

## ***New Light News March 2019***

### **A Word from the Rabbi**

Remember this little ditty:

*We're Jews out in space; we're zooming along; protecting the Hebrew race  
We're Jews out in space; if trouble appears; we put it right back in its place  
When goyim attack us; we give 'em a smack; we'll slap them right back in the face  
We're Jews out in space; we're zooming along; protecting the Hebrew race.*

It is the “trailer” that is tacked on to the end of Mel Brooks’ History of the World, Part I, advertising a Star Wars style blockbuster with a big spaceship in the shape of a Jewish star. Across the starboard side is the word *kosher*. Hasidim dance in the window of the ship every time they hit an enemy target.

Well, Jews in space is no longer a fantasy. Israel has sent a spacecraft along with a time capsule on the Jewish state’s first mission to the moon in 2019.

The capsule will consist of the Bible, pictures of Israeli symbols like the flag, Israeli songs, drawings by children and a booklet by a Jewish man about surviving the Holocaust, in addition to other materials. The spacecraft *Bereshit* (the Hebrew word for “Genesis”) launched from Cape Canaveral, FL, in February. The time capsule is expected to remain on the moon indefinitely.

SpaceIL and the Israeli Space Agency announced in October a collaboration with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration that will allow SpaceIL to better its capability to monitor and “communicate with the spacecraft before, during and after landing on the moon,” according to a statement by SpaceIL.

Think of the possibilities! It is no longer “Next time in Jerusalem.” Next year we will have space cruises to the moon and dine in weightless orbit as we try to pour the cup of Elijah during the Passover Seder. Of course, we will have to come up with new times to say Schacharit-Mincha-Maariv because the moon orbits the Earth and we have no fixed earthly anchor vis-à-vis sunup and sundown. It makes for shorter days and shorter High Holiday services! Would you like to do your wedding on the moon? Imagine your spacecraft landing in the Sea of Tranquility with your party and huppa holders digging the posts into the rocky moon soil. “We claim the first wedding on the moon for Jerry and Hannah”! We’ll yell “L’chaim!” Why did they name the space craft *Bereshit*? Are we building Jewish colonies on the moon? Can we name the first male and female astronauts Adam and Eve? Better give them clothes! I hear it is pretty cold up there!

Well, I for one am excited. Whether it is for military purposes or recreational purposes, Jews will get to test whether or not the moon is made of cheese. And you know what that means! No fleyshiks!

Moses on the Moon? Megillah on the Moon? Matzah Ball on the Moon?

The opportunities are limitless!

Shalom,

**Rabbi**

## Presidents' Report

Adar I started during February. The Rabbi says it is a time for jokes:

*A poor man walking in the forest feels close enough to God to ask, "God, what is a million years to you?"*

*God replies, "My son, a million years to you is like a second to me."*

*The man asks, "God, what is a million dollars to you?"*

*God replies, "My son, a million dollars to you is less than a penny to me. It means almost nothing to me."*

*The man asks, "So God, can I have a million dollars?"*

*And God replies, "In a second."*

February turned a corner for New Light. We began to look ahead:

- We moved our office – and the Rabbi's many books – into our new space on the second floor.
- We are actively selling our "Stronger-Than-Hate-Words Matter" t-shirts online. If you know of anyone interested, please refer them to our website. The price is \$20 plus shipping.
- We hired Rabbi Howard Stein to read Haftarah on Shabbat.
- We began planning for a special 'thank you' Purim celebration. We have invited several organizations who have been so supportive to us since October. See the attached flyer. It will be fun!
- We began thinking about next October, both in terms of the events to be held and how to build a permanent memorial to our lost members. We discussed holding a memorial service in late October for the families of our victims. We are in conversation with a gentleman who wishes to donate \$100,000 toward the construction of a permanent monument to the eleven victims.
- We met with representatives of the Federation's Independent Committee concerning their proposal for a commission to help organize and coordinate next October's events; to create permanent memorial(s); and to promote educational initiatives about anti-Semitism and hate crimes. In general, we support the creation of a Federation-run Committee to help coordinate memorial events this coming October. The one-year Hebrew anniversary is Saturday, November 16, 2019.
- We held a focus group, organized by Tree of Life, to assess our expectations and desires for the re-construction of the Tree of Life building. About ten members participated. The session was moderated by Dan Rothschild of the Rothschild Doyno Collaborative, an architecture and urban design firm located in Pittsburgh. He posed three areas of concern – Social, Economic and Physical – and asked us to write our concerns, expectations and desires on sticky notes. He will combine our notes with those of the other Focus Groups being held over the next two weeks (Dor Hadash, families, etc.) and produce a report summarizing our notes. Michael Eisenberg, head of the Building Committee, commented at the end that the TOLOLS Focus Group held in December raised similar issues. The dominant theme of the evening was FAMILY – we want to return to the closeness we had prior to the tragedy; and HOPE – that the future will bring a better and speedy conclusion to our homelessness.

