

Visit to the Museum of Jewish Heritage

On March 9, several educators as well as MaryAnn Answini and Susan Blum Connors traveled to New York City to the Museum of Jewish Heritage. Included were Jennifer Snyder from Holy Rosary School, Amy Kelly and Allyson Morcom

from Abington Heights, Mary Ellen Elia and Erin Renz from North Pocono, Lucia Villafranca, Anna Toupin, and Meghan Davis from Wyoming Valley West, and Jessica Palauskas from West Scranton.

It was an absolutely beautiful day and difficult to put the atrocities of the Holocaust in perspective. The museum is located in Battery Park with a magnificent view of the Hudson River and Statue of Liberty.

Upon entering the museum, we were greeted by our tour guide who led us to the first exhibit titled "Courage to Act: Rescue in



Denmark." This exhibit brought the lessons of the Holocaust to life through the remarkable story of Danish resistance during World War

II. Despite the enormous risk these ordinary citizens united against Nazism to save nearly 95 percent of
See "Museum" on page 12



Susie Fishbein wows with culinary masterpieces for Passover

Back by popular demand, internationally renowned kosher chef Susie Fishbein once again awed a full au-

dience with a three-course meal that looked spectacular, tasted delicious and doable for the home cook!

Beginning with Tri-colored Matza Ball Soup, which looked perfect for spring, followed by an Italian delight, Melanzane di Scarponcino, roasted eggplant halves topped with

a tomato, olive, caper and garlic tapenade. The crowning course was chicken lollipops served atop a schwarma-infused spaghetti squash with a turmeric curry dipping sauce.

The sample portions were ample and beautifully presented, and Susie created each course before the audience so they could follow along with the recipes provided and ask questions of the chef.

Susie prepared the entire meal in the JCC's kosher kitchen with the help of the following volunteers: Jeff Ganz, Tzirel Horowitz, Arlene Weinberg (also *mashgiach*), Avry and Michalle Ben-Dov, Elisheva Kosmerl (also *mashgiach*) and Alma Shaffer.

See "Susie" on page 12





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SAVE THE DATE Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration

Sunday, April 19, at 7 PM
Showing 30-minute movie
"Man on a Bus" about the
early days of Israel.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

History

The history column looks at what both sides wanted, and promises made to both, in 1947.

Story on page 5

Shabbaton

Local young professionals were among 1,000 attending a Shabbaton in New York City.

Story on page 6

CANDLE LIGHTING

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| April 1 | 7:10 pm |
| April 2 | after 8:12 pm |
| April 3 | 7:12 pm |
| April 7 | 7:16 pm |
| April 8 | after 8:18 pm |
| April 10 | 7:20 pm |
| April 17 | 7:27 pm |
| April 24 | 7:35 pm |
| May 1 | 7:42 pm |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
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A Zootopia-themed Purim Carnival at the JCC of Scranton

More than 300 community members filled the JCC of Scranton on March 1 for a wildly fun and meaningful Purim celebration! This year's carnival brought the energy and imagination of Zootopia to life, while also highlighting the courage, unity and resilience of the Jews of Shushan in the Purim story.

Just as Zootopia teaches us about bravery, standing up for what's right and embracing our differences, the story of Purim reminds us of Queen Esther's courage to speak out and save her people. Throughout the carnival, families celebrated these shared themes of heroism and community spirit in a festive and joyful atmosphere.

The afternoon was packed with exciting activities including fun carnival games with candy prizes, arts and crafts, a bounce house, face painting, a balloon artist, delicious hamantaschen and hot dogs, and

lively Purim music by EJ the DJ. Children proudly participated in a costume contest and created their own Purim masks, hats and groggers – ready to make noise at the mention of Haman's name!

At our Queen Esther's Crafty Palace, kids enjoyed hands-on innovative Purim-themed crafts inspired by the holiday. The biggest attraction of the day was our "Zooshan" Petting Zoo – a playful nod to both Zootopia and Shushan – where families delighted in feeding

and petting goats, rabbits and even an alpaca.

Thanks to the generous support of

the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the JCC Purim Carnival was free and open to all.



Congregation B'nai Harim in Pocono Pines, PA, is hiring a part-time administrator for a hybrid 10-15 hours/week position. The job includes administrative functions, such as maintaining accurate membership records, payments and donations. The candidate must learn and maintain ShulCloud, the synagogue's operating system. Updating the website and using Canva graphic software are important features of the job. The administrator will support the president, rabbi, treasurer, bookkeeper and committee chairpersons, as needed. For more information and the complete job description, please email Susan Aufhauser, President, at susanbnaiharim@gmail.com.



