

Scranton Jewish Cemetery Association receives Robert H. Spitz Foundation grant for facility improvements

The Scranton Jewish Cemetery Association is thankful to receive a grant from the Spitz Foundation as administered by the Scranton

Area Community Foundation. The Scranton Area Community Foundation acts as the financial steward for the Spitz Foundation as well as

other foundations. They are able to assist many local organizations with funding to further their goals and See "Grant" on page 9



L-r: Frank Caputo, senior grants and scholarships manager, SCARF; Moshe Fink, president of the Scranton Jewish Cemetery Association; Rabbi Yosef Guttman, board member of the Scranton Jewish Cemetery Association; and Cathy Fitzpatrick, vice president of grants and scholarships, SCARF.

In memoriam

The Officers and Board of Trustees of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania extend their heartfelt condolences to Dr. Daniel Chejfec, Executive Director, upon the passing of his mother, Mrs. Clara Chejfec. May her memory be for a blessing and may Daniel be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

David Falk, president

The Jewish Federation of NEPA donates to the JFS Mae S. Gelb Kosher Food Pantry

The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania recently made a generous contribution to JFS and our local community by donating the proceeds from its Tzedakah Tzeason Kosher Food Drive to the JFS Mae S. Gelb Kosher Food Pantry. This vital donation helps ensure that all members of our community have access to nutritious, kosher food.

recently during Chanukah, Temple Israel collects food and essential items for the JFS Mae S. Gelb Kosher Food Pantry. These collections are part of a tradition where attendance at Chanukah, Purim and Yom Kippur events is offered free of charge. Instead of a ticket, attendees are kindly asked to bring donations for the Food Pantry, helping to support those in need within our community.

Throughout the year, and most



At left: Arthur E. Levandoski, coordinator of marketing and development for JFS, and Daniel Chejfec, executive director of the Jewish Federation of NEPA. At right: Daniel A. Bubnis, Louis Nivert and Cantor Vladimir Aronzon.

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Jewish Federation OF NORTHEASTERN PA

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History

The history column looks at the vote for partition in 1947.

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Purim

The JCC and Jewish Fellowship announce their Purim celebrations; Purim traditions of Cochin Jews.

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CANDLE LIGHTING

March 6	5:41 pm
March 13	6:49 pm
March 20	6:57 pm
March 27	7:04 pm
April 1	7:10 pm
April 2	after 8:12 pm
April 3	7:12 pm

PLUS

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WHY WE MARCH

WE MARCH TO SHOW JEWISH PRIDE. OPENLY AND TOGETHER.
WE MARCH IN SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL.
WE MARCH BECAUSE COMMUNITY AND VISIBILITY MATTER.

Annual winter “Ladies Meet and Greet”

Despite the frigid temperatures outside, more than 100 women came together at the Scranton JCC on February 7 to mingle and meet newcomers, members of synagogues Beth Shalom, Machzkei Hadas and Ohev Zedek in Scranton. The women enjoyed a beautiful hot buffet, excellent program and lively comraderie.

The evening was chaired for the second year by Rebecca Fink, Judith Hecht and Chany Stein. They received help in many forms from the creation of an “Everything You Need to Know about Scranton” booklet, which offers names of doctors and other service providers, shopping tips and locations, and much more to the volunteer food and financial offerings which made for a glamorous ladies night out.

Mrs. Naomi Halberstadt, a relative newcomer herself, opened the program with a chapter of *tehillim*. She then spoke from the heart about the kindness and friendships her family and so many others have experienced coming to Scranton. She then introduced the newest members of the community (those who arrived less than a year ago).

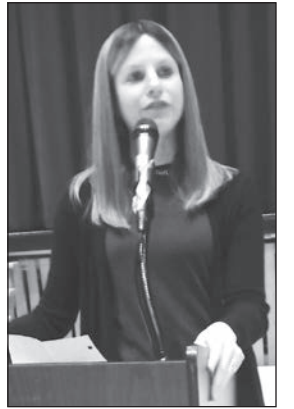
Mrs. Aliza Schwartz followed with a creative game centered on getting people to know each other. It was a great ice breaker! And, inter-



estingly, it brought out the diversity of the backgrounds of our ladies who hail from Ukraine, Chili, Brazil, Toronto, Holland and, yes, New York, New Jersey and Scranton!