By the time you receive this, the Federation's Independent Committee's Report on the distributions of monies donated to the Federation should be published (or within days of being released).

One last note: we continue to receive media inquiries about the event. The nature of the requests has changed. Initially, the requests were about the immediacy of the event. Now, they are film makers and book writers looking to do in-depth interviews and on camera reporting. As you know, we hired Bob Butter of Veritas Communications Advisors to act as our crisis manager. *If you receive a call or email from a reporter or anyone else seeking your comments or an interview, please feel free to a) say no; or b) refer them to Bob. His email is [bbuter@veritas.com](mailto:bbuter@veritas.com); his number is 412-736-6186.* You are, of course, free to speak to anyone – about anything.

**Barbara Caplan & Stephen Cohen, Co-Presidents**

### **March Meetings**

- **Monthly board meeting** - Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:30 A.M at Zweig Library, Beth Shalom 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. *Following the board meeting, Center for Victims will meet with us again at noon. We encourage everyone to attend – this is not just for board members.*
- **Sisterhood meeting** - Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 A.M. at Forward-Shady Apartment building.
- **Men's Club meeting** – Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:15 P.M. at Beth Shalom.
- **Victims of Crimes Congregational Needs Assessment Meeting** - March 12<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 P.M., in the Beth Shalom Ballroom

The Federal Office for Victims of Crime has requested a meeting with the entire congregation as part of a Needs Assessment of the local community after the October 27<sup>th</sup> synagogue shooting. This assessment will result in a report to assist the community to apply for funding to meet these needs. The meeting will be an opportunity to talk about predictable reactions to mass violence events, some ideas about coping for yourself and those you care about, and to hear the challenges in coping with the shooting and its aftermath for the congregation as a whole and the individuals who make up the congregation.

### **Pittsburgh Resiliency Center**

The federal government provides significant long term funding for services to victims. A long term planning committee was formed in November to understand the types of potential resources and write a grant to obtain government funding available for victims' services. The committee is chaired by a representative of the U.S. Department of Justice and includes additional government representatives, plus representatives from the three congregations, the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation, Jewish Family and Community Services, and the Center for Victims. Janet Cohen and Karen Coburn represent New Light.

The committee is in the very early stages of applying for a grant from AEAP (Antiterrorism Emergency Assistance Program) which would help fund a Pittsburgh Resiliency Center. Resiliency Centers have been established in many communities affected by similar tragedies. Its purpose is to help centralize the provision of services and resources to the individuals, families and communities involved. The needs assessment being conducted by the federal consultants will help inform the creation of the center and the grant request for its funding.

## **Moses in the Midrash: How the Rabbis Read the Torah**

The next classes are March 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. in the Lehman Board Room, second floor, Beth Shalom.

## **Purim**

We will celebrate Purim this year on **Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 PM** with the Megillah reading, followed by dinner and a Purim spiel. We have invited first responders and members of local congregations and organizations who have been so supportive to us over the past several months, including Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church, the Islamic Center of Oakland, the Hindu Jain Alliance, Shadyside Presbyterian Church, and first responders. See the attached flyer for details and the section below for more information about the Purim shpiel.

We will join Beth Shalom for a family Megillah reading on **Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM**. On Thursday morning Rabbi and Beth Perlman will read at the Community Day School service. Please contact Rabbi Perlman for details.

## **2019 Purim Shpiel: Mister Rogers Goes to Shushan**

We are preparing a very special shpiel this year for all Mister Rogers' fans. We will take the trolley to neighborhood of make believe to discover how the Esther story would have turned out if it was written for Children's Television right here in Pittsburgh.

The rabbi is playing Mr. Rabbi Rogers. If you would like to voice one of the puppets or characters (King, Mordecai Striped Tiger, Lady Haman Fairchild, Queen Eshter Shabbos, Chef Brockett, Officer Clemons, and Mr. McFeely) – or if you would like to help with the drafting of the shpiel, contact the rabbi at [perlmanrav@gmail.com](mailto:perlmanrav@gmail.com)

Rehearsals take place on Thursdays in March. The Shpiel will take place at 7:00 PM on Thursday, March 21st during our Purim Seudah (Banquet).

## **Men's Club Sunday Morning Minyan Reminder**

We have restarted our joint Sunday minyan/breakfast, alternating locations weekly with TOLOLS. March 3<sup>rd</sup> will be with TOLOLS at Rodef Shalom at 9:15 A.M.

## **Hearts of Hope**

On Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, we were visited by volunteers of the Hearts of Hope Program from New Jersey and Newton, CT. Hearts of Hope (<https://www.ourheartsofhope.org/>) is a movement of hope accomplished through the creation and distribution of healing art. Their beautiful ceramic and cloth hearts benefit people of all ages in hospitals, cancer centers, communities and many more. These include those suffering from serious illness, trauma and loss, or simply someone who needs encouragement, gratitude or love. We will have some to distribute at the March board meeting.