The Reporter

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Living on the edge

After decades of promoting mandatory Holocaust education, interfaith dialogue, intercommunity coalitions and more, we seem to have definitely failed in extinguishing the Hydra-headed monster of antisemitism. Bret Stephens made the point in a recent editorial that all those resources were squandered and that the answer is to stand proudly as Jews wearing our identity, so to speak, openly and unabashedly.

While I agree with Stephens that we should wear our identity unapologetically and openly, I disagree in his assessment that the resources poured into Holocaust education and other efforts have been squandered. Those efforts did bear fruit and provided American Jews with an unprecedented period of freedom which allowed Jewish life to flourish on American soil. But as with regular flowers, when the conditions of the soil or the weather change, the gardener needs to adapt.

Antisemitism is indeed a multi-headed monster which keeps rearing its ugly head under different disguises. So if cutting one head (or more) does not do the trick, how do we address it?

I believe the first step is to understand the nature of our continuous existence as a distinct

minority in many societies. We are always seen at the same time as the ultimate insiders as well as the ultimate outsiders. We are seen as controlling the host societies, and also as a cancer that needs to be removed. We are fiercely committed to the values of American society, yet we remain separate and distinct. We activate to strengthen and protect our society, yet we also have to defend our rights as a minority. We exist as Jews in the in-between. Our place in society is defined by the tension of being an insider and an outsider at the same time. That is the

b) We try to find out who or what made us fail – an external factor or people. This will make us hate those we hold responsible for our failure and exonerate us from responsibility.

The first case generates progress; the second hate and stagnation. When a society looks for somebody to lay the responsibility of its failures, it will look for a weak link, a person or a group that is vulnerable. Jews are vulnerable because of that dual condition of insiders and outsiders. Antisemites (and racists) do not care about facts but about targets of opportunity. If I outsource the responsibility to a group I perceive as “the other,” it means I did not fail but I was “betrayed.”

There are multiple examples of this in our history. Germany and World War I, and the Arabs and their failed states are just two of the latest incarnations.

In my opinion, the way to eradicate antisemitism is to promote the option of self-criticism in American society. Sharing the facts of our historical suffering will not change the antisemite – but it will provide a universal lesson of tolerance and acceptance. Promoting critical thinking in the world can help us truly change it.



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

source of our resilience, and also our greatest vulnerability.

Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (OBM), on a video I highly recommend (YouTube), looks into the phenomenon of antisemitism and comes up with an original formulation: When something goes wrong in a society or a group, we have two choices:

a) We look into our actions and their consequences to see how we went wrong. Once we have identified where we failed, we can change and improve, correcting the wrong.

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DEADLINES

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

| DEADLINE | ISSUE |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Monday, April 13..... | May |
| Monday, May 11..... | June |
| Monday, June 8..... | July |
| Monday, July 13..... | August |

Happy Passover

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

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

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

The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

Rabbi Abraham Skorka will present on “The Pope and the Rabbi: My Story of Friendship and Dialogue with Pope Francis”

Brennan 228, University of Scranton
May 12, 2026 at 7:30 pm
free admission

Rabbi Abraham Skorka is former rabbi of the Benei Tikva Congregation and rector of the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano, both in Buenos Aires. He is currently a Senior Research Fellow for Jewish Studies and Jewish-Catholic Relations at Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

He is the author of many articles and several books, including “On Heaven and Earth” with the late Pope Francis.

Elan blog: April is Stress Awareness Month

Spring into wellness: effective strategies for stress reduction

Stress Awareness Month is observed every April to raise awareness about the causes and cures for modern stress. Stress is a natural reaction that occurs in response to challenging or threatening situations. Like all adults, seniors can be affected by stress if it isn't properly managed, and stress can have a significant impact on physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life. As individuals age, they may experience increased stress due to numerous factors including declining health, financial concerns, loss of loved ones and social isolation.

Symptoms of stress can manifest in various ways, such as headaches, muscle tension, fatigue, irritability and difficulty sleeping. Chronic stress can weaken the immune system, making seniors more susceptible to illnesses and diseases. It can also contribute to the development or worsening of conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and depression. Stress can also impair cognitive function and memory in seniors, leading to difficulties in decision-making and problem-solving.

