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Scranton, PA 18510

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Susie Fishbein's Chanukah Cooking Show came to the Jewish Federation of NEPA



No sooner had the word hit the street that, arguably, the doyenne of modern kosher cooking, Susie Fishbein, was coming to Northeastern Pennsylvania, than the first reservation was made! And they kept on coming... until we had to turn people away!

As was mentioned by so many excited participants, "if you've ever eaten in my house, then you've tasted Susie Fishbein's zucchini soup." "If you've had my turkey roast, the recipe is from Susie Fishbein's 'Kosher Palette' cookbook."



Men and women came to watch Susie ply her craft and learn tips and tricks. Her menu was pleasing to the eye and the palate and the Federation set up the Linder Room in Scranton's Jewish Community Center for perfect viewing. Chaya Freilach, Rivka Edelson and Malka

See "Fishbein" on page 12



Save the date for Celebrate Israel Parade

On Sunday, May 31, 2026, thousands of Jews will take to Fifth Avenue for the annual Celebrate Israel Parade – and the Jewish community of Northeastern Pennsylvania, under the banner of the Jewish Federation of NEPA, should be front and center. As a vibrant and integral part of Jewish life both in Israel and here in Northeastern Pennsylvania, our presence at this year's parade is more important than ever.

"Our community has a deep and enduring connection to Israel. We are proud to stand with Israel, and we value the opportunity to express



our support in such a public and visible way." "It's a great honor for us to represent our community and show our unwavering support for Israel. We are proud of our heritage and our connection to Israel."

This year's parade follows a period of immense pain and uncertainty for Israel and Jews worldwide. As anti-Israel protests continue across the world, alongside rising antisemitism, the Israel Parade stands as a symbol of unity, pride, and resilience.

Let's show up and march together, proudly and visibly, for Israel.

Am Yisrael chai!

Please contact Dassy Ganz to register at 570-961-2300, ext. 2, or dassy.ganz@jewishnepa.org.



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School news

Local Jewish day schools report on recent student activities, from fall programs to Hanukkah parties.

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History

The latest history column looks at the activities of the 1946 Anglo-American Committee.

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In his own words

A former Gaza hostage shared her story of survival and faith at a Jewish Discovery Center event.

Story on page 10

CANDLE LIGHTING

January 2	4:27 pm
January 9	4:33 pm
January 16	4:41 pm
January 23	4:50 pm
January 30	4:58 pm
February 6	5:07 pm

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Wellness spotlight: How seniors can nurture their mental health in winter

BY DR. KEN SEBASTIANELLI

As the new year begins, many seniors look forward to fresh routines, cozy indoor moments and time for personal renewal. Yet winter also brings shorter days, colder weather and often less social interaction – factors that may affect mood, motivation and overall mental well-being. The good news: with a little intention and gentle self-care, winter can become a season of comfort, connection and steadiness.

Below are practical, senior-friendly ways to support mental health this winter.

1. Embrace natural light every day

Winter daylight may be brief, but it's powerful. Exposure to natural light helps regulate sleep, boost energy, and elevate mood. Here are some tips to maximize absorption of natural light during these shorter days:

- ◆ Opening blinds first thing in the morning.
- ◆ Sitting near a sunny window for meals or reading.

- ◆ Taking short outdoor walks when the weather allows.

- ◆ Using soft indoor lighting in the evening to create warmth and reduce eye strain.

2. Create a gentle daily routine

Structure is comforting, especially in months when days feel similar. A steady routine can encourage motivation and reduce feelings of isolation. Try incorporating some of these ideas into your daily routine:

- ◆ A morning stretch or light exercise.
- ◆ Hydration and nourishing meals.
- ◆ A planned social touchpoint – phone call, chat with a neighbor or virtual group.
- ◆ Evening wind-down activities like puzzles, music or reflection.
- ◆ 3. Stay social – even in small ways
- ◆ Winter can make it harder to stay connected, but social contact is one of the strongest protectors of mental health. A few ideas for maintaining social connections include:
- ◆ Weekly coffee dates – virtual or in person.
- ◆ Joining senior center programs, book clubs, or hobby groups.

- ◆ Checking in with friends or family on a regular schedule.

- ◆ Engaging with intergenerational activities. (Grandkids love teaching technology!)