Their own story of the visit to Pittsburgh can be found on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/HeartsOfHopeOfNewtownCt/posts/1053698048143263>

## **Jewish National Fund Honoring Victims**

The Jewish National Fund wanted to honor those that were taken in the massacre by planting a tree and erecting a memorial as a tribute in remembrance in Israel. The special plaque and tree were planted in January at the 9/11 Living Memorial Plaza located on a hill in Arazim Valley of Ramot, Jerusalem. Mayor Peduto will be on mayoral mission to Israel and will visit the site on Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

## **Wiesenthal Nazi Hunter**

The play “Wiesenthal Nazi Hunter” will be presented on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at the August Wilson Center as a benefit for Tree of Life. Please see the attached flyer for more information.

## **International Traveling Exhibition: Names Instead of Numbers:**

### **Remembrance Book for the Prisoners of Dachau Concentration Camp**

The German Department at the University of Pittsburgh is hosting the international traveling exhibition “Names Instead of Numbers: Remembrance Book for the Prisoners of Dachau Concentration Camp” from February 25 to March 10. Additional information on the Remembrance Book Project can be found at: <http://www.gedaechtnisbuch.org/kurzinfo-englisch/> Please see the attached flyer or contact Dr. Maureen Gallagher (mog25@pitt.edu) for more information.

## **AARP**

The Squirrel Hill AARP Chapter will hold its next meeting on March 20, 2019 in the Levy Library, 2nd floor at Rodef Shalom Synagogue at 1:00 P.M. The chapter nominating committee will present its slate of officers to the membership for approval. In addition, a health report on the importance of home safety will be given by Marsha Stern; a legislative report will be given by Barry Werber; and reports on past and future chapter luncheons and future meeting dates and guest speakers will be presented.

Naomi Herman, creator of the Mindful Files blog, <http://themindfulfiles.blogspot.com> will address the topic of the Responsibility of Living and Leaving. Ms. Herman received her MSW degree from the University of Pittsburgh and worked in early childhood education, senior adult and disease prevention programming and volunteer management. Upon hearing stories from friends and relatives about the challenges faced when a family member become incapacitated or dies she began to post information to help others to organize members’ important information for families. Ms. Herman will share her knowledge and experience at the March AARP meeting.

In the event that the Pittsburgh Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather the meeting will be cancelled. Refreshments will be served following the meeting. For further information contact Marcia Kramer at 412-731-3338.

## **Hard to Recycle Event**

The annual hard-to-recycle event will held this spring at the Pittsburgh Mills mall on May 11 from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Residents can recycle items such as televisions, computer monitors and other electronics either for free or for a small fee depending on the item. More information about the event, held by the Pennsylvania Resources Council, can be found at <http://prc.org/programs/collection-events/>

## Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

New Light Congregation honored the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. The celebration began with the call to worship and invocation by Rev. Darryl T. Canady, and included music by the Choir; a prayer for unity by Rabbi Ron Symons, Senior Director of Jewish Life at the JCC Pittsburgh; a prayer for racial reconciliation by Rev. Liddy Barlow, Executive Minister Christian Associates of Southwest PA; a prayer for peace by Bishop Kurt Kusserow, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Southwest PA; reflections on the healing trip to Charleston, SC by Rabbi Perlman; remarks Bishop Dorsey McConnel and Pastor Darryl T. Canady; a benediction and blessing of food, and refreshments.



## Cranes and Pies



The Pittsburgh Japanese Community presented 1,000 paper cranes to New Light in memory of Dan, Rich and Mel following Friday night services on February 8<sup>th</sup>. On Saturday after Shabbat services we enjoyed Rose McGee's Sweet Potato Comfort Pies. For more information please see <https://jewishchronicle.timesofisrael.com/cranes-and-pies-swoop-in-after-shabbat-services/>

### March Birthdays

Ronald Berkman  
Bonnie Greenberg  
Roselle Solomon  
Rose Stone  
Barry Werber

### March Anniversaries

Barbara and Arnie Epstein  
Eileen and Myron Snider

## Reminders

- To purchase Memorial Plaques, Simcha Tree Leaves or Stones contact Ileen Portnoy 412-683-7985
- To sponsor an Oneg in honor of that special person/event or for no reason at all call Hugh Casper at 412-421-7619
- To purchase bricks for our “Garden of Freedom” or sponsor a Kiddush luncheon contact Barbara Caplan 412-521-4332
- To purchase Giant Eagle gift cards contact Marilyn Honigsberg at 412-521-7174
- For information on our cemetery contact Stephen Cohen at 412-421-3999

## NEW LIGHT CONGREGATION

5915 Beacon Street  
412-421-1017

[www.newlightcongregation.org](http://www.newlightcongregation.org)

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