To cope with stress effectively and avoid the negative health and wellness repercussions of unmanaged stress, there are a variety of

strategies that seniors should consider. Here are a few ways seniors can help keep stress in check:

GET OUTDOORS

Spending time outdoors has been shown to have numerous benefits for both physical and mental well-being, including reducing stress levels. When you step outside into nature, you are exposed to fresh air and natural sunlight, which can help improve your mood and reduce feelings of anxiety and stress. The sights and sounds of nature can also have a calming effect on the mind, helping to lower cortisol levels, the hormone associated with stress. Physical exercise releases endorphins, which are known as "feel-good" hormones, further contributing to a sense of well-being.

Incorporating regular outdoor time into your routine can have long-lasting benefits for your mental health, helping you to feel more relaxed, rejuvenated and better equipped to handle the challenges that come your way. Staying physically active through activities like walking, yoga or gardening can help reduce stress levels and improve overall well-being. Practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or mindfulness can promote feelings of calmness and reduce stress levels.

MAKE A CONNECTION

Making and maintaining strong social connections is critical in helping seniors manage stress and



maintain their overall well-being. Having a strong social support network can help seniors navigate the ups and downs of aging and provide a sense of belonging. Staying connected with friends and family, joining community groups and engaging in social activities can help seniors combat feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Meeting new people and interacting with others can stimulate the mind, boost self-esteem and promote a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Additionally, sharing experiences and emotions with others can provide seniors with a different perspective on their challenges and help them cope more effectively. In essence, social connections act as a buffer against stress for seniors by offering companionship, empathy and a source of strength during difficult times.

CONSIDER ADOPTING A PET

Having a pet can be a wonderful way to reduce stress and improve
See "Stress" on page 10



Starts in November!

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What both sides wanted in 1947

(Fifteenth article of history series)

BY DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

1- THE ARABS

In the Arab world, the idea of Nation, as we understand it in the west, is an alien concept. Identity among Arabs stems from their Muslim identity which tends to be dominant. On a second level of identity, Arab culture is considered important. The first level I mentioned (Islam) is at the root of pan-Islamic initiatives, while the second (Arab culture) is at the root of the Pan Arab initiatives. Both perspectives provide overlapping (but by no means identical) attitudes towards the presence of non-Arabs/non-Muslims in the Mashreq (Fertile Crescent). Both perspectives have clashed in Arab societies for centuries, and those clashes intensified with the European colonial control which followed the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Supporters of both perspectives look for homogeneity; that is to “Arabize” non Arabs or “Islamize” the infidels, in both cases with various degrees of tolerance for some minority groups. In both cases, however, it is understood that their dominance is ordained by history. It is not very different from the European colonialism and imperial aspirations of the first half of the 20th century.

The immigration of Jews (non-Muslims) coming from non-Arab cultural environments, mobilized supporters of both per-

spectives in opposition to Zionism. Leaders from both sides exacted promises from the European powers to contain what they saw as the “Jewish invasion.” To compound the problem, they were used to see Jews as a subordinated population in Arab Muslim culture and the Zionist movement came across as a militant pro-Jewish group seeking peace but at the same time willing to stand their ground.

Some of the promises exacted by the Arabs from the Europeans (mostly British and French) became documents. Some of these documents were seen as binding by the Arabs, but just as vague promises by Britain and France. This complicated the relationship between the colonial occupiers, the Jews and the Arabs. Among the documents that the Arabs claimed as the basis for their control of all of British Mandate Palestine were:

- ◆ Hussein Mc-McMahon correspondence
- ◆ Hogarth message
- ◆ Faisal-Weizzman agreement
- ◆ Declaration of the seven

While there were more documents, these were at the time the most frequently quoted to support their claim. While the Faisal-Weizzman agreement was a more even-handed approach which could have provided the foundation for a peaceful coexistence, it was accepted by the Arabs under the condition

of British respect for other agreements – a respect that was lacking in London, leading Faisal – son of the Shariff of Mecca and leader of the Arab revolt against Turkey – to refuse to abide by the agreement.

All these tensions, internal and external, as well as the added imposition of Western ways of life and political organization, eventually triggered the Arab revolt of 1920 as well as the Palestinian revolts of 1929 and 1936-1939.

When the Arab League (a pan-Arab oriented organization) was formed in 1946 it made a point of including representatives of Palestine.

Under these conditions it should be no wonder that the Arabs opposed Partition and insisted in total control of the territory and the expulsion of the “European Jews.” They were not ready nor willing to compromise on issues they saw as a core part of their own identity.

2- THE JEWS

I don’t believe I need to repeat

myself on the roots of political Zionism in European society and history, but I feel the need to add one more element to the foundation of Zionism in Jewish culture.

