

May 2010

Iyar 5770

CHESED CLUB READ-A-THON



The second annual Read-a-thon Celebration, attended by students in Grades 5 and 6, began with the singing of "What a Wonderful World," a song that expresses the hopefulness and optimism that this and other Chesed Club projects engender.

Students and faculty had been asked to contribute funds by asking people they know to sponsor their reading at 25 cents per book. Larger donations were accepted as well. The final tally indicated that 1,013 books had been read and that \$5,062 had been collected. As the students had decided that the funds would be distributed equally among the six philanthropic organizations that they had selected to be the project's beneficiaries, each of the six received a check in the amount of \$845.00.

During the course of the Read-a-thon, a representative of each organization had come to address the Chesed Club at a special lunch-and learn-program to describe the assistance that his or her institution provides. A short film highlighting each organization's work was shown at the culminating program, and further insight was offered as the organizations' reps made short presentations after receiving their check from a pair of Chesed Club members. It was learned, for example, that:

- The Israel-based organization Save a Child's Heart, which improves the quality of pediatric cardiac care for children around the world, has helped 2200 children in 36 countries.
- American Friends of Magen David Adom is "on alert every hour of every day" to assist Israel's diverse population with medical emergencies. (We proffer special kudos to Mr. Gary Perl, our own Nurse Michele's husband, who represented MDA.)

- Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem, in addition to serving locally, shares its superior medical talent and technology when emergency calls, e.g., its recent field hospital in Haiti.
- Alan Shatz, representing New York Foundling, the largest child welfare organization in New York City, said that he feels blessed when invited to Ramaz.
- Sharsheret provides educational and emotional support for women with breast cancer.
- Amit provides services and facilities for Israel's youth at risk.

The students ended the program with a second song, "We are the World," which includes among its lyrics the sentiment that, "We can't go on pretending day by day that someone, somewhere will soon make a change..." Indeed, Ms. Ginsberg, who has been an icon of *chesed* education in the Middle School since its inception and in the Lower School for many years prior, has helped us all to accept responsibility in actualizing our humanity by responding to the needs of others.

Ms. Fagin concluded by saying, "I'm feeling two things right now, tears in my eyes and pride in my heart." The tears were in response to the inspiration provided by the organizations' spokespersons. The pride was in reaction to all the reading that the students had done and to the many ways in which the Chesed Club changes lives. "She really makes it happen," Ms. Fagin said in lauding Ms. Ginsberg's tireless efforts in making the students make so much *chesed* happen.

The last word, however, went to Rabbi Lookstein. He admitted that Ms. Ginsberg had been correct when she told him that he would stay until the program's end even though he had said that he would have to leave after only twenty minutes. But he went on to say that she had erred in telling him that he would get material for two sermons from watching the program. "I got ten sermons," he said. "This program combines everything we hope to be doing."

YOM HAZIKARON



Yom HaZikaron was marked once again with solemn ceremony, words of eulogy, and some interesting insights into the Israel Defense Forces. It began with our ritual of reciting the verse "For He who avenges blood remembers; He does not forget the cry of the humble (*Psalms 9:13*)" and ended with Rabbi Fried's annual performance on the flute of the haunting notes of the song "In Spite of Everything -- Israel!"

Two original poems were recited. To hear sixth grader **Sarah Mann's** poem in English, please click [here](#). To hear eighth grader **Melissa Kaplan's** poem in Hebrew, please click [here](#). The school choir sang a melancholy song about two boys who grew up in the same village and whose lives paralleled each others' until one fell in battle and the other returned to the village to bury him.

Prior to the program, each advisory group had been assigned to represent a particular division in the IDF. Ten students then read brief eulogies of ten fallen soldiers, each from one of these divisions. As each was read, the students representing that division were asked to stand and remain standing so, by the end of this very sad segment of the program, everyone in the auditorium was standing erect in recognition of the sacrifices that IDF soldiers have made and continue to make to secure our homeland.