4. Keep moving, keep warm

Physical activity boosts mood, reduces stress and supports sleep – important all winter long. Some winter-friendly movement options include:

- ◆ Gentle indoor walking or hallway laps.
- ◆ Chair yoga or online senior fitness videos.
- ◆ Light strength exercises with household items (like soup cans).
- ◆ Seasonal outdoor walks with proper footwear and layers.

5. Prioritize sleep and comfort

Shorter days can disrupt sleep cycles. Good sleep supports emotional balance, memory and resilience. Here are a few ways you can maintain a good sleep routine in winter:

- ◆ Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- ◆ Limit caffeine late in the day.
- ◆ Enjoy warm beverages or relaxing routines before bedtime.

- ◆ Keep your bedroom cozy but not overly warm.

6. Engage your mind with pleasurable activities

Mental stimulation lifts spirits and supports cognitive health. Winter is a wonderful time to rekindle favorite hobbies or try new ones. Consider some of these ideas:

- ◆ Reading, crafting, puzzles or journaling.
- ◆ Learning something new through a senior class or online workshop.
- ◆ Listening to music, audiobooks, or guided meditations.
- ◆ Cooking simple seasonal recipes.

7. Practice gentle emotional check-ins

Winter can surface feelings of loneliness, sadness, or restlessness. Checking in with yourself helps you notice changes early and stay connected to what you need. Here are a few simple ways to check in:

- ◆ Ask yourself daily: How am I feeling today? What would help me feel supported?
- ◆ Share your feelings with a friend or family member.
- ◆ Practice breathing exercises or mindfulness moments.
- ◆ If difficult feelings persist, reaching out to a healthcare professional or counselor can provide helpful support.

8. Celebrate the small joys of the season

Winter also brings opportunities for comfort, beauty and reflection. Take advantage of some unique comforts of the season such as:

- ◆ Warm blankets, soft music, and cozy reading corners.
- ◆ Watching winter birds or seasonal nature from the window.
- ◆ Enjoying hearty soups or herbal teas.
- ◆ Setting simple goals or intentions for the year ahead.

January doesn't have to be a time of "pushing through" the winter. With mindful habits, meaningful connection, and a bit of daily light – both inside and out – this season can support calm, clarity and renewed emotional well-being.

Dr. Ken Sebastianelli has served as medical director for Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab, a Jewish Senior Life Community, since 2012. Dr. Sebastianelli is a board-certified Internal Medicine practitioner with Prime Med Medical Group, and is affiliated with Geisinger Community Medical Center and Moses Taylor Hospital. He is also a member of the Medical Executive Committee at Geisinger Community Medical Center.

The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Jewish identity as a positive force

I'm writing this column on the Monday following the Bondi Beach massacre. It is the first day of Hanukkah and my mind wanders to dark places. As of today, there are 16 confirmed dead and about 40 wounded. Among the dead, there are two rabbis, a 10-year-old girl and a Holocaust survivor who shielded his wife with his body during the shooting. Among the wounded, there is an October 7 survivor who was attending the event. It seems that the events in Australia and the way they were covered by the mainstream media reflect a twisted fascination with Jews as victims. Don't get me started on the social media celebrations of the event.



all movies relating to Jewish identity focus on antisemitism or the Holocaust. The remaining 30 percent tends to have a heavy dose of Jewish self-doubt, dealing with interfaith families or the exploits of the Israeli army. And even among those movies about the IDF, the majority touch on anti-Jewish violence or Israeli rescue of Jews in danger. Can we not do better than that?

I see Jewish identity as a positive force; a foundation for resilience, a foundation for acceptance

they don't do very well in the U.S. market.

There are things we can do here, locally. We can come together to celebrate who we are – differences and all. A great opportunity to do so is coming on May 31 – the March for Israel in New York City. In these times when Jewish pride is needed, the parade is a great way to come together. Mark your calendar.

And share with us any other ideas you might have to wear our identity on the sleeve!

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

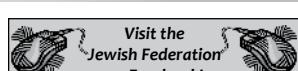
DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

of diverse opinions, for defiance in the face of history, in embracing of a millennia-old tradition. Where are the movies, the TV programs, the community expressions of that positive aspect of our identity? My Jewish identity is not the Jewish identity of the "Oy Vey," but the identity I wear on my sleeve.