Our thanks to the Scranton JCC for the use of the auditorium and to all the sponsors of the evening.

Scranton is a warm and welcoming community and we are grateful and proud to call Scranton “home.”



March 2026 Elan Blog

Brain Injury Awareness Month: What seniors and caregivers should know

BY DR. KEN SEBASTIANELLI

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month, which provides an opportunity to talk about a serious health issue that affects millions of Americans, including



many older adults. A brain injury can occur suddenly and change a person’s life in ways that are not always visible.

By increasing awareness of brain

injuries, seniors and their loved ones can better understand risks, recognize warning signs, and take steps to protect brain health.

WHAT IS A BRAIN INJURY?

A brain injury happens when an external force or medical event disrupts normal brain function. Traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) are often caused by falls, motor vehicle accidents, or blows to the head. Non-traumatic brain injuries can result from strokes, lack of oxygen, infections, or tumors. For seniors, falls are the leading cause of traumatic brain injuries, making prevention especially important as we age.

One of the challenges of brain injury is that symptoms are not always obvious right away. After a fall or head impact, a person may feel “fine” at first, only to develop problems hours or days later. Common symptoms can include headaches, dizziness, confusion, memory problems, changes in mood, difficulty concentrating, or feeling unusually tired. In older adults, these changes may sometimes be mistaken for normal aging, which can delay diagnosis and treatment. Any new or worsening symptoms after a head injury should be discussed with a healthcare provider promptly.

HOW CAN BRAIN INJURIES AFFECT SENIORS?

Brain injuries can directly impact many aspects of daily life. For seniors, this may include challenges with

See “Brain” on page 10

The Reporter
Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

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COMMUNITY NEWS

My parents' legacy

I wish first to thank all the people in the community who reached out to me when my mom passed away. I lost in fact both of my parents in less than a year, and while it was to be expected, as they were 98 and 97 years old, it still has the power to make you think and evaluate your own life.

Part of my parents' legacy is one of active intellectual engagement with the world around us. My dad was more into the political and historical aspects of that world. My mom's tended to be more on the day-to-day operation and the family connections. Both of them left in this regard strong "footprints" in my own way to look at the world.



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

very building. My mom, active at the time in the HaShomer HaTzair (a Youth Zionist Socialist organization) attended that ball under peer pressure.

While starting to clean the old papers at my parents' home I found old letters in Yiddish from relatives in Israel and Philadelphia, an even one written in Ladino by a relative in Tzfat (Safed). I found certificates of recognition for their activism and support of She'erit Hapleitah (an organization of Holocaust survivors), AMIA, the Sholem Aleichem school my brother and I

attended and of which my dad was president. I also found more certificates from Hacoaj, the Jewish National Fund, the Argentine equivalent of UJA and Israel Bonds. I still have two closets to clean.

The bookshelves are still full of books on Jewish history, Jewish cuisine, Jewish art; all sitting side-by-side with a socialist history of the French Revolution, books on Argentine history, history of art, books on Jewish and world philosophy, as well as on politics.

Reflecting on their passing, I realize that they lived full and meaningful lives – and that what

gave meaning to their lives was their caring for family and friends and their engagement with their world – their general environment as well as their Jewish community and identity. Their Jewish identity is what helped make sense of the world they lived in and engage with it.

Among the things I found was a siddur printed in 1943 which belonged to my grandfather, a Yiddish journalist who lived a life of activism himself. The siddur was kept in a velvet bag my great-grandmother made and embroidered for my great-grandfather in 1896. (The year itself is embroidered on it.)

Looking at all this and more, the reminders of lives fully lived, I realize on whose shoulders I stand and it makes me recommit to those same values which guided their lives: Love for the Jewish people; love for the State of Israel and the use of my intellect to try to understand the world and engage with it. I hope that the legacy I will leave behind will be as rich as the one they left me.

