

Ruach Reflections

April 2009

Gray Academy of Jewish Education

Nisan-Iyar 5769

Chag Sameach! Have a safe break!

Important Dates

April 1	Science Fair
April 2	Alumni Meeting @ 7pm Celebration of Science
April 2	Gr. 9 - Gwen Secter - Meet with Survivor Group
April 3	Gr. 12 to Record Ethical Wills
April 3	Alumni Association lunch for Gr. 12
April 7	School Seder - am
April 8-17	Pesach Break
April 20	First Day Back after Pesach
April 21	Yom Hashoah Reports Go Home WBJE Exec. and Board Meeting
April 22	Last day of classes - Gr. 12 P2K Departs for Israel
April 23	Parent-Teacher Interviews @ 8:45 - 12 pm and 4-9 pm
April 24	Parent-Teacher Interviews @ 8:45- 12:30 pm
April 25	Rosh Chodesh Iyar
April 27	Gr. 12 Exams Begin Chief Rabbi of Berlin to Speak to Gr. 8-11 @ 9:30 am Staff Meeting @ 4pm
April 29	Yom Ha'atzmaut
April 30	PAC Meeting @ 7:30 pm

March Madness (& Fun)

Purim without our High School Gym Riot is like celebrating this festive holiday without hamentashen! Starting with a Megillah Reading with Rabbi Simmons and a costume competition in the Berney Theatre, the day unfolded with a yummy pancake breakfast prepared by the teachers and administration, and then ended with gym riot prep and the anticipation of the next day! On March 11, gym riot activities included the presentation of songs and banners, Go Kart racing in the gym, a dance and basketball competition, followed by an eating contest and dodge ball. Congratulations to Grade 9B who won in the junior high category and Grade 12B who won in the high school.

Students in Grades JK-6 had a great time on March 6 with Pajama Day and a school wide Shabbatot; finishing off the celebrations the next Tuesday with a fun-filled day that started off with Megillah Reading for JK – Grade 3 and Grades 4 – 6, followed by the Mainstreet Parade, the exchanging of Mishloach Manot, the Purim booths, and a school wide BINGO.



Interview with Linda Goodbrandson, Librarian

Librarian Linda Goodbrandson lives by the adage never judge a book by its cover, and given there are thousands of books in the Kaufman-Silverberg Resource Centre under her watch, she can suggest a good one for you!

Linda has been a library technician since 1993 and studied Library and Information Studies at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, and we are very fortunate to have her running our beautiful facility.

"It's been really rewarding. I enjoy the variety of work and people that this library serves", she proclaims with enthusiasm when asked how she would sum up her career so far. "I encourage everyone to use the library. There is something for everyone. Suggestions for new items to

purchase are always welcome."

And recently she has created a buzz in the library at lunchtime with a Craft Club and two Book Clubs for all grades.

Mrs. Goodbrandson is also looking for student volunteers,

grandparents and/or parents to help out with reading to the young students, and running the lunchtime programs, so please give her a call at 477-7476. All the beading and crafts are sold by the crafters, with proceeds going to various charities like Siloam Mission.

Beyond the usefulness of the library for the school, it is also full of wonderful resources for adults too - from books in Yiddish, Spanish, French and Hebrew (and English of course) to videos, access to databases, new fiction, books on CD and newspapers from around the globe. There is also a monthly listing of all new book acquisitions, should you need a good night time read.

In fact, the library has a number of classrooms, which are also used by the teachers at the school who may be looking for a change in venue for their students, or wish to have them work on projects within the resource centre.

The library also sells tribute and memoriam cards for \$10 and \$18, with proceeds going towards the purchase of new books. So please consider supporting the library.

To check out the latest offerings, useful web links for homework and hours of operation, go to:

<http://www.grayacademy.ca/library.html>

Guidance Department Update

Diane Peters, High School Guidance Counsellor was recently invited, along with several other community organizations, to join the **Jewish Community Task Force to End Violence Against Women** - a partnership that was started last September by Jewish Child & Family Service (JCFS), Jewish Women International Canada, and the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg - and sat down with us to talk a bit about its purpose.

"The mandate of this task force is to educate the community about Jewish domestic violence; the topic of domestic violence is a strong area of interest for me so I am very pleased to be a part of this important work," said Ms. Peters.