I'd like to see celebrations of more positive aspects of our culture and history, like Mimouna, a Moroccan-Jewish celebration marking the end of Passover; or Sigd – the Ethiopian-Jewish celebration of the connection with the land of Israel. I'd like to see more movies and TV programs based on things like the novels of Isaac Bashevis Singer, or reboots of early 20th century Jewish films like "Gryne Felder" or "The Dybbuk." Well, "Yiddl Mitl Fiddle" actually did get a reboot in Barbra Streisand's "Yentl." There are some others, like "The Lion Within" and "The Golem." There are many Israeli films like "The Footnote" and others showing a positive image of Jewish culture, but

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Learning beyond walls and weather: BSA's vision for education that moves with the times

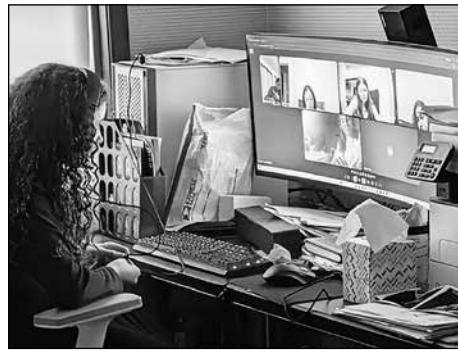
At Beth Shalom Academy (BSA), learning is not confined to four walls, a rigid schedule or perfect weather. Education is a living, breathing experience that travels with our students wherever they are: from their classrooms, to their homes and even to snowy winter days filled with sleds and snowmen.

Moving with the times is more than a necessity; it is a mindset, a commitment to ensuring that learning continues in meaningful ways no matter the circumstances.

BSA proudly welcomes students from across the Greater Scranton area, with some traveling daily from



as far as Dallas, PA, to Stroudsburg, PA, though the heart of our school community remains rooted in Scranton. Our families demonstrate remarkable dedication and our students arrive each day eager to learn – whether in person or from a screen when conditions require.



This commitment is what defines our community: resilience, flexibility and a shared passion for growth.

That spirit was on full display during a recent snowstorm that blanketed Scranton and surrounding areas. While some faculty members were fully prepared to drive in from



Moscow and Back Mountain, the administration made a game-changing decision to move the school day online. Under the leadership of Mrs. Malky Gaerman, chief administrator and assistant to the principal, Beth Shalom Academy

See "BSA" on page 9

Computer programming at Beth Shalom Academy

Under the tutelage of Dr. Stephen Mansour, students at Beth Shalom are learning how to write computer programs. Their current project is creating a tic-tac-toe game on the computer, which introduces them to fundamental concepts of logic and design. They are learning how

to program in APL, an array-based computer language that helps them understand how data can be structured and manipulated efficiently.

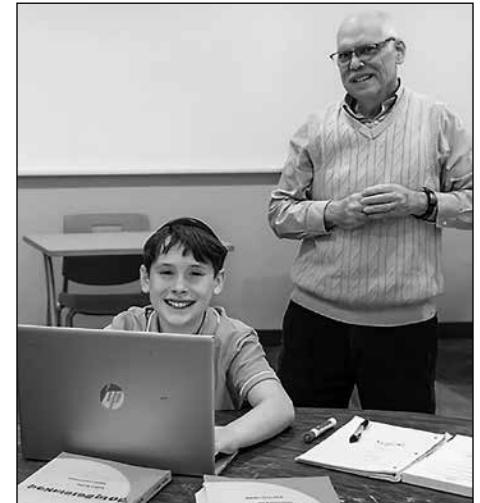
The tic-tac-toe grid can be thought of as a 3 by 3 array of Xs and Os, making it an ideal model for learning array-based programming.

The program must check the user's inputs and determine whether a winning move has occurred, teaching students how to create conditions, test outcomes and think critically about problem-solving in code.

At Beth Shalom Academy, this type of innovative instruction

reflects a broader commitment to preparing students for a rapidly changing world. Education today must move beyond rote memorization and static lessons, and instead

See "Computer" on page 9



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

Step 1

Visit www.jewishnepa.org



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.



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The 1946 Anglo-American Committee

(Twelfth article of history series)

BY DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

The emergence of the Cold War and the Jewish refugees lingering in the Displaced Persons Camps across Europe forced the Western allies to revisit the issue of British Palestine and seek ways to address these issues while avoiding a confrontation with the Arab (oil producing) countries.