Judaism, as a civilization, no less than as a religion, puts great emphasis in the connection between the people, the Torah and the Land as the central part of Jewish identity. This was most likely the reason that the attempts to redirect the efforts of the Zionist movement to a location other than the land of Israel failed repeatedly. For the vast majority of Jews, a Jewish sovereignty anywhere other than Israel was simply unthinkable. While there were indeed those who opposed Zionism on a religious basis, their opposition was to redeeming the land before the coming of Maschiach – not to the recognition of the link of the Jewish people to the land.

The five or six decades before the U.N. Partition resolution were ones in which the Zionist movement

See “Sides” on page 11

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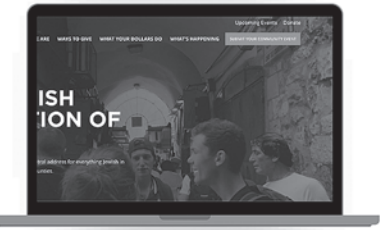


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Step 4

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

Be proud of who you are: Local young adults join 1,000 Jews from 30 countries for an unforgettable Shabbaton in NYC

BY JOEL CHAIMSON

Aubrey grew up carrying a warning passed down through three generations. Her great-grandmother had fled Germany before the Holocaust began – escaping just in time – and the terror of that era never left her. She drilled a lesson into her daughter: “Don’t announce your Jewishness. Hide it.” That message passed from mother to daughter, generation to generation – until this past month, when Aubrey, of Dunmore, PA, joined a group from the Jewish Discovery Center of Northeastern Pennsylvania on a trip to New York City that would change everything.

“This weekend taught me: *be proud of your Judaism*,” she said. More than 1,000 young Jewish professionals gathered from 30 countries. The Chabad Young Professionals (CYP) Encounter was not just a weekend event. It was a turning point.

Held in Crown Heights, Brooklyn – the heart of Chabad – the four-day CYP Encounter drew participants from 308 cities across 30 countries, ages 20s and 30s. The packed program included a tour of the iconic “770” synagogue, the world’s largest Jewish speed-dating event and – just before Shabbat – an address by Eliya Cohen, who was held hostage by Hamas in Gaza for 505 days after October 7, 2023. Shabbat brought 25 hours of learning, connection and a grand *Havdalah* concert. The weekend concluded at the Ohel in Queens, where participants left handwritten letters at the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s resting place.

For many, October 7 didn’t inspire retreat – it ignited pride. “The way we fight antisemitism is by doubling down on who we are,” said Avi Winner of Chabad. Evan G., 23, from Whitefish, Montana, where he is often the first Jew people have ever met, said the weekend “opened his

eyes” to Jewish life worldwide. Jonathan Pachter, 29, from Paris, reflected, “In my city, wearing a *kippah* has become an act of courage. Seeing successful Jewish professionals living proudly here gives us strength.”

The group from Northeastern Pennsylvania came back fully charged – inspired, connected and prouder than ever in their Jewish identity. “I came into this weekend not knowing what to expect, and I’m leaving feeling like I truly understand what it means to be part of something much bigger than myself,” said Grant of Old Forge. “Every session, every conversation, every moment of Shabbat added another layer – I

feel like I learned more about my Judaism this weekend than I have in years.” Joe from Clark’s Summit echoed that feeling: “Being surrounded by a thousand Jews from across the world, all proud of who they are – it lit something in me that I’m bringing home.”

Are you a young Jewish professional in your 20s or 30s? Join the young Jewish network at the Jewish Discovery Center of Northeastern Pennsylvania.



Presidents’ Day at BSA

At Beth Shalom Academy, Presidents’ Day is not simply a day off on the calendar – it is an opportunity. While many schools closed their doors, our classrooms were alive with learning, creativity and thoughtful presentations as students explored the meaning of leadership, democracy and the presidency.

Throughout the building, students took ownership of their learning, each grade approaching the presidency from a different lens.

The first and second grade boys focused on the special role of Pennsylvania in the lives of our presidents. From learning about President James Buchanan, the only president from Pennsylvania, to discussing the historic importance of Philadelphia in shaping early American government, our youngest boys proudly shared how our very own state helped shape the presidency. Their enthusiasm reminded us that history begins close to home.

The third and fourth grade boys zoomed in on the fascinating details that surround the presidency. They researched and presented on topics such as Air Force One, the Secret Service and the daily responsibilities of the president. One particularly impressive highlight was a model of Air Force One created in BSA’s MakerSpace.