DEADLINES

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

DEADLINE	ISSUE
Monday, March 9	April
Monday, April 13	May
Monday, May 11	June
Monday, June 8	July

FedPro conference



The group of Small Federations Executives at the FedPro conference in Phoenix, AZ, February 9-11.

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Faith in the darkness

During the month of January, Beth Shalom Academy engaged in extensive and thoughtful preparation for International Holocaust Remembrance Day, approaching the subject through multiple lenses including art, poetry, history and experiential learning. Under the direction of Mrs. Naomi Halberstadt, director of Judaic studies at BSA, students explored the Holocaust in developmentally appropriate ways, allowing them to build understanding while also processing the emotional weight of this chapter of Jewish history. Middle school and high school students participated in three differentiated levels of Holocaust trivia, encouraging inquiry, discussion and mastery of key concepts while meeting students where they are developmentally and academically.

This week, Beth Shalom Academy held a meaningful and moving program in honor of Holocaust



Remembrance Day. The event was open to the wider community, and many community members joined together with parents and faculty to reflect, remember and learn through a multifaceted presentation that highlighted both the resilience of the Jewish people and the thoughtful engagement of our students.

The program opened with reflective poems inspired by survival stories, followed by the viewing of



the creative butterflies students have been crafting as part of the “Faith in the Darkness” program. These butterflies, symbolic of hope and the remembrance of the children of the Holocaust, have been a central component of students’ learning throughout the past month. The audience also recognized students who worked diligently to master Holocaust-related terminology, demonstrating their commitment to understanding this critical chapter of Jewish history.

A particularly meaningful component of the program was a project created by the fifth and sixth grade girls. Drawing inspiration from “The Diary of Anne Frank,” the students collaboratively wrote and illustrated a diary of a fictional young Jewish girl named Miriam. Through this project, the girls imagined Miriam’s voice, experiences, fears and hopes, ultimately telling the story of her survival through the Holocaust. This powerful exercise allowed students to connect emo-




tionally and personally to history, transforming abstract facts into a deeply human narrative.

The program also featured a powerful and thoughtful talk by Mendy Kreiman, LSW, who spoke about Jewish perseverance, resilience and the enduring strength of faith even in the darkest times.

To conclude the program, Mrs. Devorah Weinberg led a remembrance art activity in which participants created rock art featuring symbols of hope and Judaism. Additional creative butterflies were also made, reinforcing themes the students have been exploring throughout the month and offering a hands-on way to express remembrance, reflection and continuity.


Together, the program served not only as a commemoration of the past, but as a meaningful educational experience that empowered students, families, faculty and community members to remember, reflect and carry forward the lessons of Jewish resilience and hope.






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Partition

(Fourteenth article of history series)

BY DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

The passing of the Partition Resolution was by no means a given. The first hurdle was to have the Security Council approve it. Without it, the Resolution could not be presented to the General Assembly for voting. The main obstacle at the Security Council was the Chinese delegation, which was ready to veto it. The veto of any member of the Council would mean that the resolution was dead in the water.

Morris (Moisheh) Abraham Cohen was a Jew born in 1887 in Poland, whose family emigrated to England in 1889. Even as child he was a bit of a rebel, and his parents sent him to Western Canada in 1905 in the hope that would help him “straighten out.” While he worked on a farm in Saskatchewan, after a year he left and made his living as a carnival barker, cardsharp, pick-pocket, pimp and eventually a real estate broker. During this Canadian sojourn, he befriended some Chinese exiles and came to sympathize with their plight. He volunteered to help the supporters of Sun Yat-sen who opposed the emperor. Around that time (end of World War I), his real estate business collapsed and he enrolled in the British Army gaining military experience. All this colorful background led him to join Sun Yat-sen’s military forces training their military. His penchant to move around with two guns under

his belt earned him the nickname “Two Gun Cohen.”

