

Ruach Reflections

The Newsletter of Gray Academy of Jewish Education

March/April 2011 Adar II/Nisan 5771

Look Who Is Running The School!



I am sure it did not take you more than a second to figure out who the five clowns in the picture really are. During the excitement of the Annual Purim Parade down Mainstreet we too took time out from our busy day to enjoy the holiday with our students. Our days are filled with curriculum challenges, student assessment and evaluation, celebrating student successes, parent inquiries and the occasional injury on the playground or in gym class. Being in costume or not, the five of us are all here because of one common goal- excellence in both General and Judaic Studies education for our 609 students at Gray Academy. As you read through this exciting edition, you too will see what sets us apart from other schools. We can hold our heads high and be proud. Our students have worked hard, achieved many successes and are excellent ambassadors at school, in the community, across Canada and around the world. We work together - Students, Staff, Parents and Administration and learn from each other. Read on and you will see why.

L'Hitraot,
Joyce Kerr
Vice Principal

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Asper Cup

The Annual Asper Cup High School Debating Tournament took place on Sunday March 6th and Monday March 7th. Over the course of the 2 day tournament debaters from seven Winnipeg schools competed in 6 rounds of parliamentary debate on biting current issues. The debate teams from Gray Academy were J.J. Gerstein and Ariel Melamedoff, Gilad Binnun and Ben Waldman. The four top teams went on to compete in semi-finals which opened up to a final round where Sarah Levy and Derek Knight from St. John's Ravenscourt competed against J.J. Gerstein and Ariel Melamedoff from Gray Academy. It was an extremely close round dealing with the conflict in Libya resulting in a well-earned triumph for Sarah and Derek. Following the final debate the debaters were bussed to the Shaarey Zedek Synagogue for the Closing Banquet and Awards Presentation. Sarah Levy took home 2 awards at the tournament; first was top speaker presented by Howard Morry representing the sponsor Pitblado; the second award, Top Team with partner Derek Knight, was presented by Sarah's father, Moe Levy, who was a guest presenter with Gail Asper representing the Asper Foundation, a generous sponsor for the Asper Cup. Gray Academy's J.J. Gerstein placed 4th Individual and Ariel placed 6th Individual.

Thank you to Hope Morry and Cara Kroft for co chairing the Judges Committee, Beth Grubert for organizing the final banquet and Shelley Ross for organizing the meals at the tournament. To the more than 50 volunteer judges over the two days, thank you for your time and judging skills. Thank you also to the generous help of teachers, students, parents, and coaches, the tournament was a tremendous success!! We look forward to next year's Asper Cup which will take place in the fall. If you have an interest in debating or public speaking, feel free to contact Mr. Andrew Kaplan at akaplan@grayacademy.ca



Top to Bottom:
Asper Cup Debaters
1st Place Team: Sarah Levy & Derek Knight (SJR)
2nd Place Team: J.J. Gerstein & Ariel Melamedoff (Gray)
Puff Pastry Asper Cup for all to enjoy at the Banquet

Partnership 2000 (P2K)

Partnership 2000 (P2K) is a strong partnership between Gray Academy and Danciger High School in Kiryat Shmona, Israel. This partnership has grown stronger and stronger over the past 12 years. This year marks the ninth delegation that has come from Israel. The students are hosted and co-hosted by Gray Academy families. This year seven students from Israel came in the middle of March. Everyday the delegation and their teacher supervisor met at the school and from there, went on different field trips that taught them about Manitoba's history and Winnipeg's culture. They went to places like the Manitoba Museum, the Mayor's Office in Town Hall, the Zoo and the Forks. Every evening the Israelis and the Winnipeg host and co-host families were involved in a program. We went Glow Bowling, Go-carting and watched a Moose hockey game. On the Friday evening of the program the host families and co-host students enjoyed Shabbat Dinner in the MPR. Erin Minuk and Lauren Yusim organized the evening, transforming the MPR into a welcoming Shabbat feeling place. From soup to chicken and rice "The Shabbat Feeling" was felt deep in all of our hearts. On the Saturday morning Gray Academy students and the Danciger delegation participated in Shabbat morning services. For some of the students it was their first time being on the Bima and for one of their teachers it was their first time being in a synagogue on Shabbat. We all celebrated Purim together at Etz Chayim – first with Megillah reading and then with a dance. A highlight of their time here was at the Coffee House on Sunday night. This program was open to all of high school. It was held at the Park Theater and many talented students from Gray and Danciger performed. The Israelis sang some Hebrew songs; as well as performed an original song written by a few of the Israelis and Josh Goldstein from our school about the P2K experience. On the evening before their return back to Israel, Daniel Kroft and his family hosted the Goodbye Reception at their house. Each delegate has the opportunity to speak about their experience in Winnipeg. During their time here we really got to know them well and looked forward to seeing them soon because our Winnipeg delegation was fortunate enough to be going to Israel later that week.