The keynote address was delivered by Rabbi Kramer in memory of his high school classmate and fellow student at Yeshivat Ohr Etzion, Chaim Dubkin, ob"m, who became an officer in the highly esteemed Golani Brigade. During Operation Peace for Galilee, when a unit of paratroopers became cut off, Dubkin, who had always loved nature and hiking and was highly valued in the IDF for his superior skills in navigating unknown terrain, led his men in a successful mission to bring supplies to the stranded paratroopers. But, in a subsequent successful mission to take a hill from the enemy, Dubkin was shot and killed by Syrian fire. Rabbi Kramer shared with the students an excerpt from a message that Dubkin had left behind to be read in case of his death: "Know that I loved all of you, but do not mourn for me for too long -- that is not why I sacrificed my life. I gave my life so that you should be happy, so that you would be able to live a normal life and fulfill my dream and love the things that I loved...the green fields, the open spaces, our homeland, every inch of our land...and our *Torah*."

Several years ago, the Israeli Ministry of Defense published a series of 10 posters that depict our pride in our soldiers and how devastated we feel when they fall. Several students, marching in a military formation, displayed these posters as others summarized their messages. This ceremony was enhanced by **Andrew Lobel** (8) as he provided the marchers with haunting musical accompaniment on the piano. (To see these posters, please click [here](#).)

Two eighth graders spoke about the IDF: **Yossi Yadid** saluted his father, Rami Yadid, for his military service (to hear this presentation, please click [here](#)) and **Eyal Foni** summarized the thesis presented in books such as the recently published *Start-Up Nation* that Israelis' superior performance in high-tech industries can be traced back to their IDF training and experience (to hear this presentation, please click [here](#)).

Teddy Tuckman, a virtuoso on the violin, entertained the audience with an outstanding performance. He then told the story of a rock-throwing Palestinian youth whose life as an anti-Israel agitator changed when he learned to play the violin and eventually established a music school on the West Bank. Teddy then quoted the verse, "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (*Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3*) and concluded: "May all of Israel's enemies exchange their weapons for peaceful things like violins and may we enter into an era of peace." (To hear Teddy's words, please click [here](#).)

GRADE 7 STUDENTS TOUR WASHINGTON, D.C.



Students in Grade 7 took in the sights of Washington, D.C. with enthusiasm. They toured the Capitol; sat in the balcony of the House of Representatives; had their understanding of our universe expanded by viewing the newly released Imax film *Hubble 3d* at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum; studied artifacts of our country's history at the Smithsonian Museum of American History; were inspired at the Lincoln, Washington, and FDR memorials; gained insight into the assassination of President Lincoln at Ford's Theater; were schooled in situ on the workings of the Supreme Court; ate hearty meals and many snacks; bowled with vim and vigor; were kind to their chaperones; davened and benched; needed hardly any first aid; and even managed to sleep a bit. To see photos of their rich experiences, please click [here](#).

YOM HAATZMA'UT



Love of Israel was here, there, and truly everywhere as students engaged in a host of activities to celebrate Israel's 62nd birthday. The school had been pulsating with preparations for weeks and the students' excitement abounded.

The hundreds of people at *Zimriah* were privy not only to beautiful singing and musical accompaniment punctuated with the various dramatic and comedic interludes, but also to a mini course in Israel's history as they were asked to select the winner of the "Izzy" Award. As the different groups came up to perform, their movement on to and off the steps at the front of the synagogue took place with hardly any notice as the audience's attention was deflected to the large screens that displayed audio visual presentations. With students' prerecorded voiceovers, these presentations gave background information about the Izzy Award nominees: David Ben-Gurion and Shimon Peres in the category of leadership and politics, Eliezer Ben-Yehudah and Naomi Shemer for language and the arts, Ada Yonath and Shmuel Yosef Agnon for science and literature, and Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook and Rav Yisrael Meir Lau for rabbinic and religious leadership.

It is true that the marvels of modern technology that facilitated the voting and produced the virtually instantaneous results declared David Ben-Gurion to be the winner of the 2010 Izzy Award. Yet all lovers of Zion both in heaven and on earth who celebrated with us that evening would certainly declare all Ramaz Middle School students to be winners in that the impressions left by such an inspiring and educational program are sure to be long-lasting. *Zimriah's* impresario *Morah* Randi Wartelsky and Ms. Miri Rubin who produced the visual presentations are to be congratulated for their talents as both artists and educators.

A host of activities followed the next day at school. After a beautiful *shacharit* prayer service with *Hallel*, Rabbi Bakst described some of his personal memories as a boy in Palestine -- and then Israel -- in 1948, which made his subsequent reading of the day's *haftarah* all the more meaningful. The students then watched a short film with original footage of Ben-Gurion's reading of Israel's Declaration of Independence and Golda Meir's description of how awed she was to think that she was actually one of its signers. **Joseph Baruch** (8) added to a deeper understanding of the American-Israel connection by reading an original essay based on an interview that he had conducted with his grandfather, Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, about the role

that the KJ community played in helping Israel's economy during the Intifadas. (To hear Joseph's remarks, please click [here](#).)