When the partition resolution was brought up in front of the Security Council, the Jewish Agency led by Ben Gurion reached out to Two Gun Cohen to try to convince the Chinese delegation to change their stand. Cohen, who was back in Canada by then, traveled to San Francisco and met with the Chinese. He convinced the Chinese not to veto, but abstain. As a result, the Security Council put the resolution for the consideration of the General Assembly.

While U.S. President Harry Truman appeared sympathetic to the Zionist aspirations, his Secretary of State George Marshall was opposed to the idea of partition and favored a U.N. Mandate replacing the British and under U.S. control. At the same time, multiple Jewish organizations competed to meet with Truman. Some of them, like the ZOA, supported partition – while others, like the American Council for Judaism, opposed the whole idea of a Jewish State. So many groups pressured Truman from both sides that at some point he refused to meet with any more Jewish groups.

Ed Jacobson was the American-born son of Lithuanian Jewish immigrants. Born in 1891, the family moved around until eventually settling in Kansas City in 1905. It was then that Jacobson

See “Partition” on page 10

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NEPA organizations team up to offer kosher TV dinners for local elderly

“Never Go Hungry” initiative provides affordable, ready-to-heat meals for residents 65 and older

CLARKS SUMMIT – The Jewish Discovery Center (JDC), with support from a grant from the Jewish Foundation for the Elderly of Eastern Pennsylvania, has launched a new initiative aimed at ensuring that no senior in the community goes to bed hungry.

The program, titled “Never Go Hungry,” introduces kosher frozen dinners prepared under kosher supervision that are designed to go from freezer to table in approximately 30 minutes.

Organizers say the goal is simple: provide seniors – especially those living on fixed incomes – with a dependable, nutritious meal option for times when grocery shopping or cooking may not be possible.

The meals are packaged for oven

heating – not for microwaves. Each meal is fully prepared and set up in a sectional dinner tray and then flash frozen, offering convenience without compromising on quality or dietary standards.

Current meal offerings include:

- ◆ Sweet and Sour Meatballs with rice, roasted broccoli and mini cranberry pie
- ◆ Shawarma Chicken Steaks with yellow rice, hummus and Moroccan carrots
- ◆ Chicken Marsala with mashed potatoes, roasted broccoli and mini cranberry pie
- ◆ Short Ribs with mashed potatoes, roasted broccoli and mini cranberry pie

Through grant funding provided by the Jewish Foundation for the Elderly of Eastern Pennsylvania,

the program offers a \$20 per meal subsidy available to NEPA residents aged 65 and older who are living on a fixed income. Organizers note that order quantities may be limited depending on the availability of grant funds.

Free delivery is available within the Greater Scranton and Abington areas, making the program even more accessible for seniors who may have difficulty traveling.

The initiative reflects growing concern about food insecurity among older adults, particularly those managing rising living costs while relying on fixed retirement incomes.

Chany Rapoport, co-director of the Jewish Discovery Center, emphasized that the program is rooted in community responsibility and care.

“This initiative is about more than a meal,” she said. “It’s about making sure our seniors feel supported, valued and secure. Every person deserves the dignity of knowing that no matter the circumstances – whether it’s bad weather, illness or financial strain – a hot, nutritious kosher dinner is within reach. If we can ease even one worry for a senior in our community, then we’ve accomplished something meaningful.”

Eligible seniors and their families may place orders online at jewishnepa.com or by calling 570-885-8252. Organizers encourage interested residents to order soon, as funding for the subsidy is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Purim and protest: the role of effigies in Cochin Jewish tradition

(Hebrew University) – A recent study on the unique Purim traditions of the Cochin Jewish community by Prof. Shalva Weil, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Great Britain, from Hebrew University, published in the Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, examines the historical and cultural significance of effigies in Purim celebrations among Cochin Jews, tracing their

evolution from the 16th century under Portuguese rule to their transformation in modern-day Israel.