The result was the establishment of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, assembled on January 4, 1946. The mandate of the committee, as described in the official document, was:

"To examine political, economic and social conditions in Palestine as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement therein and the well-being of the peoples now living therein.

"To examine the position of the Jews in those countries in Europe where they have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution, and the practical measures taken or contemplated to be taken in those countries to enable them to live free from discrimination and oppression and to make estimates of those who wish or will be impelled by their conditions to migrate to Palestine or other countries outside Europe.

"To hear the views of competent witnesses and to consult representative Arabs and Jews on the problems of Palestine as such problems are affected by conditions under paragraphs 1 and 2 above and by other relevant facts and circumstances, and to make recommendations to His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States for the interim handling of these problems as well as for their permanent solution.

"To make such other recommendations to His Majesty's Government and the Government of the

United States as may be necessary to meet the immediate needs arising from conditions subject to examination under paragraph 2 above, by remedial action in the European countries in question or by the provision of facilities for emigration to and settlement in countries outside Europe."

After months of meetings with Arab and Jewish leaders and visits to DP camps in Europe, the committee presented its conclusions and recommendations. Their first conclusion regarding the European situation was that no substantial support existed from countries outside Europe to resettle the Jewish survivors, other than Palestine. This prompted them to recommend immediately granting 100,000 immigrant visas to Palestine for Holocaust survivors.

They also concluded that under existing conditions, neither under a Jewish state nor an Arab state would the rights of the minority be respected. They recommended the writing of a constitution guaranteeing self-rule for both communities under very similar conditions as first recommended by the Woodhead Commission. They also recommended that the territory be administrated under a mandate of the United Nations during an interim period and recognize the rights of Jews to immigrate even beyond the initial 100,000 visas. They warned, however, that the levels of immigration had to be limited by the need "not to upset the balance" in Arab-Jewish relations. This again supports the Woodhead Commission report. They did, however, recommend that the land purchase provisions of the 1939 White Book be rescinded, considered discriminatory against Jews.

Jews saw these conclusions as a

serious blow to their hopes for an independent state, while the Arabs opposed the conclusions as favoring the Jews. The Arabs demanded an immediate stop to Jewish immigration.

Several months after these conclusions and recommendations were presented, the recommended 100,000 visas had not materialized and Holocaust survivors continued to live in DP camps. In October 1946, President Truman demanded that Britain issue the visas. The British, however, dealing with unrest in India and anxious to maintain their economic ties with the oil rich Arab countries, felt their empire was beginning to crumble, and that made them less than enthusiastic about granting the visas.

The Krakow pogrom of 8/11/1945 and the Kielce pogrom of 7/4/1946

signaled to Holocaust survivors that returning to their countries of origin was unsafe to say the least.

Britain made two half-hearted attempts to implement some of the recommendations of the Committee as interpreted through the lens of their own interests. These included a Swiss-like confederation with Arab and Jewish cantons, and dividing the land into two separate autonomous areas under a unified government. Both ideas strike as hopelessly naïve and ignoring the realities on the ground.

The British impossibility to find a position balancing the interests of Jews and Arabs while preserving British interest, led eventually to Great Britain appealing in early 1947 to the newly formed United Nations to take over.

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.

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Check out the Federation's new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook

Hundreds gather for JCC's Superhero Chanukah Celebration

The Jewish Community Center welcomed a large turnout for its Chanukah celebration on Sunday, December 14, from 1-3:30 pm, at



the Steven Bruce Arenberg Memorial Superhero Chanukah Festival.

Attendees enjoyed a wide variety of delicious, symbolic foods cooked in oil, including a latke bar with an assortment of sauces and toppings, falafel, doughnuts and popcorn. Additional foods and treats included Israeli salad and an ice cream sundae

See "JCC" on page 12



Scranton Hebrew Day School Hanukkah festivities



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Beth Shalom Academy lights “Up the Community” with Hanukkah Carnival

Beth Shalom Academy was filled with light, laughter and community spirit today as the school hosted a vibrant Hanukkah Carnival open to families and neighbors from across the area. The festive event was proudly planned and run by BSA’s high school



girls, who transformed the campus into a joyful celebration of creativity, teamwork and Jewish pride.