Students in Grades 5 and 6 engaged in grade-wide activities that included arts and crafts, informational games, and sporting events -- all with an Israel theme. As per tradition, seventh graders served as the audience for Grade 8's YAC (*Yom HaAtzma'ut* Competition) Program in which the three Grade 8 classes faced off against each other in a color war type program with Israeli people, places, and events as the themes of the various categories (speech, poem, dance, song, banner, and PowerPoint presentation).

After a lunch that offered falafel, pita, Israeli salad, and blue and white cupcakes decorated with petite Israeli flags, the students gathered for a *chagigah*. The several short videos lauding Israel's many achievements that they watched heightened their exuberance as they demonstrated their love and pride for the State of Israel through their spirited dancing.

Ms. Sokolow, Mr. Braun, and Ms. Medows of the Students Activities Department thank all their colleagues for their creativity and dedication in implementing the day's celebration. It was a great party!

MAN O MAN RAY



As part of our partnership program with the Jewish Museum, museum educator and artist Jeff Hopkins came to each of Ms. Bernstein's Grade 7 History classes to introduce the students to the works of Man Ray, the subject of an exhibition at the museum. The students learned that this iconoclastic artist, who was called "the quintessential modernist," used a variety of media as vehicles for self-expression, including paint, photography, sculpture, film, poetry, and prose. The students learned that the artist's original name was Emmanuel Radnitzky and offered theories as to why he adopted such truncated and bold one-syllable nomenclature instead. They saw slides of some of his works and pondered as to his possible intentions.

Both in the classroom discussion and in their subsequent visit to the exhibition itself, the students focused on the artist's "rayographs" -- pseudo-photographic collages created by exposing objects on light sensitive paper to create images without using a camera. Back in the classroom, Mr. Hopkins encouraged the students to create their own artistic statements based on this genre. First, he asked the students to select a topic in the news as a subject for their work and to bring to class several objects associated with that subject. The students then arranged their iconic objects, each according to his or her personal sense of art and style, on photographic paper. Each student's work was then passed through a light box so that any areas that were covered remained white, while the exposed areas turned blue. After enlarging each work on a copy machine that rendered it black and white, Mr. Hopkins asked the students to add color -- no pastels, please.

The students chose a variety of themes for their work including the recession, Ivanka Trump's wedding, the Tiger Woods scandal, the earthquake in Haiti, Avatar, and hybrid cars. To see several samples, please click [here](#). A larger display is on view for your enjoyment in our school lobby.



Mazal tov to our Middle School History Day winners who advanced from the New York City to the New York State History Day program and now are headed to the national level competition to be held at the University of Maryland. This year's theme is "Innovation in History: Impact and Change."

- **Elisheva Blas** (8), first place in the Junior Historical Paper category, writing on the topic, "The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways: The Road to Success?"
- **Jack Cahn** (8), first place in the Junior Individual Performance Category for his presentation, "The Innovation of Nuclear Power: For Bomb or Boon?"

Congratulations also go to their mentor, Ms. Judy Sokolow.



Mazal tov to our students whose entries to the Torah Atlanta Jewish Heritage contest earned them the following:

In the RESEARCH PAPER category:

- **Russel Oppenheim** (8) -- "Uzi Narkiss: A Hero of the Six Day War" -- 1st Place
- **Sam Feder** (8) -- "Reasons for the Six Day War" -- Honorable Mention
- **Leora Huebner** (8) -- "Henrietta Szold: An Icon of Zionist Activism" -- Honorable Mention

In the POETRY category:

- **Skyler Levine** (7) -- "Pearls of Memory" -- 3rd Place

For further information and to read some of these works, please access www.jewishheritagecontest.com.