The goal of the task force is also to begin to develop strategies for mobilizing services and resources in our community to assist women facing intimate partner abuse. This will include youth, young adults, seniors, synagogues, rabbis, schools, service delivery agencies, etc.

Ms. Peter's coursework with students in Grades 7-12 is also very extensive as she explores healthy relationships that involve not only self-examination, but also looks at it in the context of family, friends and dating relationships. With guest speakers from *Klinik* and *Osborne House* coming in to talk to Grade 9-12 students, the outreach on this topic is very positive.

In fact, Diane sat on the Board of Osborne House and has extensive experience volunteering on the crisis help line there.

We thank Ms. Peters for her involvement with this new task force. For more information, please contact Al Benarroch ('82), Clinical Director at JCFS, and the agency's lead on this task force at 477-7430.

In other Guidance news, we welcome new Elementary Guidance Counsellor, Marcelo Mohadeb, who is a familiar face already as the Grade 1 teacher.

For more information on Ms. Peters and Mr. Mohadeb's respective office hours, please go to: http://www.grayacademy.ca/parents_guidance.html

Ms. Peters has recently updated an extensive list to choose from on scholarship information. Please click on this school website link: www.grayacademy.ca/parents_guidance_scholarships.html

And for a checklist on how to prepare for university, we have a web link along with University Guidelines: www.grayacademy.ca/parents_guidance_preparing.html

Elementary Corner

JK, Gr. 1, 3 and 5: Matzah Factory @ Chabad Lubavitch North

This past week many of our students had the opportunity to participate in a Matzah Making workshop with the animated and always enthusiastic Rabbi Baruch Heidingsfeld from Chabad Lubavitch. The students were led through the process beginning with grinding the wheat to mixing the flour and water, to making an individual matzah and using the poker roller, and then finally making sure it was in and out of the oven. All within 18 minutes after the mixing started. A fantastic time was had by all!!

Kindergarten: Dr. Evan Margolis visit

Recently, Dr. Evan Margolis came to talk to the Kindergarten classes about dental care and healthy choices for teeth. He gave our students, toothbrushes, colouring books, dental floss, and pencils. He talked about good healthy choices for our snacks, how important it is to take care of our teeth and to visit your dentist twice a year!



Grades 5 & 6: Science Fair

Viewing of our Grades 5 and 6 Science Fair projects will be on Wednesday, April 1 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm. The projects will be set up in the hallways on the second floor. Come and see what our students have discovered over the past few months.

Go Raiders Go!

With the end of the 2009 season, Gray Academy basketball teams completed their most successful and, certainly, most memorable season in recent times.



Gray Academy was represented at the MHSAA Provincial Championships by the **JV boys** and the **Varsity girls**. The JV boys' qualified for the Urban JV Championships by virtue of their victory over Linden Christian in the Zone 12 final. The boys met a strong St. Paul's team in their winner-moves-on game. Despite being 29 points down at halftime, the boys battled back and lost by only 9. The girls entered the Varsity Provincials ranked 7th in the province. The girls lost to the 10th ranked Windsor Park Royals. This upset dropped them to the consolation side and they were eliminated from



the tournament with their second loss the next day.

Our Varsity boys were runners-up to U.W. The JV girls, Grade 8 boys and Grade 7 girls and boys all enjoyed meaningful and challenging seasons.

The High School Provincial Curling Team Members: Justin Lasker (skip), Steven Baker, Joey Frohlinger, Jonathan Ripstein and Josh Kerr won 1 game and lost 2 along with Grant Buckoski (coach).

Our attention now turns to badminton as our high school team will compete in the Zone 12 Championships on April 22. The Grade 7-9 players await the Pembina Trails tournament which starts after Pesach Break.

- Kevin Abrahams, Physical Education

Tu B'Shvat - A Celebration

Kindergarten had a fun filled week of Tu B'Shvat activities in February. They began with a "Fruit Seder" and sampled figs, dates, oranges, bananas and raisins just to name a few. The students also worked on their "Family Tree" project.



Grade 1 students illustrated "My Garden" pictures and enjoyed a picnic style Tu B'Shvat snack.

Grade 2 continued to work on their unit "Fruit and Trees in Israel".

Grade 3 enjoyed learning centres, including seed planting, a puzzle of Is-

rael, an Israel card game, Israel Trivia and Tu B'Shvat bingo. **Grade 4** had a Tu B'Shvat Seder. They read, sang, asked questions and riddles, and of course, ate!