The carnival featured more than a dozen lively booths packed with games and activities, three bounce house, and a delicious menu that included a favorite highlight – Hanukkah donut decorating, where children eagerly decorated their own sufganiyot with colorful toppings. Tables were filled with tons of prizes, and smiles could be seen throughout the building as families enjoyed the fun together.

The highlight of the day was

the much-anticipated Menorah Contest, which showcased one of BSA’s most original and innovative learning environments: the MakerSpace. Under the direction of Mr. John Sakson, director of secular studies, students in grades one through eight worked in class teams to design and build their own menorahs using imaginative materials and bold ideas.

More than an art project, the menorah challenge was an exercise in collaboration and unity. Students learned how to listen to one another, share creative visions, problem-solve



as a group, and take pride in a shared outcome. The finished menorahs reflected remarkable originality and demonstrated how creativity flourishes when students work together.

See “Carnival” on page 9

Bais Yaakov of Scranton – “The small school with a big heart”

Bais Yaakov began the new school year with a back-to-school program and a getting to know you trip to the Steamtown train museum.

Bais Yaakov prides itself on being able to meet the individual

needs of all its students, with a diverse curriculum including both academic, as well as subjects such as home economics, art and sewing. The Bais Yaakov prides itself on its highly qualified staff both in

the Judaic and secular studies. Bais Yaakov features specialty teachers on Zoom, such as renowned educator and speaker Mrs. Yael Kaisman from Lakewood, NJ, and Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum from Israel.

Rosh Chodesh brings with it speakers, trips and activities, both inside and outside of the school. On Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan (the new month), students enjoyed a field trip to

Lakeland Orchards where they picked apples and enjoyed other activities.

MISHMERES PROGRAM KICKOFF

Students participate in this program, which focuses on proper speech and sensitivity to others. Videos and exciting speakers and newsletters are part of this program created by the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation. *Yimei Iyun* (Days of Learning) See “Heart” on page 11

Scranton Hebrew Day School held Hanukkah lunch



Jewish Federation
OF NORTHEASTERN PA

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• *Regular Schedule of Services* •

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Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi Elliott Kleinman
President: Liza Roos Lucy
Contact person: Cheryl Badner, Congregation Administrator
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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.bnaiharimpoconos.org
Shabbat morning services 10 am-noon; every other Saturday.

JEWISH FELLOWSHIP OF HEMLOCK FARMS

Rav Shoshana Mitrani Knapp, 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
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: Jennifer Novak
1 Knox St., Scranton, PA 18505 (Off Lake Scranton Rd.)
570-344-7201 • website: www.TempleHesed.org
E-mail: 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 (5th Street) at Avenue A)
570-421-8781 • website: www.templepoconos.org
E-mail: 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
918 East Gibson St., Scranton, PA 18510 (located at the corner of Gibson & Monroe Sts.)
570-342-0350 • e-mail: 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

Bais Yaakov held Hanukkah Carnival



Bais Yaakov of Scranton: A joyful beginning

Bais Yaakov of Scranton has once again proven that its size is no limitation to the depth of its impact. With a vibrant start to the new school year, the school continues to embody its guiding principle: "The small school with a big heart."

A JOYFUL BEGINNING

The year opened with a lively back-to-school program, followed by a "getting to know you" trip to the Steamtown Train Museum. These activities set the tone for a year of learning, friendship and growth.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Bais Yaakov takes pride in meeting the individual needs of each student through a diverse curriculum that blends rich religious studies with rigorous academics, while also offering enriching subjects such as home economics,

art and sewing. The school's highly qualified staff in both Judaic and secular studies ensure that students receive a well-rounded education rooted in tradition, values and excellence.

Specialty teachers join via Zoom, bringing world-class instruction directly into the classroom. Among them are renowned educator Mrs. Yael Kaisman of Lakewood, NJ, and Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum from Israel, whose expertise and inspiration elevate the learning experience.

ROSH CHODESH CELEBRATIONS

Each new month is marked with meaningful programming. On Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, students enjoyed a memorable trip to Lakeland Orchards, where they picked apples and participated in seasonal activities, blending joy with tradition.

See "Bais" on page 11

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

The Reporter
Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

Carnival

A special thank you goes to Mrs. Shieila Cutler, who generously came in to help judge the me-

norah contest, lending her time and thoughtful eye to celebrate each team's creativity and effort.