Mazal tov to our Inter-Yeshiva Science Congress Winners held at HALB (The Hebrew Academy of Long Beach)

Grade 8

- **William Bryk and Jack Cahn** won First Place for their work "The Shocking Truth"
- **David Cahn and Daniel Dellal** won First Place for their work "Saving the World One Turn at a Time"
- **Sam Feldstein and Jonathan Silverman** won First Place for their work "Do the E.M. Wave"
- **David Mokhtarzadeh, Cyril Putzer and Yossi Yadid** won Third Place for their work "Plasma Generator"

Grade 7

- **David Major and Erica Newman-Corre** won Third Place for their work "The Prisoner's Dilemma"

Ramaz was one of 15 schools participating. Kudos also to their science teachers and mentors Ms. Lois Nyren, Dr. Terri Aharon, Ms. Elisheva Weissman and Ms. Malka Roditi.

An Interview with NURSE MICHELE PERL

by Junior Journalist FLORA LIPSKY (7)



The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) protects the confidentiality of a patient's medical information. Although Nurse Perl would certainly never disclose anything that should remain private about a student, she did share some interesting information about herself and about her role as our school nurse.

Nurse Perl has worked in several different settings. Her first job was at Albert Einstein Hospital in the Bronx. She worked on the medical-surgical floor and later moved to the out-patient surgery unit. Nurse Perl made an interesting comment about this phase of her life: "Since this was my first job, I was able to put into practice what I had learned in school. But working with real patients on a daily basis is harder because you always have to be sensitive to the feelings of both the patients and their families." Nurse Perl also worked in St. Joseph's hospital in Queens, where she was responsible for screening prospective employees, pre-testing patients for surgery, and taking care of surgical patients who were admitted for ambulatory (one-day) procedures. Her last job before coming to Ramaz was for New York Hospital Queens where, as home care coordinator, she managed 50 cases for people who needed long term care at home.

Nurse Perl also worked with younger populations in day camps and sleep-away camps. She was also the nurse for one March of the Living trip, a program that takes high school students to Eastern Europe to learn about the Holocaust and culminates with a visit to Israel. Her position with us at Ramaz is, however, her first job in a school setting. She came to the Middle School when it opened eleven years ago and set up the health office.

Nurse Perl told me that she very much enjoys working with students our age, especially at a Jewish day school such as Ramaz. I asked her if she is able to tell if a child is faking sickness, and what she does if they are. She laughed and replied that even if she strongly suspects that students are faking, she gives them the benefit of the doubt. "In the end, the truth usually comes out," she said.

One of the questions I've always wondered about is how a doctor or nurse decides which patient to see first. This process is called triage, or prioritizing. Nurse Perl said that since she knows the students and their cases well, she can usually tell who needs immediate care and who can wait.

At the beginning of the year, parents fill out forms authorizing the school to care for their children and to give them certain medications if they are not feeling well. I asked Nurse Perl what she does if a specific medication is not listed, the parent is not answering the phone, and the child seems to need the medicine. She answered saying that it depends on the situation and how much of an emergency it appears to be; but, if it is just a headache, she might just give such students something to drink and some crackers and send them back to class.

Nurse Perl is in the building from before the first bell rings each morning until the very end of the school day. She is always in contact through a walkie-talkie. "Many students for various

reasons pass through the health office every day," she told me. "I hope for uneventful days because excitement in my field is generally associated with illness or an accident." She added that she is happy to be of help to the students whenever she can, but always prefers when her office is empty and students are in class.

I asked Nurse Perl what advice she has for the students. I was not surprised when she replied, "A good amount of sleep and proper nutrition can't be stressed enough. Good nutrition and sufficient sleep can help avoid many health issues."

Nurse Perl works very hard for our school and community. On a personal note, she has three married children and is a happy *bubbie* (grandmother). She is an extremely caring person and a great nurse. Thank you, Nurse Perl!!!

In the Classroom: Grade 5 English with MS. VICKI GINSBERG

by Junior Journalist DANIEL CAHN



In English class, we have been learning our poetry unit. So far, we have read six of Robert Frost's poems:

- ▶ “Birches” is about reminiscing, as Frost describes himself swinging on birch trees as a child.
- ▶ “Two Tramps in Mud-Time” is about a person who is cutting wood, when two tramps come to take his job. It is not until then that he notices how much he loves his job and chooses which is more important: the tramps having the money or him having a job that he loves.
- ▶ “The Rose Family” is a short poem about the fact that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
- ▶ In “The Road Not Taken,” Frost talks about choosing which

road to take, and how hard it is to make choices. In the end, he finally decides to take “the road less traveled by.”

▶ In “Death of a Hired Man,” an old man, who works for someone, is dying and instead of going to his brother’s house, he goes to his boss’s house. This shows that home is not just a place where you are related to the owner, it is a place where you feel welcome.