We were the ninth delegation to go to Israel from Gray Academy. We left on Sunday March 27 for two weeks. Josh Leiberman, Josh Goldstein, Ruth Bae, Rheann Brownstone, Jona Erenberg, Mai Weinberg, Dena Stitz and Erin Minuk. Judi Shuster and Mrs. Rosenberg were the teachers who went with us. For both of us (Dean and Erin) it was our third time in Israel, but it was an experience unlike anything we had had before. The trip focused less on touring the country and more on the experience of what it is like to be a part of everyday life in Israel. Because we were living with an Israeli family and an Israeli teenager we got to live life like they do. During the day we did do some touring, we went on hikes and toured the northern part of Israel. At night we participated in programs with Student Council, and had time to hang out with the Israelis and get to know them. The touring and activities that we did while in Israel were great. What made the experience so amazing was more so the people we met and the connections we made to them. Never before have we made such strong connections in such a short time, and we know that these are friendships we will keep for the rest of our lives.

Thank you to the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg for supporting this great program at our school.

Dena Stitz and Erin Minuk (Gr. 11)



P2K - Nachshonai Ha-Hulah

April 2011 was a wonderful milestone for myself and eight of our students who were selected and honored with the trip and experience of a lifetime. P2K is an annual event that brings Israeli teachers and seven selected students from their school to ours and then we reciprocate and journey to their Israeli schools.

I was privileged to spend precious time at an elementary school in Yesod Ha-Ma'allah. Nachshonai Hahulah has an enrollment of 99 students from Grades one to six. I encountered every grade and taught a variety of English lessons as well as coordinated fun art projects that inspired and motivated all those fantastic students.

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Look Who Came To Visit ... Drive One 4UR School



Top Left: Pam , Roberta and Bev
Top Right: Rory Paul and Lance Fridfinnson
L to R: Steve Ratson and "A Test Driver"



On Thursday April 7, the Grade 12 students held a grad fundraiser in conjunction with Midtown Ford. Months of hard work and organizing by Pam Vine (Grad Parent Fundraising Committee Head) and Grade 12 student volunteers sure paid off. Choosing the perfect date coinciding with Parent Teacher Conferences truly made it possible to have so many parents and walk through traffic at the Campus during the 5 hour period. For every test drive that went out Ford gave \$20.00. Pam's original target was 85 test drives. Two hours into the program they realized that they were going to surpass their original goal. At 8:30 p.m. when conferences were over there were still parents waiting to do their test drive. To Lance Fridfinnson at Midtown Ford and his staff, thank you for being so accommodating. The evening finished with 180 test drives. ***You do the math... \$3600.***

Grade 12 Graduates could not have asked for a better way to end off their fundraising activities. Todah Rabah to everyone who participated!!

Curler Jill Officer

Grade 3A was treated on Friday March 11 of having Jill Officer, who plays second on Jennifer Jones' curling team, read to them. The grade 3's enjoyed a story, *Perfect Snow* by Barbara Reid, and then asked questions that showed they were engaged with their very special guest. They asked if she spends time with her team members when not curling, how old was she when she started to curl and where she has traveled to compete. Jill showed students her ring and necklace, prizes from the Scotties tournament and winning the Manitoba provincials, explaining how with every win in the Scotties tournament, the Scott paper company replaces the diamond with a larger one. She demonstrated how to throw a rock and talked about training almost every day of the year.



Laura Wiseman

On Monday March 12, Professor Dr. Laura Wiseman spoke to our Grade 11 and 12 students. Professor Wiseman teaches Jewish Education at the University of York. While explaining the structure of Birkat Ha-Mazon, "just peel the bracha" to use her words, she talked about becoming a Jewish Studies teacher. She also gave information on scholarships for university programs in Israel.



Ryla Braemer

Also on March 12, Gray Academy graduate Ryla Braemer (Class of '99), with the assistance of Hart Jacob (Class of '00) taught a great class on Israel and Israeli culture. She showed how we can "hug and wrestle" with Israel: How do we acknowledge the successes that have been achieved in a mere 60 years, and how do we wrestle with problematic issues. The students in the Modern Israel class were excited about her interactive and enthusiastic presentation.



P2K continues @ Nachshonai Ha-Hulah

We organized a **Canada Day**, where our Grade 11's planned activity centres and the various grades propelled through them. They loved learning a dance to the music, "I've Got a Feeling" by the Black Eyed Peas, playing Hockey with the "Josh Couple", using a giant Canada Parachute controlling Canada beach balls in the middle, creating adorable puppy faces, and beautiful butterflies. As the Grand Finale, we served our "Costco" bite size brownies proudly sporting a Canadian flag at the center of each one! We all had such an amazing time and there were so many hugs and kisses when the grade 11's left!