Continued from page 7

Computer.

embrace hands-on, inquiry-based learning that mirrors real-life problem solving. By integrating technology and programming into the curriculum, Beth Shalom Academy ensures that its students are not only consumers of technology, but thoughtful creators who understand how systems work and how ideas are transformed into functioning tools.

This experiential approach empowers students with confidence and curiosity. When learners physically build programs, test their ideas, encounter challenges and debug their own work, they gain a deeper and more lasting understanding of how technology operates. More importantly, they develop perseverance, analytical thinking, and adaptability—skills that

are essential for success in future careers that may not yet even exist. Beth Shalom Academy continues to lead by example, demonstrating that innovation in education is not about replacing tradition, but about enhancing it to equip students for tomorrow's world.

For more information about Beth Shalom Academy, visit www.bethshalomacademy.com.

The Hanukkah Carnival was not only a celebration of the holiday, but also a reflection of Beth Shalom Academy's mission: fostering leadership, creativity, and community through meaningful, hands-on experiences. Visitors are always welcome to visit BSA and the MakerSpace to see firsthand the creativity and collaboration taking place each day. As the menorahs were admired, donuts enjoyed and prizes awarded, one thing was clear: the true light of the day came from the students who planned, created and celebrated together.

For more information or to book a tour, visit www.bethshalomacademy.com.

GIFTING STOCK FORM

Gifting stock to a charitable 501©(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.



The Jewish Federation
OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

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.



Jewish Family Service
OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Help neighbors in need! Donate Your Vehicle or Real Estate

Your **vehicle or real estate** donation strengthens individuals, families, and communities.

Why Donate?

- Avoids costly repairs and maintenance
- Easy donation process
- Reduces taxes and fees
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Check out the Federation's new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook

For more information about Beth Shalom Academy, visit www.bethshalomacademy.com.

“A Journey from Darkness to Light”: Former Gaza hostage Judith Raanan shares story of faith at Hanukkah event

CLARKS SUMMIT, PA—Amid the flickering lights of the Hanukkah menorah, the Jewish Discovery Center (JDC) hosted a profound evening of testimony and hope on December 16, as former Gaza hostage Judith Raanan shared her harrowing, yet inspiring, story of survival and faith.

The event, titled “A Journey from Darkness to Light,” brought the NEPA community face-to-face with one of the first individuals released following the October 7, 2023, attacks in Israel. Raanan and her teenage daughter, Natalie, were taken from Kibbutz Nahal Oz and held in Gaza for two weeks before their release.

A “HUG” FOR A GRIEVING GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The evening felt especially timely for many attendees who arrived carrying the weight of a fresh global tragedy. Just days prior, a devastating



attack at a Hanukkah celebration near Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, resulted in the loss of many lives—including two beloved Chabad rabbis, Rabbi Eli Schlanger and Rabbi Yaakov Levitan.

For those in the room, Raanan’s presence served as a vital source of comfort during a week of mourning. One participant, reflecting on the heartbreak in Sydney and the ongoing tensions abroad, summed up the atmosphere of the evening:



“The hug that we all needed – that was tonight.”

THE CALL TO ILLUMINATE THE WORLD

Rabbi Benny Rapoport, director of the JDC, framed the evening not just as a reflection on trauma, but as a call to action rooted in Jewish tradition.

“Nearly 4,000 years ago Abraham and Sara, the first Jews, stood up to shine the light of goodness and holiness to the world around them,” Rabbi Rapoport told the audience. “They said to all people: ‘God has a plan and a purpose for each of us... we are His ambassadors.’ Each and every one of us. Jew or non-Jew. Young or old. Rich or poor. We can illuminate the world with our words and actions.”

He emphasized that the Hanukkah menorah serves as a physical symbol of this spiritual duty, particularly when faced with evil. “When you light a candle, darkness goes away. When you do good, evil melts away,” he said. “When you speak out and promote goodness and kindness, love and unity, the dark clouds of ignorance dissipate. When you stand up and proudly perform mitzvot, the world begins to heal.”

FAITH IN THE FACE OF TERROR

During her address, Judith Raanan recounted the terrifying moments her room was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade and the instincts she

See “Faith” on page 11



Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving



The Jewish Federation
OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

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.