The Cochin Jewish community, numbering no more than 2,400 at its peak in 1948, lived in harmony with their Hindu, Christian and Muslim neighbors. Unlike other Jewish communities, they never experienced antisemitism in India, except during the Portuguese conquest of

the 16th century. Their unique Purim celebrations featured role reversals that symbolically challenged societal hierarchies based on caste, religion and gender. This inversion of power structures was most vividly expressed through the construction and destruction of effigies representing adversaries, a practice embedded in the communal and ritualistic fabric of Cochin Jewry.

By the 20th century, Cochin Jews increasingly aligned themselves with the global Jewish community. Following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, the majority of Cochin Jews emigrated to Israel by 1954, leaving behind only a small number of Paradesi and Malabar Jews scattered across the state of Kerala. Today, the once-thriving

See “Cochin” on page 11

JCC Scranton

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Jewish Fellowship of Hemlock Farms

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The rebirth of Beth Shalom's Sisterhood – Beth Shem

The Beth Shem Sisterhood has entered a vibrant new chapter, marked by renewed energy, thoughtful programming, and strong leadership under the direction of Shai Albrecht. With a clear vision of inclusivity, warmth and community connection, the Sisterhood has quickly re-established itself as a meaningful force within the Beth Shem community.

The rebirth of the Sisterhood was fittingly launched with a Chanukah community celebration that welcomed members of the broader community. The event embodied the Sisterhood's mission: bringing people together across ages and backgrounds. The evening featured a lively magic show, engaging activities for both adults and children and a delicious dairy buffet that created an atmosphere of joy, connection and light – perfectly aligned with the spirit of Chanukah. The event was widely attended and set the tone for what the Sisterhood hopes to achieve moving forward: programming that is warm, accessible and meaningful for all.

Following this successful community gathering, the first official Sisterhood members' event was a paint night hosted by Shai Albrecht in her home. This intimate and creative evening marked the beginning of a series of planned activities designed to foster connection, creativity and camaraderie among Sisterhood members. The paint night was led by Devorah Weinberg, an artist and teacher at Beth Shalom Academy, whose guidance and artistic expertise made the evening both inspiring and enjoyable. Participants left not only with artwork in hand, but with a renewed sense of connection to one another and to the Sisterhood itself.

With thoughtful leadership, purposeful programming and a strong emphasis on community, the Beth Shem Sisterhood is once again becoming a vibrant hub of engagement. Under Shai Albrecht's leadership, and with the continued involvement of talented educators and community members, the Sisterhood is poised for continued growth, offering meaningful opportunities for connection, creativity and shared experiences in the months ahead.



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Israel harvests 1,500-year-old Byzantine grape seeds in Negev Desert

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Israeli researchers have harvested 1,500-year-old Byzantine-era grape varieties from a restored vineyard in the Negev Desert, part of an effort to recreate a renowned ancient wine that was once exported throughout Europe, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority announced. The first harvest took place at Avdat National Park, marking a major milestone two years after ancient grape seeds were planted in the site's desert vineyards as part of a groundbreaking effort

to revive a centuries-old winemaking tradition.

The grape seeds were discovered years ago by Haifa University researchers in an archaeological cave at the site. "The Byzantines in the Negev were a powerhouse," Lior Schwimmer, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority's southern district heritage officer who led the harvest, told Ynet. "While wine was commonly produced

See "Seeds" on page 11

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



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www.jfsnepa.org/support-jfs to make your donation to our 2026 Annual Campaign today!



Together, We Can Make a Difference

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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

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Rabbi Dovid Saks
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 Jewish Heritage Connection
 601 Jefferson Ave., Scranton, PA 18510
 570-346-1321 • website: 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*.

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 Call for more information.

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF THE POCONOS

Rabbi Mendel Bendet
 570-420-8655 • website: 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: Susan Aufhauser
 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.

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 1516 Hemlock Farms, Lords Valley, PA 18428 (located at 540 Forest Dr., Hemlock Farms, Lords Valley, PA 18428)
 570-775-7497 • e-mail: jhf1516@gmail.com
 Friday evening Shabbat service 7:30 pm
 Saturday morning Shabbat service 10 am

MACHZIKEH HADAS SYNAGOGUE

Rabbi Mordechai Fine
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 570-342-6271

OHEV ZEDEK CONGREGATION

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

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 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

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 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

A night of joy and blessing at the JRC

On January 28, the Jewish Resource Center of the Poconos filled with a special kind of warmth – the kind that only comes when a community gathers to celebrate a new home being built. More than 75 JRC friends and family members arrived to share in the joy of the *sheva brachot* for Moshe and Bracha Yehudis Salkow, who had celebrated their wedding less than a week earlier.

