>.
- ◆ Roundtable will hold several courses over the winter months, including “The Song of Songs: A Biography” on Mondays, January 12-February 2, from 10-11 am, cost to attend \$138 (<https://roundtable.org/live-courses/literature/the-song-of-songs-a-biography>); “Global Jewish Book

Club: Winter 2026” on Wednesdays, January 7, February 4, March 4 and April 8, from 12:30-2 pm, cost to attend \$184 (<https://roundtable.org/live-courses/literature/global-jewish-book-club-winter-2026>); “Yiddish in New York” on Tuesdays, February 10-March 10, from 1-2 pm cost to attend \$239 (<https://roundtable.org/live-courses/literature/yiddish-in-new-york>); and “Rembrandt’s Jews and Other Themes from the Dutch “Golden Age” on Wednesdays, February 11-25, from 11 am-noon, cost to attend \$138 (<https://roundtable.org/live-courses/arts/rembrandts-jews-and-other-themes-from-the-dutch-golden-age>).

- ◆ Uri L’Tzedek will hold the virtual talk ““The Holy Blasphemer’ in Leviticus 24” on Wednesday, November 19, at noon. Rabbi Uri Topolosky will discuss the biblical story. The cost to attend is \$18. For more information or to register, visit [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UbHjYkGGSSCTaBvVpcJ-9w#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UbHjYkGGSSCTaBvVpcJ-9w#/registration).

See “Online” on page 10

Starts in November!

Have you always wanted to try a Yoga Class?

**YOGA FOR BEGINNERS**

First Wednesday of each month

4:30pm - 5:15pm

**W/MEGAN MIZANTY**

Live in the moment!

FREE for JCC Members

Guest Drop-in Fee: \$10

# The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

thanks for your support!

## Friends of *The Reporter* make big news!

The Federation is asking members of its communities to support its “*Friends of The Reporter*” Campaign which seeks to raise \$5,000 to assist in funding the newspaper.

The newspaper is delivered monthly to each and every identifiable Jewish home in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

*The Reporter* is the primary intercommunal newspaper of the Jewish communities of Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties. Supplementing synagogue newsletters, bulletins and e-mails, *The Reporter* is issued to hundreds of Jewish households throughout our region. Over the past several years, the publishing cost of the newspaper has increased dramatically although the newspaper continues to be provided at no charge to members of our Jewish communities in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Federation has assumed the financial responsibility of funding the newspaper at a cost of \$23,990 per year and asks only that its readers assist it in raising \$5,000 as part of its “*Friends of The Reporter*” Campaign to offset a small share of these expenses.

Your gift to fund our regional Jewish newspaper matters a great deal to our readers and we would be very grateful for your financial support.

As always, your comments, opinions & suggestions are always welcome.

With best wishes,  
Daniel Chejfec, Executive Director  
Jewish Federation of NE Pennsylvania  
601 Jefferson Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18510

**I will support continuation of our expanded Federation *Reporter* by contributing:**

.....\$36 .....\$54 .....\$100 ..... other amt. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) (as you wish to appear on our list of “Friends”) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check here if you prefer your name not to be published

Please write and send tax deductible checks to:  
Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania  
601 Jefferson Ave. Scranton, PA 18510



Online . . . . . Continued from page 9

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold several events: “The Firschein Press: A Legacy Preserved” on Thursday, November 13, at 7 pm ([www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/upcoming-public-programs/firschein-press-legacy-preserved](http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/upcoming-public-programs/firschein-press-legacy-preserved)); “Hand in Hand” with Anita Norich and Ellen Cassedy on Thursday, November 20, at 7 pm ([www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/upcoming-public-programs/hand-hand-anita-norich-and-ellen-cassedy](http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/upcoming-public-programs/hand-hand-anita-norich-and-ellen-cassedy)); and “Book Launch | Yiddish: A Global Culture: Bold Stories, Boundless Creativity” with David Mazower in conversation with Lisa Newman on Thursday, December 4, at 7 pm ([www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/upcoming-public-programs/book-launch-yiddish-global-culture-bold-stories-boundless](http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/upcoming-public-programs/book-launch-yiddish-global-culture-bold-stories-boundless)).

◆ Literary Modiin will hold its virtual November 2025 Author Event on Sunday, November 16, at 1 pm. The event will feature authors Nina B. Lichtenstein (“Body: My Life in Parts”), Danila Botha (“A Place for People Like Ys”), and Yishay Ishi Ron with Yardenne Greenspan (“Dog”). For more information or to register, visit [www.juliezuckerman.com/event-info/literary-modiin-november-2025-author-event](http://www.juliezuckerman.com/event-info/literary-modiin-november-2025-author-event).