If Your Goal is to:

Make a quick & easy gift

Then You Can:

Simply write a check now

Your Benefits May Include:

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



Bais

CHARACTER AND VALUES: MISHMERES

PROGRAM KICKOFF

The Mishmeres Program, launched in partnership with the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation, encourages students to focus on proper speech and sensitivity toward others. Through videos, speakers, and newsletters, the program instills values that last a lifetime. Yimei Iyun, or "Days of Introspection," further enriches the spiritual journey throughout the year.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CHESED: THE B.Y. AND ELAN SKILLED NURSING

Bais Yaakov students extend their learning beyond the classroom through daily visits to Elan Skilled Nursing Facility, assisting residents at mealtimes and offering companionship. These interactions foster empathy and respect for the elderly while brightening the lives of residents.

The school's commitment to *chesed* (acts of kindness) is evident in its weekly preparation and delivery of challah and kugel to Webster Towers, local hospitals and families in need. Students also support new mothers and respond to community needs with full meals when necessary.

Heart Continued from page 7 of Introspection) take place throughout the year.

THE BAIS YAAKOV AND ELAN SKILLED NURSING

Students visit Elan Skilled Nursing Facility daily to help residents at mealtimes as well as offer them young company. This help is critical to the well-being of the residents who look forward to these young, smiling faces, as well as to the girls themselves who gain a sensitivity and understanding of our elderly.

CHESED IN THE COMMUNITY

Students prepare and deliver challah and kugel weekly, to Webster Towers, as well as to others throughout the community as well as the local hospitals. Full meals are prepared when necessary. The students help new mothers as well and are called upon when others' needs arise.

VETERANS DAY

In honor of those who served our country, Bais Yaakov was fortunate to have veterans in our community talk about their experiences in the service. Rabbi Sandhouse, a former chaplain, told the students about his responsibilities as a chaplain with Jewish servicemen. He told personal stories about his own father, O. B. M., when he served in the army.

Dr. Stephon Monsour, Bais Yaakov math professor spoke about his experience in the U.S. Coast Guard. Dr. Murray Small, chemist and retired teacher of Bais Yaakov, shared his experiences as well.

BAIS YAAKOV COMMUNITY ANNUAL HANUKKAH DINNER AND CARNIVAL

Once again, the Bais Yaakov Hanukkah carnival and dinner was enjoyed by all. This year, the carnival featured Mrs. Michelle Ben Dov, professional face painter. A delicious dinner was prepared by Mrs. Etty Fink. Bais Yaakov thanks all the many volunteers who rolled up their sleeves to help. The event was made possible by the many dedicated volunteers whose efforts brought joy and light to the community.

Bais Yaakov of Scranton continues to shine as a beacon of education, values, and community spirit proving that even the smallest schools can make the biggest difference.

HONORING VETERANS

On Veterans Day, the school welcomed community veterans who shared their stories of service. Rabbi Sandhouse, a former chaplain, spoke about his role supporting Jewish servicemen and shared moving anecdotes about his father's military service. Dr. Stephon Monsour, Bais Yaakov's math professor, recounted his time in the U.S. Coast Guard, while Dr. Murray Small, chemist and retired teacher, reflected on his experiences in the armed forces.

HANUKKAH CELEBRATION: B.Y. COMMUNITY ANNUAL HANUKKAH DINNER AND

CARNIVAL

The annual Bais Yaakov Community Hanukkah Dinner and Carnival were once again a highlight of the season. Families enjoyed festive activities, including professional face painting by Mrs. Michelle Ben Dov, and a delicious dinner prepared by Mrs. Etty Fink. The event was made possible by the many dedicated volunteers whose efforts brought joy and light to the community.

Bais Yaakov of Scranton continues to shine as a beacon of education, values and community spirit proving that even the smallest schools can make the biggest difference.

Faith

relied on to protect her daughter. Despite the darkness of captivity, Raanan emphasized that her connection to her faith never wavered.

"No matter how far you run away from God, He will find you, wherever you are," Raanan told the hushed audience. She encouraged those in attendance to "connect to the flame" by performing acts of kindness and observing Jewish traditions like Shabbat.

INCREASING THE LIGHT

As the evening concluded with the lighting of the menorah, Rabbi Rapoport challenged the attendees to take the inspiration of Raanan's

survival back into their daily lives.