▶ The last poem we read so far is called “The Last Word of a Bluebird.” It is about a bluebird that had to fly north for the winter and tells a crow to tell the bird’s daughter that he may return in the spring and that during the time he’s not here, she should live normally. This was actually a note left for Frost’s daughter when he left, and returned the next summer.

Ms. Ginsberg explained that we would also be learning poems by Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, William Blake, Carl Sandberg, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, William Shakespeare, Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet, William Shakespeare, Lord Byron, and Edgar Allen Poe. We are learning to assign themes to the poems we read so we can sort them into categories such as choices, home, and reminiscence. This is in preparation for original poetry that we will be writing later this school year.

It is clear that Ms. Ginsberg truly loves poetry. She told me that “Poetry, of all the mediums of literature, really reflects the essence of our souls; it gives the greatest insight into how people feel and react.” She said that when the students write their own poetry, “they will be able to talk about their feelings in a way they have never before been able to express.”

In the Classroom: Grade 7 History with MS. JENNIFER BERNSTEIN

by Junior Journalist WILL FRIED



Ms. Bernstein is a terrific seventh grade history teacher. We have been learning about American History from the 1850s and the Civil War to the Second World War, as well as pertinent issues in current events.

Ms. Bernstein teaches us with enthusiasm, intelligence, and care for our individual learning styles. She describes events in detail and enhances our understanding by comparing historical information to things that we can relate to in our current day lives. We enjoy participating in class debates that occur over controversial events in history and Ms. Bernstein's reenactments are always fun to watch (and, of course, to learn from).

Ms. Bernstein welcomes our questions and comments, which enhances our lively conversations. She has managed to transform a potentially dull history class into an exciting period to look forward to. We have all learned a lot more about American history and now have a better understanding of our ancestry, culture, and way of life. After every class, we feel accomplished and able to discuss cogently the historical information we have learned. Being in her class also helps with clues in crossword puzzles.

We are about to embark on a new project to learn about the 1950s-1980s that will combine the study of history with computer technology. It is entitled, "Tour of Post-War America." We have been divided into groups and were instructed to pretend that "the New York Historical Society has hired us to create a promotional [virtual] tour of an era in American History for their annual fundraiser" using PowerPoint software. Each group is researching a topic such as The Cold War Abroad, The Cold War at Home, Johnson's Great Society, and The Vietnam War and the Anti-War Movement.

We need to research our topic using both books and Internet sources and we must include at least 15 primary source images and other computer-based enhancements such as a link to Google maps indicating places important to our topic and an interactive quiz at the conclusion of our work.

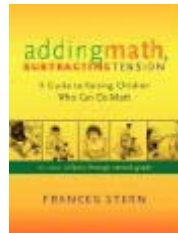
After completing our own project and viewing the presentations created by our classmates, we are sure to have learned a lot.

MITPALLELIM OF THE MONTH

מזל טוב! to the following students whose inspiring demeanor during tefillah has earned them recognition as Mitpallelim of the Month:

Elinor Aharon (7)
Jared Feingold (6)
Sam Feldstein (8)
Lauren Gross (7)
Joyce Harary (7)
Olivia Hershkowitz (7)
Danielle Lefkowitz (8)
Matthew Levy (6)
Sarah Mann (6)
Eliana Present (6)
Russel Oppenheim (8)
Hannah Rico-Mehlman (6)
Hannah Swieca (8)

FACULTY CORNER



Congratulations to Ms. Frances Stern, MS Math mentor and teacher, on writing a book for parents of children between the ages of 0 and 7 about how to help them become comfortable with math. *Adding Math, Subtracting Tension: A Guide to Raising Children Who Can Do Math* is now available.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL CALENDAR

Sunday, May 9

Mother's Day
Grade 8 Returns from Israel

Monday, May 10

Grade 8 - No Sessions

Wednesday, May 12

Yom Yerushalayim

Tuesday, May 18

Erev Shavuot
MS Early Dismissal at 1:24PM

Wednesday, May 19

Shavuot
No Sessions

Thursday, May 20

Shavuot
No Sessions

Sunday, May 23

Salute to Israel Parade

Thursday, May 27

MS Performance

Friday, May 28

Grade 8 Last Day of Sessions

Monday, May 31

Memorial Day
No Sessions