◆ Tikvah Ideas is holding the four-part virtual course “The Human Condition—A Philosophical Reading of Ecclesiastes,” a video series with philosopher Dr. Micah Goodman. He will discuss

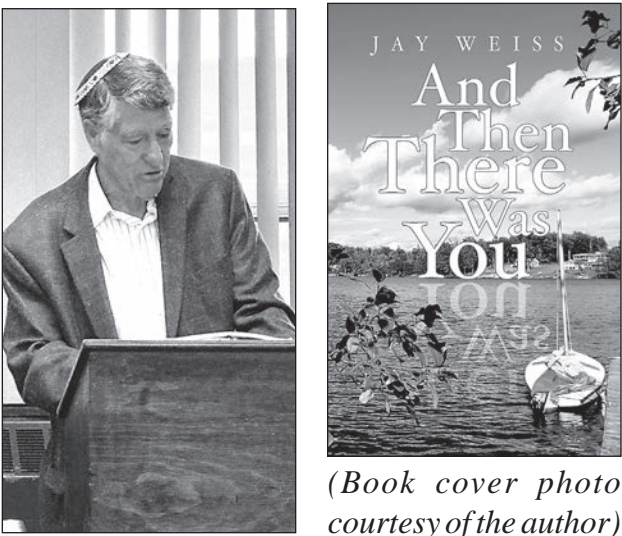
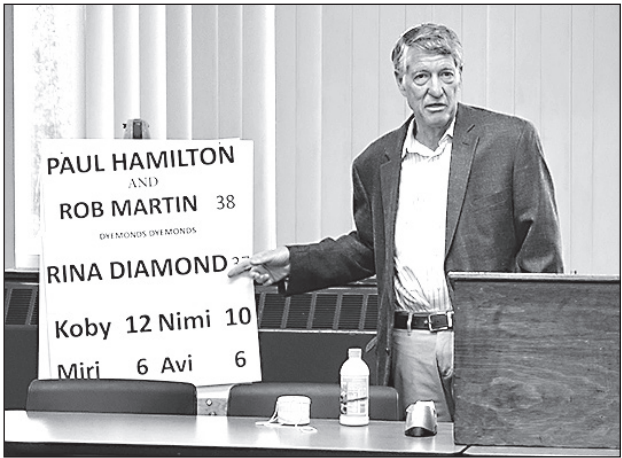
what the book has to say about “life, death, joy, and suffering – or what it means to be human.” For more information or to register for the series, visit <https://lp.tikvah.org/ecclesiastes>.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute will hold the hybrid program “How to Survive? Israeli Women Civilians Coping with Hamas Captivity,” Gabriela Spector-Mersel on Tuesday, November 11, at 1:30 pm. “Spector-Mersel will present findings from her analysis with military health expert Dr. Leah Shelef of Hebrew University that can inform the rehabilitation process of released captives, especially civilian women.” For more information or to register, visit [https://brandeis.zoom.us/join/register/uL\\_CKBHwTtG1OE4Gj-RvfA#/registration](https://brandeis.zoom.us/join/register/uL_CKBHwTtG1OE4Gj-RvfA#/registration).

◆ The Museum at Eldridge Street will hold the virtual program “The Life of Arthur Rothstein: Documentary Photography, Memory and the Immigrant Experience” on Wednesday, November 19, at 6 pm. The cost to attend is “pay-what-you-wish.” The program will explore Rothstein’s life and career. For more information or to register, visit [https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/eldridgestreet/items/663539/calendar/2025/11/?-flow=918844&full-items=yes&back=https://www.eldridgestreet-org.filesusr.com/html/c310b5\\_15c6ca89d1dee2a57265c0f3f64d74d3.html](https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/eldridgestreet/items/663539/calendar/2025/11/?-flow=918844&full-items=yes&back=https://www.eldridgestreet-org.filesusr.com/html/c310b5_15c6ca89d1dee2a57265c0f3f64d74d3.html).

Novel . . . . . Continued from page 1

in years in an Orthodox Jewish community where no one would know who he is because they don’t watch TV or listen to pop music. But he hasn’t counted on having his world completely turned upside down. And now nothing will ever be the same.



(Book cover photo courtesy of the author)

# PACE

## Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowment

**Your gift to the Annual Campaign DOES A WORLD OF GOOD.**

*Endowing your gift allows you to be there for the Jewish community of NEPA forever.*

A Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowment (PACE) is a permanent fund that endows your Jewish community Annual Campaign gift as a lasting legacy. A PACE fund will continue to make an annual gift in perpetuity on your behalf.

To determine the amount you need to endow your entire campaign gift, multiply your current annual gift by 20.