For many in attendance, this was their first time experiencing *sheva brachot*, the daily celebrations held during the week following a traditional Jewish wedding. Each evening, family, friends and community members gather for a festive meal where blessings are recited, memories are shared and the bride and groom are honored with joy and good wishes.

From the moment guests stepped into the room, the atmosphere felt like a celebration wrapped in light. Tables were beautifully set and accented with soft candlelight, creating a calm, glowing backdrop for laughter, conversation and heartfelt blessings. As people settled in, it was clear that this wasn't just another event. It was a moment. When the bride and groom entered, a spontaneous dance circle formed around them, welcoming them with the warmth and enthusiasm they deserved.



Rabbi Salkow opened the evening with introductory remarks and congratulations. Rabbi Halberstadt, Charlie Cahn and the bride's father, who had traveled from Detroit, each offered their own mazel tov wishes and blessings to the young couple. The program also included lighthearted group games that highlighted the couple's personalities and brought plenty of smiles to the room.

Dinner, catered by Elisheva Kosmerl, was truly divine. It was the kind of meal people remember long after the evening ends, not only for its flavors, but for the care and heart behind it. Many attendees remarked how meaningful and enjoyable the experience was, especially for those encountering *sheva brachot* for the first time.

See "JRC" on page 9





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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
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KKL-JNF OKs tens of millions for Kibbutz Manara, Arad Valley

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael–Jewish

JRCContinued from page 8

As the evening continued, one by one, the blessings were recited, each one lifting the room a little higher. These *brachot*, blessings for joy, harmony and peace, were offered with sincerity for the couple’s future together. By the time *Maariv*, the evening prayer, was concluded, the gathering felt complete: celebration, connection, gratitude and prayer woven together into one beautiful night.



GrantContinued from page 1

helping to raise the level of communal support available in our area.

The grant was requested to enable the Scranton Jewish Cemetery Association to replace the rest rooms located on the premises that are quite antiquated. The plan is to build a totally new building that will be handicap accessible, energy efficient and simple to maintain. The Scranton Jewish Cemetery Association has retained Jordan Clark of Ballina Group, LLC to prepare architectural drawings to solicit bids for construction. The goal is to have the new facility operable for the end of summer 2026.

The Scranton Jewish Cemetery Association is a 501(c)13 organization that maintains the Jewish Cemetery located on Shoemaker Road in Dalton, PA. The association is nearing its 100th anniversary. The property was purchased in 1928 by a group of civic and religious Jewish organizations, and set up according to traditional Jewish law to provide burial in sacred ground according to the traditions handed down from generation to generation from our rabbis’ teachings for thousands of years.

Scranton Area Community Foundation has served as administrator of the Robert H. Spitz Foundation since 2016. The Robert H. Spitz Foundation is a tax-exempt, private foundation that supports initiatives and programs serving the residents of Lackawanna County and Northeastern Pennsylvania. Formed in 2015 through the estate of Mr. Spitz, the Robert H Spitz Foundation supports an array of projects and programs that improve the Northeastern Pennsylvania region. To date, the Robert H. Spitz Foundation has provided over \$6 million in funding to the community.

National Fund (KKL-JNF) on February 10 approved strategic assistance totaling 90 million shekels, including 30 million shekels for Kibbutz Manara and approximately 60 million shekels for development in the Arad Valley.

Under the first decision, Kibbutz Manara was designated a “special priority assistance target,” enabling the immediate transfer of 30 million shekels for the restoration of destroyed neighborhoods and the renewal of infrastructure. The *kibbutz* sustained “extensive damage” to its buildings and infrastructure during the war

against Hezbollah, which began attacking the Jewish state a day after the Hamas-led October 7, 2023, massacre.

