

## Good Morning Reader

# Spirit of Purim shines through inclement weather

BY ROCHEL LEAH GOLDBLATT  
READING EAGLE

Despite rain and snow last Wednesday night and Thursday, the Jewish holiday of Purim was celebrated with joy and merriment.

The holiday recounts the story told in the biblical book of Esther: A Jewish woman named Esther marries a Persian king and saves the Jewish nation from royal adviser Haman, a homicidal anti-Semite who had a long-standing rivalry with Esther's uncle Mordechai.

Through a few twists of fate and some subtle miracles, the Jewish people were saved from slaughter, and the holiday of Purim was thereafter celebrated.

It is a joyous holiday, with costumes, gift baskets, triangular jam-filled cookies called hamentashen, charity, good food and the reading of the Megillah, a scroll containing the story of Esther.

The festivities kicked off last Wednesday night with a carnival hosted by the Jewish Federation of Reading.

"I was pleasantly surprised, considering all the changes we had," Federation Program Director Amanda Hornberger said, noting that the carnival had been scheduled for March 1 but was canceled due to snow. "(They) came out in costume, the little kids, and some of the adults too, which was really, really fun."

She said there were about 100 people who came to the carnival at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom in Wyomissing.

The kids especially had fun with carnival games, a bounce house, crafts



COURTESY OF RABBI YOSEF LIPSKER

Celebrants were invited to don costumes for the Purim in Italy festivities at Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks County, Muhlenberg Township, on Thursday.

and decorating their own gragger, a noisemaker used to drown out Haman's name during the Megillah reading, Hornberger said.

After the carnival, Oheb Sholom and Kesher Zion Synagogue teamed up for a family service that told the story of Purim in an interactive way for the children and a "hamentash nosh," which was a cookie snack.

"It was just a singing and family-friendly retelling of the Purim story," said Rabbi Brian Michelson of Oheb Sholom. "Just a slightly different way of doing it for the kids."

He added that there was a costume parade and that everyone who came in costume got a prize.

The Purim evening at Oheb Sholom concluded with a traditional Purim service for adults.

Thursday was snowy in Penn-

sylvania, but it was toasty at Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks County in Muhlenberg Township, where they were celebrating Purim in Italy.

"It was amazing," Chabad Rabbi Yosef Lipsker said. "Despite the fact that we had the worst weather we ever had for Purim, spirits were high."

About 30 people attended the transformed synagogue to pose by the canals in Venice portrayed in a life-size poster, eat pizza and pasta and show off their Italian-themed costumes.

"It showed a certain strength, a certain tenacity, a certain conviction," Lipsker said. "People got together to celebrate Purim despite difficulties. That's what Purim is all about."

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READING EAGLE: SUSAN L. ANGSTADT

**Large pothole-pocked Ruth Road in Fleetwood on Tuesday.**

son potholes have popped up promptly on parkways and pikes from Pottstown to Perry Township. Whereas potholes arrived sparingly last year, now they are proliferating.

This winter differs from 2013-14 in that Monday was the first day since Dec. 28 that the temperature in Berks County climbed over 50. Last winter, there were a number of 50-plus-degree days amid the cold spells.

"It's that freezing and thawing when water on the road gets down into cracks then freezes that causes potholes,"

said Ronald Young Jr. of PennDOT's District 5, which includes Berks. "When you get cars driving on that pavement it breaks apart."

Does that mean, although it seems bad now, that the pothole season won't be as long this year?

"It's too early to tell," Young said. "But don't forget that even though it is in the 40s during the day, it still is going down below freezing overnight. So, you do have that freezing and thawing effect."

PennDOT records show [See *Hole-riddled* >>> A3]

## REPORT A POTHOLE

To report a pothole on a state road, call PennDOT at 1-800-FIX-ROAD (1-800-349-7623) or visit [www.dot.state.pa.us](http://www.dot.state.pa.us). Be sure to have the following information available: name of county, name of municipality, name of road and closest intersection. Your name and phone number are optional.

For local streets, call your municipality.

of the 50-plus acre site, which is also in Union Township.

The plant has the potential to create over 300 jobs in the borough, James Palumbo, a project manager for EmberClear, told council Monday.

He said the company is under contract to purchase the property, which is owned by Armorcast LP, but the deal has not been finalized. The tract was home to a former World War II tank factory.

EmberClear has not yet submitted official plans or details, but Palumbo said the project would require an 8- to 10-inch natural gas pipeline to the site.

The company would also receive water from the borough through municipal authority and would collect and use its stormwater runoff, he said.

In February, EmberClear officials announced that they were no longer pursuing the project on a 63-acre farm field at Mountain Home Road and Krick Lane in South Heidelberg. That \$1 billion proposal involved an energy process that would have converted natural gas into propane and

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