"As we light the menorah and see how the lights increase – each night adding another flame – let us all consider what we can do to increase the goodness and light in our home, our families, our workplace, social network and the great community."

Raanan, who now uses her art to raise money for the restoration of destroyed *kibbutzim*, echoed this sentiment. Despite the heavy hearts following the tragedy in Australia, the event served as a reminder that the Jewish spirit remains an unquenchable flame.

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 or call 570-961-2300, ext. 1.)

Check out the Federation's new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook

Continued from page 8

bar with plenty of toppings.

Entertainment was highlighted by a live performance from Superman Rob the Juggler, along with dancing led by EJ the DJ. Families also enjoyed a full slate of Chanukah and superhero-themed activities, including games, inflatables, Chanukah arts and crafts, Chanukah music and puzzles, fun with dreidels, a photo booth, menorah candle making, balloon art, face painting and doughnut (sufganiyot) decorating. Special appearances by Batman and Wonder Woman added to the excitement and created a fun, immersive superhero atmosphere.



Guests also had the opportunity to use an olive press to make their own olive oil and to shop in the gift store for last-minute Chanukah gifts, decorations and menorahs.

The JCC extends its sincere thanks to its dedicated staff and more than 30 volunteers

Continued from page 6

who helped make the event a success, as well as special appreciation to our festival sponsors: the Steven Bruce Arenberg Memorial Israel Youth Travel and Jewish Cultural Fund, Race-West Company and the Foundation for the Jewish Elderly of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Fishbein.

Gutman volunteered to prepare the room for the event and, indeed, the room was welcoming.

Starting with a lesson on kosher cuisine in various countries that Susie has visited and conducted culinary tours, Susie led off with a delicious white bean humus served in a martini glass with a steeped tomato topping and vegetable cigar garnish. Susie taught the A-B-Cs of homemade humus; she brought the ingredients and equipment with her. Susie also



Continued from page 1

had prepared perfect sized samples for each person to taste to rave reviews. There was an audible gasp upon seeing the exquisite presentation of this humble dish.

The main course was an homage to the dates grown in Israel with silan glazed salmon over a date and chickpea salad. The salmon portions were perfectly cooked and the portion for each audience member was very generous.

Finally, in honor of Chanukah and the tradition of fried foods, Susie prepared fresh beignets that were deep fried in front of the audience by Shanie Davidson-Dunn who assisted Susie throughout. Each participant received a hot beignet in a small bakery bag with confectioner's sugar for them to shake and dust the pastry.

Susie's many cookbooks were for sale with some of the proceeds benefitting the Federation and one was even raffled off. Congratulations Mrs. Chaya Zamir of Scranton who won the chance to choose a cookbook as a gift from the Federation.

Susie e-mailed the actual recipes to all who participated. And someone mentioned trying to get together again for a tasting of recipes people tried in the Susie Fishbein cookbooks they purchased.

The Jewish Federation was happy to usher in Chanukah with this wonderful program and thanks everyone who participated and enjoyed.



We bring security.

Throughout Europe, violent attacks target Jewish people and Jewish institutions. Security is posted at synagogues. At Jewish day schools, five-year-olds file past armed guards to get to the playground. Jewish students arriving at college encounter toxic anti-Israel slogans.

Your UJA gift will help restore a sense of security. With your help, we can share expertise and funding to keep children safe at schools, and stand up against hatred so that Jews everywhere can walk without fear - into a synagogue or simply down the street.

**That's why there's UJA and the Federation.
And that's why we need you.**

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania is to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel and world Jewry, and revitalize and perpetuate Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

____ I'm enclosing a gift of \$ _____ I'll pledge \$ _____ *

* ____ One-time * ____ Quarterly installments (1/4 of total) * ____ Monthly installments (1/12 of total)

**2025-26 UJA Campaign
Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania
601 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510
Telephone: 570-961-2300 (ext. 3)**

Payment options

- ____ Please bill me at the above address.
- ____ Enclosed is my check payable to "UJA/Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania".
- ____ On-line banking (designate your payments through your bank auto-draft account to "UJA/Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania").
- ____ My company (_____) has a matching gift program.
I'll obtain the form and forward it.

Authorized signature

Date

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