Grades 5 & 6

saw the video *The Story of Stuff with Annie Leonard*. Following the video, students reflected on their responsibility towards the earth.



Jugglefest



On March 6, in the Berney Theatre, students in Grades 7-9 competed in the annual Jugglefest. And it delivered on its promise to be yet another exciting show, with quality performers showcasing their stuff in juggling, diabolo and devil's sticks (new this year).

After a qualifying round, students who advanced to the competition included: Yale Selchen (Grade 9) who was this year's winner, Adam Stoller (Grade 9), and the team of Evgeny Gotfrid (Grade 8) and Zohar Davidovich (Grade 9). Thank you to MC Ilya Vaslavskiy.

To see more Jugglefest photos, go to our gallery: http://www.grayacademy.ca/students_gallery.cfm. Coming soon! The video footage of Yale Selchen's award winning performance on the website.

Pippin - The Musical

The high school musical, *Pippin*, rocked the house last week in the bi-annual event that is always a show-stopper! The last night was well attended by parents, grandparents, friends and Alumni who gave a standing ovation - all wanting more from the cast and crew. A big congratulations to the students and volunteers who have worked very hard to bring you a "corner of the sky". Go to our website photo gallery to see more.



Purim: A Photo Montage



To see more Purim photos, go to our photo gallery
http://www.grayacademy.ca/students_gallery.cfm

Music at Lunch



Music at lunch is a new initiative at Gray Academy which offers students an opportunity to showcase their musical talent in an intimate environment, in front of other students.



Students with a talent or love of music are invited to audition for a slot in an upcoming "Music at Lunch" in which they can share their passion with other interested students. The next one is April 1.

"Music at lunch" is intended to enrich the lunch-time climate of the school by giving students an opportunity, approximately once a month, to perform in a supportive and interactive environment; so far, it has been highly successful and we expect an ever increasing audience as our program becomes progressively more eclectic.

- Andrew Kaplan, Teacher & Music at Lunch Coordinator

Extracurricular Activities

Debating and Public Speaking

Congratulations to Sarah Levy and Zev Ripstein who will represent Manitoba at the Senior National Debate Championships to be held in Saskatoon April 22-27.

At the Junior High Provincial Debating Championship on March 12 at Balmoral Hall, our three teams were all in the top 10! Ben Meyers was the top Gray debater, with Ben and Jordan Gertenstein going to the Nationals. Josh Lieberman and Gil Binnun now qualify to go to the Donahoe Cup on April 17, and Ariel Melamedoff and JJ Gerstein placed 10th. Mazel Tov to all students!

CanSpell Spelling Bee

We are proud to announce that Grade 7 student Mitchell Rabkin represented our school at the 4th annual Provincial Spelling Bee, and was presented with a participation medal. There were over 50 school students in the competition.

Chess Tournament

Congratulations to Gray Academy of Jewish Education students that participated in the recent Provincial Chess Tournaments: Gabriel Lazar (Grade 6), Daniel Jacobs (Grade 4), Tom Rotem (Grade 3), Danielle Schwartz (Grade 3) and Noah Slayen (Grade 2). We are very proud of their sportsmanship and for ably representing Gray Academy at this level.

Fern Shawna Rykiss Literary Award

Congratulations to the following students who won the 2009 Fern Shawna Rykiss Literary Award:

- **Junior High:** First Place - Jana Elazar, *Grey*; Second Place - Rafi Hoult, *Space and Time*
- **Senior High:** First Place - Shira Tennenhouse, *Fifteen Seconds*; 2nd Place - Erin Minuk, *Forever*

Thank you to our esteemed judges: Free Press columnist, Colleen Simard; Uptown Magazine columnist, Barbara Stewart; and mystery story author, David Annandale. Also, thank you to the nine Junior High and 22 High School students who submitted stories.

Reach for the Top

The Senior team is currently in first place with one more tournament left in the season on April 7th. The Provincials are on April 24th and we hope to be in them. Our Intermediate team for Reach for the top finished the season with 7 wins and 7 losses. Our overall score was 3,760 points, and we were just shy of being in the top six teams that are competing for the provincials. Our team of Ben Waldman, Levi Garber, Rachel Rubin, Yoni Coodin, Gil Binnun, Adam Stoller, Yona Lazar and Meir Cohen are to be commended for their dedication.