It is so hard to describe how warm and delightful the students and teachers were. The students call their teachers by their first names, so I loved it when they were all calling me "SENDY" and running up and giving me hugs. I always felt so welcomed.

The school is unique in countless ways. Classrooms run off an open courtyard. They have an immense vegetable and flower garden that all the students take such pride in. It was so cool being outside with them at recess. They were so anxious for me to share a piece of broccoli or a leaf of romaine with them. A concrete sink is stationed in the middle of the garden so students can pull out a veggie, wash it right away and have a snack. A large caged-in area harbors active chickens, roosters and rabbits. If you don't finish your snack in the morning (usually a sandwich), it is never thrown out. We would throw it over the fence and feed the animals.

Off the court-yard, lies the staff-room with its door, perpetually open for students to walk in. The teachers drink Nana Tea that is also grown in their garden. They just walk outside, pick some Nana leaves and add hot water. I loved it! It was so fresh and delicious and I am a coffee drinker! Being a "green" school, recycling is quite important to them. A guard is situated at the head of the school. A large table stretches in front of his office where parents and students drop off water, wine bottles and paper daily. Once a week, a recycling truck picks up the recyclables and the school earns additional money.

The last day of school before Pesach break, I was so happy to be included in their Seder celebration in the courtyard. The teachers had large frying pans, dipped a board of matzo in egg mixture and fried the boards for the seder. The greens came from the garden and the children brought an egg. Instead of "chrain", they served chocolate spread (Nutella), so yummy on matzo! The Grade Four class had their own seder in their classroom and their parents brought an entire seder meal. We had a feast. Just before home time, the students were allowed to go to the garden and pick some of the fresh vegetables to take home for Pesach. I have never seen such gigantic cauliflowers and Romaine Lettuces. It was amazing to see!

I took over 350 pictures in the 13 days that we spent in Israel. Please feel free to come up to the second floor across from our aquarium where I have posted some of the very best! If you see me in the hall I might go on and on about all our wonderful experiences.

Sandy (Sandy) Rosenberg



Top Left to Right:
Sandy Rosenberg at the Grade 4 Seder
Taking Care Of The Garden
Gray Academy Delegation at Nachshonai Ha-Hulah

Out and About

National Debate Seminar in Hay River, NWT

This year, I had the privilege of going to the National Seminar in Hay River, Northwest Territories. It is an individually ranked tournament where you are paired up with a randomly selected partner, also known as coordinate debating. What struck me as interesting throughout my time in Hay River, was that the National Seminar was not solely advertised as a debating experience. We were encouraged to build bridges with students from other provinces and territories, and ultimately leave the bubble that we are accustomed to back home. We were also educated on several issues that Northern Canada faces in the 21st century, which the majority of debaters would otherwise not have known. Although, what most impressed me was the hospitality that Hay River and the Hay River Dene Reserve showed us throughout our stay. Though there was nothing they could do about the colder than Winnipeg temperatures, Hay River managed to organize one of the best National Seminars in its 40 year history (from what I have been told). I am extremely grateful that I had the opportunity to attend such an event, and I know I will remember the experience and the people I met in Hay River for the rest of my life.

J.J. Gerstein (Gr. 11)



L to R: J.J. Gerstein, Tom Lawson, Alana Roberts
The Tom Lawson Award is presented to the best male and female delegates who most exemplify excellence in debate and the spirit of the seminar.

Shabbat @ The Sharon Home

On March 26th, our Global Connections class went to the Sharon Home. The purpose of our visit was to conduct a Saturday Shabbat service. When I entered the building, I felt like I was entering an “old people palace.” I knew the general direction of where to go, however, I didn’t know exactly. The security guard directed me to where the service was to be held and I entered the synagogue.

I saw a flock of people, some old, some young. Many were seated, eager for the service to begin. I put on my kippa and took my seat at the front of the room. I was joined by Taliah Gunn. Dr Ashrafi opened with the help of Sari Waldman. Ms. Binder, Morah Joyce, and Ms. Buffie were also present.

Finally, it was my turn to present what I had practiced. I stood up; the people looked expectantly at me. I opened my mouth and the words flew out. Soon, Sari and Dr. Ashrafi joined me and a few Sharon Home occupants joined too. The section of the service that I did flew by. I sat down and took a deep breath.

I was done but everyone else still had to do their parts that they practiced. It was now the Torah service. The Torahs were the smallest I have ever seen. The service itself moved quickly.