At the same time, the board approved designating the Arad Valley – including the city of Arad and the Mevo’ot Arad region – as a priority assistance area. KKL-JNF will join the national effort to establish five new communities in the Mevo’ot Arad and Yatir regions, allocating 39.8 million shekels to complete development and infrastructure

See “JNF” on page 11

GIFTING STOCK FORM

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“... .. 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.”

The Jewish Federation OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

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



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Partition.....Continued from page 5

first met Truman. In 1917, they both reported for basic training at Fort Sill and ran a canteen together. Upon discharge, they decided to go as partners into the haberdashery business – a business which failed during the post-World War I recession. They remained, however, life-long friends. When news reached America about what was happening in Europe during World War II, Jacobson discussed the situation with Truman many times, gaining the future president’s sympathy for their plight and his support for the Zionist idea.

The Jewish Agency tried to meet with Truman to secure American support not only as a vote,

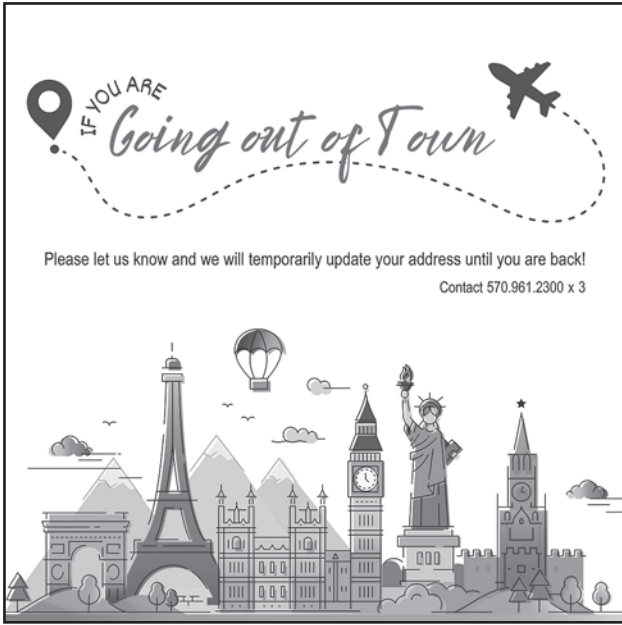
but in exerting diplomatic pressure on others to follow suit. Truman was refusing to meet with Jewish groups of any kind. It was Jacobson who convinced Truman to meet with Chaim Weizmann, whose fame as a chemist preceded him. Weizmann so impressed Truman that the president not only secured the vote in favor of the resolution, but was instrumental in convincing other delegations to follow suit.

On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly voted on Resolution 181. Voting in favor were Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Belarus, Canada, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Liberia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Sweden, South Africa, Ukraine, United States, USSR, Uruguay and Venezuela. Voting against were Afghanistan, Cuba, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. Abstaining were Argentina, Chile, Republic of China, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, United Kingdom and Yugoslavia.

The approved resolution put 725,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews in the territory assigned to the Arab State; 407,000 Arabs and 498,000 Jews in the territory assigned to the Jewish State; 105,000 Arabs and 100,000 Jews in the area to be established as the Corpus Separatum of

Jerusalem. It was expected that the Jewish State was going to absorb the over 200,000 Holocaust survivors still lingering in the Displaced Persons camps of Europe. That would have made the population of the Jewish State 65 percent Jewish and 35 percent Arab.

The Partition, as we know in hindsight, just marked the beginning of a new stage in the conflict. The Arab community in Palestine, as well as every member of the Arab League, rejected the resolution and vowed to destroy the Jewish State as soon as the British troops vacated the territory. The Jewish community in Palestine, as well as Jews around the world, accepted the resolution and celebrated. Behind the scenes, the Jewish Agency leadership was very aware of the upcoming war and began preparing.



Brain.....Continued from page 2

balance, mobility, speech or performing familiar tasks. Emotional changes such as irritability, anxiety or depression are also common and can be just as impactful as physical symptoms.