You can fund your PACE by adding the JEWISH FEDERATION OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA to your will, or by making the Federation a beneficiary of your IRA. All contributions to establish a PACE are tax deductible.

**Let your name be remembered as a blessing.**

Endowments can be created through a variety of vehicles, some of which do not necessitate funding during your lifetime yet still provide your estate with considerable tax benefits. They also enable you to perpetuate your commitment to the Annual Campaign in a way that best achieves your own personal financial and estate planning goals.

**Examples Of Ways To Fund Your Pace Gift Are:**

- \* outright contribution of cash, appreciated securities
- \* capital gain property such as real estate
- \* charitable remainder trust
- \* gift of life insurance
- \* charitable lead trust
- \* gift of IRA or pension plan assets
- \* grant from your foundation
- \* reserved life estate in your residence
- \* bequest

Using appreciated property, such as securities or real estate, affords you the opportunity to eliminate the income tax on the long-term capital gain, will in some instances generate a full income tax charitable deduction and will remove those assets from your estate for estate tax purposes.

For more information contact Daniel Chejfec at [Daniel.Chejfec@jewishnepa.org](mailto:Daniel.Chejfec@jewishnepa.org) or call 570-961-2300, ext. 1.)

IF YOU ARE Going out of Town

Please let us know and we will temporarily update your address until you are back!

Contact 570.961.2300 x 3



# Sukkot.....Continued from page 3

them about the lulav and etrog, and leading everyone in joyful songs. With the help of their teachers, the children also decorated the sukkah, adding their own colorful touch to this beautiful celebration of community and tradition.



This year's program was dedicated in honor and memory of Nettie Cader z"l, Helene Cader z"l, Irv Cader z"l, Esther Birnbaum z"l and Rika Schaffer z"l.



## Seniors.....Continued from page 2

quality of life because it can help restore and enhance the senses of taste and smell and improve physical endurance and energy levels, making daily activities more enjoyable.

### TIPS THAT CAN HELP SENIORS QUIT SMOKING

Before starting the quitting process, seniors should discuss their plans with healthcare provider to receive personalized advice and support. The healthcare provider can help develop a structured plan that includes setting a quit date, identifying triggers and outlining coping strategies. Seniors should be mindful of any underlying issues like stress or depression, and seek professional help if necessary.

Having a support network can dramatically improve success rates for seniors who want to quit smoking. Involve family and friends who can provide encouragement and accountability, and consider joining a support group to share experiences and tips with others in similar situations.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products like patches, gum, and lozenges can ease withdrawal symptoms and help seniors gradually reduce nicotine dependence. Exercising regularly and eating a balanced diet while quitting smoking can help reduce cravings, combat weight gain, and improve overall physical and mental well-being.

### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO QUITTING

Quitting can be difficult, and it's common for people trying to quit to experience withdrawal symptoms such as irritability, anxiety or cravings. Recognizing these symptoms as temporary can help seniors stay committed to quitting.

Relapses can happen, but they should not be viewed as failures. Instead, they offer an opportunity to learn and strengthen the resolve to quit. Regularly reminding oneself of the reasons for quitting and celebrating small milestones can help maintain motivation.

Quitting smoking is a significant step towards a healthier, more fulfilling life for seniors. By understanding the benefits, utilizing available resources, and adopting effective strategies, seniors can overcome the challenges and enjoy the many rewards of a smoke-free life.



## GIFTING STOCK FORM

Gifting stock to a charitable 501(c)(3) organization is a great way to make a donation.

By gifting stock in which you have a large capital gain, you not only receive the benefit of making a sizable donation, but you also save the capital gains tax.

Example:  
Gift: \$2,000  
(Stock: ABC @ \$20 per share - Gift: 100 shares)

If you were to sell "Stock ABC" that you originally purchased at \$10.00 a share, you would have a \$1,000 capital gain and you would be required to pay at least \$150.00 in federal taxes, etc.

But by gifting the stock, you save the entire \$150.00 and you've found a way to help the Federation accomplish its mission:

"... to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel and world Jewry and perpetuate Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania."

Your gift will not only assist our local and regional organizations and agencies, but you will have the satisfaction of helping those in need.



You will be able to look back and say: "I'm just doing what my People have always done for each other."

For further information on gifting stocks in payment of your pledge to our Annual UJA Campaign, please contact the Federation at 570-961-2300 (ext. 3) for details.

➡ Check out the Federation's new, updated website at [www.jewishnepa.org](http://www.jewishnepa.org) or find it on Facebook



**DAVID HOLLANDER AND ALEX ITZKOWITZ, CO-CHAIRS OF OUR 2025-26 UJA CAMPAIGN.  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.**