The MakerSpace is a dynamic, hands-on en-

vironment rich in STEAM materials – science, technology, engineering, art and math – that empowers students to build what they are learning about. Rather than simply reading about Air Force One, students engineered, designed and constructed their own version, bringing research

See “Day” on page 9



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Together, We Can Make a Difference

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT



BSA Girls High School hosts Achdus event packing *shalach manos* for the community

In the true spirit of Purim and unity, the BSA Girls High School recently hosted a beautiful Achdus event, bringing together students from multiple area high schools to pack *shalach manos* for members of our community who find it difficult to leave their homes, as well as for residents of Elan Skilled Nursing.

The room was filled with energy, warmth and purpose as girls worked side by side assembling thoughtful packages that will bring *simcha* to so many. What made the evening particularly meaningful was not only the *chesed* itself, but the unity behind it.

The night before the event, Dr. Itzkowitz called Mrs. Lane from the girls high school in Kingston and invited her students to participate. Reflecting on the conversation, Dr. Itzkowitz shared, “Even though our schools are 30 minutes away from each other, there was a warmth and understanding of the importance of doing community outreach together.”

Students from different schools, neighborhoods and backgrounds came together with one
See “Achdus” on page 9



BSA Shushan Purim Carnival brings joy to the entire community

The spirit of Purim was alive and vibrant at Beth Shalom Academy as more than 200 community members gathered for the BSA Shushan Purim Carnival, an event that brought together families from near and far for an afternoon of laughter, creativity and celebration.



From the youngest babies to adults, everyone found something to enjoy. The carnival featured over a dozen booths and activities, each designed to capture the playful energy of Purim. One of

the most popular booths was the creative twist on a classic game, “Pin the Tail on Vashti,” which kept children laughing as they tried their best to land the tail in the right spot.



NOW HIRING

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 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
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 E-mail: tipoc@ptd.net
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Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi Daniel A. Bubnis, rabbibubnis@templeisraelscranton.org
 Cantor: Vladimir Aronzon
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 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. & Rosh Chodesh, hybrid at 7:30 am; Tues., Wed. & Fri., Zoom only at 7:30 am; Shabbat and festival morning services at 9:30 am

Beth Shalom Sisterhood hosts joyful Purim morning celebration

The Beth Shalom Sisterhood once again brought warmth, creativity and community spirit to Purim with a lively and engaging event that followed the morning megillah reading. The celebration, led by Sisterhood President Mrs. Shei Albrecht together with Vice President Leah Jaski, created a joyful atmosphere where families gathered to celebrate the holiday together.

The morning began with the megillah reading at 10 am, after which community members were invited to enjoy a Sisterhood brunch and participate in a variety of fun and

interactive activities. The event welcomed over 80 people, filling the space with the excitement and happiness that make Purim such a special day.

Mrs. Albrecht organized a series of original and entertaining party games that kept both children and adults actively involved. Among the favorites were creative games such as Musical Cups, Box Marching, Pin the Sticker on the Purim, and Spin and Jump, along with several other playful activities that encouraged laughter and friendly competition. The

See "Sisterhood" on page 11



A Grand Purim Feast in the Poconos: Chabad of the Mountains brings the community together

The joy and spirit of Purim were on full display in the Pocono Mountains this year as Chabad of the Mountains, led by Rabbi Mendel Raices, hosted a lively and memorable Purim Feast at the Kalahari Convention Center. The festive

event drew several hundred guests, creating an atmosphere filled with celebration, laughter and community.

Families, friends and visitors from across the region gathered to take part in the evening's festivities. For some guests, it was their first

See "Feast" on page 9



Feast Continued from page 8

time attending the Purim feast, while others have made the annual celebration hosted by Chabad of the Mountains a cherished tradition for many years.

The event featured exciting entertainment for both children and adults, with a talented magician and juggler captivating the audience with impressive tricks and playful performances. Throughout

the evening, guests enjoyed a wide variety of interactive games and activities, creating an energetic and welcoming environment for all ages.



Day Continued from page 6

to life in a tangible and meaningful way. This integration of academics and creativity reflects the BSA philosophy: learning should be experienced, not just memorized.

Our middle school and high school boys and girls presented in-depth research projects covering a wide range of topics connected to the presidency. Some explored the foundations of democracy and the structure of American government. Others examined individual presidents and pivotal historical moments that shaped our nation. Students analyzed leadership styles, discussed constitutional responsibilities and reflected on how historical decisions continue to influence our present day.

What made the day especially meaningful was the intentional message behind it. Presidents' Day at BSA is not about a vacation – it is about understanding respon-



sibility, leadership and civic engagement. It is about helping students recognize that history is not distant; it is something we continue to build every day.