Shabbaton Reflections

Here are personal reflections on the three themes of this year's Grade 6 Shabbaton: Learning, Spiritual and Fun:

Learning - by Sami Worb

I certainly learned a lot from the Hebrew Honeys activity. First we talked about inner beauty and what we thought of ourselves. Then we learned about famous Jewish women in history who have accomplished a lot and what their characteristics are. Finally we made licorice-fruit-loop bracelets. I really liked this program because I learned a lot about myself. I wish the boys wouldn't have bugged us at the end. All in all I think this program is a great addition to Shabbaton.

Spiritual - by Jarod Standil Margovski

Learning and reading my Torah portion was very special to me. We first got our assigned portions and then learned the trope using a computer program. We had around two months to practice until Shabbaton. Then when Shabbaton came, we read our parts from the Torah. I felt really close to G-d when I read my part from the Torah. It's a Mitzvah to read from the Torah so reading our Torah parts on Shabbat fulfilled this Mitzvah. I also got to fulfill another Mitzvah by carrying the Torah. All in all reading from the Torah was a memorable experience.

Fun - Camila Aprosoff

I thought soul singing with Mrs. Bronstein was really fun. As soon as we walked in, the lights were turned down and Mrs. Bronstein was sitting around a table with flowers surrounded by candles. We sang some songs in Hebrew, but others were in English. We were all swaying to the music and one student played the bongos. I loved soul singing because the atmosphere created was welcoming and it made you want to sing. I felt that it was inviting and it was great. I would really like to do it again.



To see the visually stunning PowerPoint presentation the students put together that celebrates this momentous occasion, please go to the link below:

www.grayacademy.ca/students_co-curricular_clubs.html

Field Trips and Special Visitors

Comparative Religion Course



On March 26, the students went to a mosque to meet and hear Samir Hassan, Projects Manager, Islamic Social Services Association. For the first two years of the Comparative Religion course taught by Judaic Studies teacher Anat Ekhoiz, religious leaders from Winnipeg have been invited to talk to the students about their faith. Since then, after nurturing connections, Ms. Ekhoiz has asked the speakers to host us in their places of worship. By sharing the vision of Ms. Ekhoiz in enriching our students' knowledge of the different religions and communities around us, this course offers a unique experience leading to open minds and hearts in meeting new and different people.

History Lesson

Using authentic artifacts and costumes from World War I, *The Great War Project* invited our students into the horrific reality of the industrial war and the changes that new technology brought to European and North American society at the turn of the 20th century.

A powerful multimedia presentation was put together by Peter-Oakes-Munro that incorporated video, music, art and the actual words of veterans of the war to bring immediacy to the events of this pivotal time in history.





Rotary Career Symposium

On March 12th, the Grade 12 students boarded the bus to go to the Convention Centre where the Rotary Career Symposium was being held. It was a bitter, cold and sunny morning as we stepped into the enormous auditorium and excited voices and beeping sounds buzzed our ears. We were there to catch a glimpse of what our future careers might look like. Or, for those who have no idea what they are interested in yet, the Rotary Career Symposium was an excellent way to get more information on different areas of interest. There were tons of different booths set up with helpful representatives at each. There were booths set up for jobs with the Government of Canada; for different national and international universities and colleges; and for professions in the fields of nursing, mechanics, cooking, hair styling and security, amongst others. Everyone was able to take home an interesting sample of what they had learned that day. Some people even walked out of the Convention Centre with hair extensions and food samples, but most importantly, everyone walked out of there knowing a little bit more about our endless options.