It was time for Kiddush and the cookies were there. It was time for schmoozing and I met the nicest lady named Babe Hershfield. Babe’s name was not really “Babe,” it was Dorothy. Dorothy had a great sense of humor and was very mobile and talkative. This was a short description of our time at the Sharon Home Shabbat service.

By Harison Levitt Pinsky

Moot Beit Din in San Francisco

Moot Beit Din is a unique Ravsak program that enables students from Jewish high schools around North America to delve into issues of Jewish law through creative engagement with contemporary situations. It provides students with an opportunity to explore the relevance of Jewish Law and to stretch their imagination by applying traditional Jewish sources to dilemmas of the modern world.

Every year Ravsak prepares a new case on a topic to which there is no clear consensus or precedent within Jewish Law. After an intense study of relevant classical and modern sources, students prepare written decisions on the case. They then present and defend their decision before judges during an oral argument.

The students meet for a four-day Shabbaton held in a different location each year. They break ice and break bread together, learn together, Daven together, perform a Chesed project, sightsee, and celebrate Shabbat together. Before their teams step into the room to compete, they have formed friendships and established spiritual bonds that last far beyond the Shabbaton.

On April 3, Gray Academy of Jewish Education competed in this year's Moot Beit Din in San Francisco, California. Under the guidance of Rabbi Ari Ellis, Keenan Benarroch, Meir Cohen, Adam Stoller, and Avichai Stoller spent several months pondering the question of human cloning. Both whether the cloning of a human being should be permitted according to Jewish Law and what the status of cloned individual would be.

Some of the sources we studied together seem to permit cloning and take a positive attitude towards scientific and medical advances. Others seem to prohibit it as violating the natural order and God's master plan for the world. All the sources we studied provided deep insight into the ethical and moral dilemma involved. Together, we came to the conclusion that that while there is no clear prohibition that forbids cloning, it is nevertheless not in the spirit of Jewish tradition and should only be permitted under extraordinary circumstances.

The Shabbaton was filled with classes and fun activities in which we made new friends from other schools. The Shabbat services and Torah Reading were entirely led by

students while Shabbat afternoon classes were taught by the schools' advisors.

On Sunday morning, we left the hotel and made our way to the Jewish Community High School of the Bay where the competition took place. Despite having never participated before and being that the organizers decided that the schools would compete by reverse alphabetical order of their city, we were selected to present first in our division. Although we didn't win the competition, the judges selected Solomon Schechter of Westchester in New York as first place in our division, one of the other three Canadian teams, CHAT – Wallenberg of Toronto won first place in their division.

Our return flight home wasn't until the next evening. So after the presentation, we spent a day and half touring the beautiful city of San Francisco. Rabbi Ellis, who is originally from California, took us to see many of the famous sites of the San Francisco Bay area. We visited Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39, Ghirardelli Square, and even took a bay cruise under the Golden Gate Bridge and around Alcatraz Island. We ate lunch twice at San Francisco's only Kosher restaurant downtown. And we even had some time to shop at Union Square before heading for the airport.

The whole experience was a great success. We made new friends, learned Torah, and had lots of fun. We want to thank Ravsak and Gray Academy for their generosity, making it possible for us to participate.

Rabbi Ellis and Avichai Stoller (Gr. 12)



Matzah Factory @ Chabad

L to R:
Rabbi Baruch Heidingsfeld
Gr. 5: Mixing Process
Gr.3: Rolling and Poking



We Are The Champions



CANADIAN NATIONAL MATH LEAGUE COMPETITION

GRADE SEVEN:

Gray Academy Ranked #1 out of 302 schools in Canada

Individual Rankings: #3 Braden Ganetsky in Canada
#1 Braden Ganetsky in Manitoba
Top 20: Sari Glow, Mati Pelich, Matthew Slusky and Yael Ripstein

GRADE EIGHT:

Gray Academy Ranked #5 out of 294 schools in Canada

Top 20: Hannah Lank and Cami Aprosoff
Top 30: Dafna Schultz, Julia Kroft and Zach Greenberg



IT IS GRADUATION TIME
Come and Join us...

Grad Shabbat @ Etz Chayim
Saturday May 6, 2011
9:00 am

Grad Convocation @ Shaarey Zedek
Thursday, May 12, 2011
7:00 pm



PROVINCIAL CHESS CHAMPIONS

Leor Wasserman and Igal Raihman

We wish them good luck at The National Chess Competition in Victoria in May

What's Coming Up...

May 6 & 12: Grad Shabbat @ Etz Chayim 9 am
Grad Convocation @ Shaarey Zedek 7 pm

May 27: Gr. 3 Imaginary Trip to Israel

June 2: Gr. 1 Chaggigat Ha-Siddur

June 3: Kindergarten Shabbat

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Alumni Happenings...

Alumni news to share... email jkerr@grayacademy.ca



Gray Academy
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