At Beth Shalom Academy, we believe education is strongest when students actively participate, question, create and present. Whether through a second-grader proudly explaining Pennsylvania's place in presidential history, a fourth-grader unveiling a MakerSpace-engineered aircraft or a high school student analyzing democracy, the message was clear: Learning is not something we take a break from – it is something we celebrate.



Achdus Continued from page 7

shared mission – to bring joy to others.

At BSA, we often speak about the value of *ahavas Yisroel* – love for a fellow Jew. As Dr. Itzkowitz expressed so beautifully, “We teach our students and children about *ahavas Yisroel* (love for our fellow Jews). The most important thing we can do is exercise it and show our children that we are living it – not just preaching it.”

Whether it is Kingston to Scranton or any of the surrounding areas, we must work together as one people. Though sometimes our customs may look

a bit different, we all come from the same place, and ultimately we all end up in the same place. It is our duty to teach our children the importance of working together – through example, not just words.

The girls packed each *shalach manos* box with care, knowing that beyond the treats inside, they were delivering something much deeper: connection, dignity and joy.

This is the essence of Purim. This is the essence of Achdus. And this is the essence of what we strive to build at BSA every day.



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
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The Reporter

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Over 100 celebrate Purim bash with food, festivities and fun at the Jewish Discovery Center

BY CHAIM DAVIDSON

More than 100 community members gathered at the Jewish Discovery Center on March 3 for a festive evening celebrating Purim. Singles, couples and families of diverse backgrounds from Scranton, the Abingtons and across Northeast Pennsylvania came together for a lively program filled with tradition, delicious food, entertainment and activities for all ages.

The celebration began with the reading of the Scroll of Esther, telling the story behind the holiday. The megillah reading was enhanced with a captivating multimedia presentation, including an animated video in a LEGO-style format that told the full Purim story. The vivid, silent animation ran on screen throughout the reading, keeping attendees visually engaged while they followed along and enthusiastically shook graggers at the mention of the villain Haman.

Following the reading, guests gathered in the center’s main dining room for a royal Purim dinner complete with Purim shtick, an open bar and plenty of laughter. Rabbi Benny Rapoport, co-director of the JDC, delivered remarks exploring the relevance of the Purim miracle in light of the current military campaign to degrade and prevent Iran’s aggression against

the Jewish homeland. He focused on the unique steps taken by Queen Esther that seemed to defy common sense, yet reveal her recognition of God’s miraculous providence in the continued and eternal existence of the Jewish people—back then – and today.

The evening’s entertainment featured a comedy and magic performance by Denny Corby. Corby’s high-energy show combined mind-bending magic with humor and audience participation, leaving the crowd amazed and entertained.

The food was a true highlight of the evening, featuring a diverse and sumptuous spread that delighted every guest. Attendees enjoyed unique buffets including a Build Your Own Taco Station, a Middle Eastern Pita Bar, a Dumpling/Kreplach Bar, a Carving station and a Salad and Grain Bowl Bar. The carefully curated menu reflected both traditional flavors and festive Purim creativity, making the meal not just a dinner but an integral part of the celebration itself.

While adults participated in the dinner celebration, children enjoyed their own special program nearby. Young participants enjoyed dinner boxes and took part in a hands-on paint project, giving them a creative and colorful way

to celebrate the holiday.

Community members shared enthusiastic feedback following the celebration. “The party was incredible; we had the best time. Denny was spectacular, so funny!” said Maya Wisneski.


Another attendee, Coby Cranman, told organizers, “Amazing event! So beautiful, fun, delicious! You outdid yourselves.”

Bruce Levine also praised the evening, saying, “The Purim bash food was super scrumptious... the pulled beef, shawarma, schnitzel, falafel and carving station. Wow.”

In addition to listening to the megillah and enjoying the festive meal, guests also performed the other *mitzvot* associated with the holiday, exchanging mini *mishloach manot* food gifts provided and giving *tzedakah* with coins and charity boxes set up throughout the venue.

The event was made possible thanks to donations by attendees as well as the JDC’s annual and monthly supporters of the JDC. A special thanks to event sponsors Jerry and Phyllis Chazan, and Artie and Angelika Gabriellov.

Purim is traditionally celebrated with the reading of the megillah, festive meals and joyful gatherings that highlight Jewish resilience and unity. The Jewish Discovery Center’s celebration reflected these traditions while bringing the local community together for an evening of joy, laughter, and connection. See the JDC Instagram and Facebook pages for more photos and videos of the event.



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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Stress


Continued from page 4 overall well-being. The companionship and unconditional love that pets provide can help decrease feelings of loneliness and anxiety. Interacting with pets, such as stroking a cat or playing with a dog, can release oxytocin, a hormone that promotes relaxation and reduces stress levels.