- Laura Dayan, Grade 12 student

My Visit To John Pritchard School

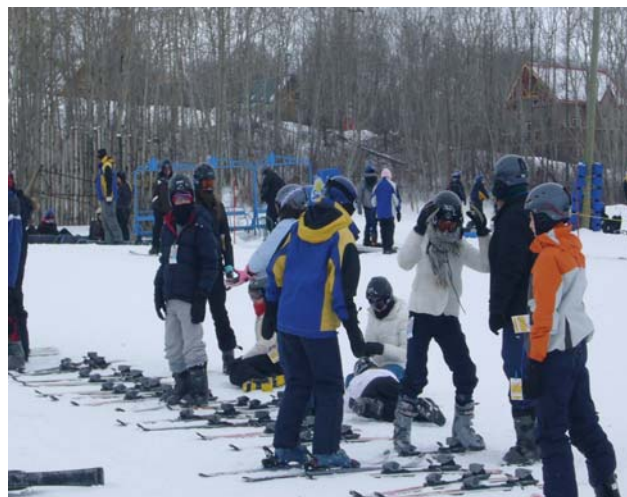
On March 19, my Grade 11 Canadian History class went to John Pritchard School to participate in their cultural day. Our class was split up into four groups to discuss different aspects of Judaism such as basic Judaism, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, keeping kosher and the high holidays. The class' goal was to provide these students with a basic knowledge of Judaism which they were clearly lacking prior to this visit. My topic of discussion was Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. We outlined what a Bar/Bat Mitzvah was, how people prepare for them, why people have them, and stories from our own Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. I enjoyed the experience as it allowed me to really teach about Judaism in a creative and fun way that allowed the students to get engaged in the discussion. Also, I proved to myself that I have a strong enough Jewish education that I feel comfortable discussing my background in whatever situation. Overall, this experience was a success as both parties discovered a lot, whether it was the students learning about Judaism, or us realizing the strong Jewish education we have received at our school.

- Saul Shrom, Grade 11 student

Grade 8 Ski Trip



The Grade 8 ski trip was a great experience that I had the privilege of undertaking. It was a very fun and relaxing trip that was always kept entertaining by the remarkable hotel, beautiful ski resort and outstanding chaperons. Every aspect of the ski trip was very enjoyable and ran very smoothly. Overall the ski trip is just a great time



to hangout with your friends and enjoy the slopes and views at the Asessippi Winter Resort. I strongly recommend to anyone who has the opportunity to take part in the Grade 8 ski trip to do so.

- Jordan Gertenstein, Grade 8 student

Did you Know?

Maccabia Bound - Grade 12 student Mitchell Billinkoff is heading to Israel this summer for the much anticipated Maccabia Games to play ping pong. In a January 22, 2009 article in the Canadian Jewish News (CJN), it was stated that "Billinkoff will be the only Canadian competing in table tennis, and he's hopeful that he can bring home a medal." Mitchell said in the CJN article that he has been to the North American Maccabia Junior Games three times before and won a total of 5 gold medals, 2 silver and 1 bronze. The last time in 2007 he won 3 gold medals for singles, doubles and the team competition. Mitchell was also named Manitoba Jewish Athlete of the Year in 2007. Good luck this summer!

JWScene - You can still get a copy of the latest high school student newsletter from Mrs. Connor's Grade 12 English class. Make a small donation to the Ladybug Foundation and you will be able to read all about the latest trends at Gray Academy.

Music to our Ears! - Congratulations to Grade 12 student Joey Frohlinger and sister Becky (Grade 9) who won a number of awards at the recent Winnipeg Music Festival.

Baby News - Mazel Tov to teacher Sharon Gaber on recently becoming a grandmother.

Sports Star of the Week - Check out our website to see who was CTV's Sports Star of the Week on a recent television broadcast:

http://www.grayacademy.ca/about_news.html

Forum for Young Canadians - Good luck to Zev Faintuch (Grade 11) and Blake Lerner (Grade 10) as they head off to Ottawa later this month to represent our school at The Forum on Young Canadians. While in Ottawa, Zev and Blake will have the opportunity to see our politicians in action in the House of Commons.

Slam Dunk - *SLAM! Wrestling: Shocking Stories from the Squared Circle*, published by Toronto's ECW Press, will be edited by Jon Waldman ('97), a veteran SLAM! staffer who has worked for the website since 2000. *SLAM! Wrestling: Shocking Stories from the Squared Circle* is expected to hit store shelves in Fall 2009. Congratulations Jon!

Community Announcements



WORLD PREMIERE OF "I BELIEVE"

"I Believe" is an exciting new dramatic musical piece with full orchestra, chorus and children's chorus. Composed by local Ukrainian Catholic composer/lyricist/music teacher Zane Zalis, *I Believe* is the story of the Holocaust. Hours of interviews with Holocaust survivors combined with intensive research and reflection form the backbone of the project. The musical style defies definition, but the appeal is universal and it grips the soul. Through this work, the composer hopes to promote tolerance and acceptance. The world premiere will be held on May 21st at the Centennial Concert Hall. A limited number of premium ticket packages are still available. For information contact Linda Levesque 477-7428 or llevesque@jewishwinnipeg.org. For more information: www.ibelieveproject.com.

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