Recovery from a brain injury looks different for everyone. Some people improve within weeks, while others may need ongoing therapy and support. Rehabilitation services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapy often plays a critical role in helping individuals regain their independence and quality of life.

HOW CAN WE PREVENT BRAIN INJURIES?

Prevention is one of the most powerful tools we have to help reduce brain injuries. There are simple steps seniors can take to significantly reduce the risk of brain injury. Keeping living spaces free of clutter, ensuring good lighting, using grab bars in bathrooms and wearing supportive footwear can help prevent falls. Regular vision and hearing checks, reviewing medications with a healthcare provider and staying physically active to maintain strength and balance are also important protective measures.

Brain Injury Awareness Month is also a time to emphasize the importance of showing compassion and understanding for those who have been affected by brain injury. Many people living with brain injury face invisible challenges that others may not immediately recognize. Patience, clear communication, and emotional support can make a meaningful difference for those recovering from or living with a brain injury.

By learning more about brain injuries, seniors and caregivers can take proactive steps to reduce risk, recognize symptoms early and support recovery. Awareness leads to prevention, timely care and a better quality of life – at any age.

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.

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.

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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
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JNF Continued from page 9

work in cooperation with the Settlement Division. As part of its vision to reduce socioeconomic gaps and promote demographic growth, the committee also approved the establishment of a “KKL-JNF House for Excel-

lence” in Arad. The project will be funded with an initial investment of 19 million shekels, along with a commitment to allocate an additional 10 million shekels over five years to support the center’s ongoing educational activities

following its launch. “Our commitment to the north and the Negev does not remain on paper; we know how to be swift in finding solutions and it is a great honor for us to bring practical tools to the field and provide immediate

responses where they are most needed,” said Eyal Ostrinsky, chairman of KKL-JNF. “KKL-JNF once again proves that it is the leading operational arm in strengthening the national resilience of the state of Israel.”

Cochin Continued from page 6

Cochin Jewish community on the Malabar Coast is nearly extinct, and traditional Purim celebrations have all but disappeared. No longer do the streets of Jew Town, Mattancherry, or Fort Cochin witness the parading of Haman’s effigy. With only one Paradesi Jew remaining there and a handful in other former Cochin Jewish locations, synagogue services now rely on visiting Jewish tourists and the once-vibrant Purim revelry has faded into history. In stark contrast, in Israel, where an estimated 15,000 descendants of Cochin Jews now reside, Purim is celebrated in ways that reflect broader Jewish and Western cultural traditions. Children dress up as superheroes, soldiers and biblical figures; they participate in school parties and exchange the iconic hamantaschen pastries. Observant Jews continue to read the Book of

Esther in synagogue and hold festive meals, incorporating their heritage into mainstream Jewish customs. Weil, who was awarded the 2025 “Yakir Yerushalayim” honor as a distinguished citizen of Jerusalem due to her life-long research into ethnicity and gender, highlights in her research the transition of Cochin Jewry from a localized, community-bound identity to an integrated and globalized Jewish experience. The effigy, once a potent symbol of resistance and communal identity, has faded along with the physical presence of Cochin Jewry in India. Yet, as Freud aptly noted in relation to transference theory, “When all is said and done, it is impossible to destroy anyone in absentia or in effigy.” While their presence in India has nearly vanished, the legacy of Cochin Jews continues to thrive in Israel and beyond.


Seeds Continued from page 7

in the lowlands and coastal plains, achieving that in the Negev was extraordinary. Yet they managed to produce wine on a massive scale – millions of liters – and export it to Europe.” The project builds on research showing that ancient grape varieties

once thrived in the region between the fourth and seventh centuries, a period when the Negev was renowned globally for its high-quality wine. Around 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of grapes were harvested – enough to produce approximately 12 bottles of wine.

Support the JFS Annual Campaign

Even a small donation can make a big difference.



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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.

MA NISHMA NEPA

How to Submit a Community Event

Step 1
Visit www.jewishnepa.org

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Click the button (top right)
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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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