Pets also encourage physical activity and social interaction, which are important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Taking a dog for a walk or playing with a pet can help increase physical activity levels and reduce feelings of stress. Additionally, pets can provide a sense of purpose and routine, as they rely on their owners for care and attention.

It’s important for seniors to prioritize self-care and take steps to manage stress in order to maintain their mental and emotional well-being. By addressing and managing stress effectively, seniors can improve their overall health and enjoy a higher quality of life in their golden years.

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Sisterhood Continued from page 8

interactive nature of the games allowed families to participate together, making the experience especially memorable.

In addition to the games, children enjoyed the talents of Michal, the face-paint artist, who created colorful and festive designs for eager participants. A balloon artist also delighted

children with imaginative balloon creations that added another layer of excitement to the celebration.

Many attendees remarked that it was the first time in Scranton that children had such a wonderful opportunity to enjoy organized games and spend relaxed time with their families and friends early in

the day, immediately following the megillah reading. The event created a festive continuation of the morning's Purim celebrations and brought an extra layer of excitement to the holiday.

The Beth Shalom Sisterhood continues to play an important role in building community through thoughtful programming and welcoming gatherings. Thanks to the leadership of Mrs. Shei Albrecht, Vice President Leah Jaski and the Sisterhood volunteers, the Purim morning celebration was filled with joy, laughter and meaningful connection for everyone who attended.

Events like this remind the community that Purim is not only about the *mitzvot* of the day, but also about sharing happiness and strengthening friendships within the community.



Sides Continued from page 5

invested human and financial resources to develop the land and its economic capacity to absorb a larger Jewish population. These efforts were successful, and in addition to encourage more Jewish immigration, it attracted Arabs from the surrounding countries who came in search of economic opportunity. It also helped in the development of an Arab Palestinian middle class.

The economic development of the Jewish community and its relationship with the development of the Palestinian community created, as it does everywhere, tensions between the two groups. In the Jewish community there were two attitudes toward this issue. There were those who saw Palestinians as intruders and enemies and advocated for a Greater Israel to include the eastern bank of the Jordan River (today's Jordan). On the other extreme, there were those who advocated a close partnership and even visualized a bi-national state. The vast majority of the community was somewhere in-between, with the most pragmatic group led by Ben Gurion enjoying majority support. There are also, of course, some religious groups completely opposed to the goal of a Jewish state for religious reasons of their own.

World War II and its aftermath put pressure on the Jews to find ways to bypass British limits on Jewish immigration in order to bring in the remnants of European Jewry which was lingering in the Displaced Persons Camps of Europe. This pressing need made the leadership of the Yishuv, headed by Ben Gurion, more willing to compromise and more open to the

idea of Partition. They felt that only political and sovereign control over immigration would make a Jewish state possible.

The Jewish case was based on the ancestral connection and the need for self-determination, but it was also grounded in international commitments which, as in the case of the promises to the Arabs, were seen differently by the Jews and by the Mandatory powers. The documents they saw as most important were:

- ◆ 1917 Balfour Declaration
- ◆ 1920 Treaty of San Remo
- ◆ Faisal-Weizmann agreement

The Nazi persecution and extermination of European Jews was also perceived by the Yishuv as a strong justification for a Jewish state. There is no wonder, therefore, that Jews (some of them reluctantly) saw in the U.N. Partition resolution an historic opportunity to restore Jewish self-government and to rescue the survivors of the Nazi genocide.

With each side looking at the issue from such different – indeed opposing – perspectives, it was clear for both sides that the Partition approved on November 29, 1947, was just the beginning of a different stage in the conflict between both communities. Neither side was in a position to compromise and the clash was unavoidable.

As the crowds celebrated in the streets of Tel-Aviv and almost all other Jewish population centers, the Jewish leadership knew that war was coming and was preparing for it. They felt that 2,000 years of exile and dispersion, and 200,000 Jewish refugees still in Europe, were weighting on their shoulders.



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Museum. Continued from page 1

Denmark’s Jewish population. We learned about two “miracles” – the “miracle by boat” and the “miracle by bus.” The “miracle by boat” was the saving of Danish Jews by smuggling them into Sweden. This was done, not only because these men, women and children were Jews, but also because they were Danes first and foremost. The “miracle by bus” involved 36 Red Cross buses taking numerous Danish prisoners to Sweden

upon German agreement, ultimately saving their lives. Despite the enormous risk, these ordinary citizens united against Nazism to save nearly 95 percent of Denmark’s Jewish population.

The second exhibit was titled “The Holocaust: What Hate Can Do.” It is an expansive and timely presentation of Holocaust history told through personal stories, objects, photos and film – many on view for the first time. Each room, and each

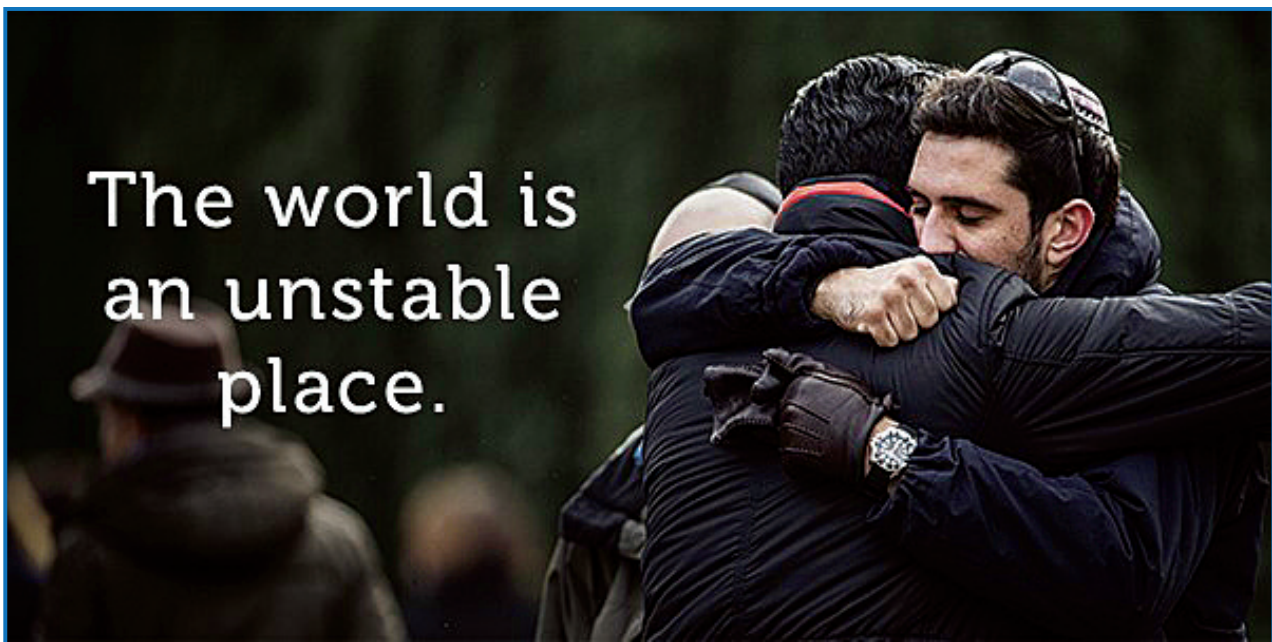
object, contains generations of experiences and information about who Jews are, what sustains Jewish communities and what life was like during the period of European modernization, World War I, and the political and social movements that brought about the rise of the Nazi Party. Within the Holocaust’s experiences of legalized racism and fascism, pogroms, ghettos, mass murder and concentration camps are also instances of personal and global decision-making, escape, resistance and resilience, and ultimately liberation and new beginnings.

Outside the museum stands The Children’s Tree, a sliver maple tree descended from a tree that grew in Terezin (Theresienstadt), a Nazi concentration camp in the Czech Republic. The tree was planted in 1943 by a teacher named Irma Lauscher and a group of Jewish children imprisoned in the camp. Lauscher and the children used their precious water rations to keep the tree alive.

Amy Kelly, Social Studies Department chair at Abington Heights High School, wrote, “I am definitely going to include the history of the Jewish experience in Denmark from the exhibit we toured within my unit. It is a perfect example that can highlight the importance of individual impact and collective action to protect human rights. It was so valuable to have time with other educators as well to hear ways in which they incorporate education about the Holocaust into their classrooms.”

Elie Wiesel, in his preface to his novel “Night,” wrote, “For the survivor who chooses to testify, it is clear his duty is to bear witness for the dead and for the living. He has no right to deprive the future generations of the past that belongs to our collective memory. To forget would not only be dangerous but offensive: to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.” By exploring this exhibit, we bore witness and illuminated our understanding of Jewish life before, during and after the Holocaust.

This trip was part of the Holocaust Education Resource Center, a program of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania.



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



Susie. Continued from page 1

Susie’s cookbooks were available for sale and signing by the author.

This exciting event was organized by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania with support from David Elliot Poultry Farm.

