



# THE UHI BULLETIN

The Weekly Newsletter of United Hebrew Institute, Kingston, PA

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Dear Parents,

A few weeks ago I wrote about an article mentioned in the New York Times that noted few women participated in the highest-level mathematics competitions. The research compared the percentage of women on the math from the United States who competed versus the percentage of women from other countries' teams. Since the article raised a number of valid questions, I felt that I could use that article as a springboard to discuss a Jewish perspective on education in general and UHI more specifically.

The more I thought about the article, however, the more disturbing it became to see how the researchers, otherwise intelligent people, could come to such unscientific conclusions. Thus, even though a scientist is trained to test and prove a hypothesis, when a bias or agenda sets in, intellectual honesty is the first casualty.

While it is impossible to review the entire article, some questions come to mind. In all the other countries where women were more prominent, they were still a small minority. If men and women have equal mathematical abilities, shouldn't the men and women be relatively equally represented? In fact, one sentence does state, "The data presented here neither prove nor disprove whether the frequency of occurrence of people with profound intrinsic aptitude for mathematics differs between women and men."

More disturbing are the recommendations offered to address the problem. The first proposal is to put to rest the myth that females cannot excel in mathematics [even at the highest level]. This touchy-feely is in no way based upon the study that was conducted. Do women today think that they cannot excel? The research is absent on this point. Can women compete at the very highest levels? The research indicates that they do not compete as well as men, though the reason for it is left unclear. It is astounding that the key component upon which to base recommendations is not part of the study.

More fundamentally, the reasoning that researchers employ to arrive at this conclusion is disturbing. They have found that women can compete at the highest levels. What does that say about average to above average women? Perhaps

those cannot perform math as well as men. I am not taking a position in this discussion. I assume that a scientist and researcher should be skeptical and allow the data to support the conclusions and proposals. This article does neither. Allow me to use basketball as an analogy.

There was recently an NBA basketball player named Mugsy Bogges who was an outstanding player. He was approximately 5 foot, three inches tall. That is considered height challenged in regular society. In NBA terms, it is positively tiny. Now imagine that there were ten such players. Would any reasonable person say that we must destroy the myth that short players cannot play in the NBA? A reasonable person would say that although it is possible for a short person to play excellently, that is the exception; and one should not realistically expect to compete against much taller players.

The other proposals presented are even further off the mark. I will continue this article in future editions of the Bulletin. What is really scary is that articles like this one often drive decisions in education that affect thousands of students and millions of dollars.

I leave the reader with the following advice. Treat educational research with much suspicion and skepticism. It is often driven by motivations that are beyond pure science and would not be accepted in other branches of scientific endeavors. *Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Nemetsky*



**SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM TO BEGIN  
SOON, WATCH FOR DETAILS**



## CALENDAR OF SCHOOL EVENTS

- ◆ November 7 - Early Fridays begin, Dismissal @ 2:15 p.m.
- ◆ November 12 - Dental Exam for Kindergarten, First, Third and Seventh Grades will be given by Dr. Loren Grossman. Please send in permission slips by November 10.
- ◆ November 26, beginning at 2:00 p.m., Thanksgiving Program at UHI, Family and Friend Invited, reception following program.
- ◆ November 27 - November 30 Rosh Chodesh Kislev, Thanksgiving Vacation, School Closed
- ◆ December 1 - School Open, Classes Resume
- ◆ December 12 - Hearing test will be given to all UHI students, watch for details.

Mazel tov to:

*Dr. Michael Weiss on becoming President of the Federation  
Ethel Pollack on her grandson Stewart's marriage to Sherry  
Mr. & Mrs. Ted Fisher on their son Stewart's marriage to Sherry  
Julie Green on her Bat Mitzvah*

Get Well to:

*Denise Evans*

Condolences to:

*Kieran J. Casey and Family in memory of Leo Casey  
Mrs. Marilyn Strauss and Family in memory of husband, Ed  
Motti & Libby Hershkop in memory of Libby's sister*

**A NOTE FROM TALY**

The PTA meeting held on November 5th to discuss the UHI Lunch Program was extremely productive. Even though small in attendance it was large in results. Thanks to the moms and dad who participated.

A lunch program for all students will begin soon and volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve lunch. There is a special incentive for volunteers. Please call me at 574-5525 or leave a message at UHI if you are interested. Lunch program details will be distributed to everyone next week. Watch for details!

Also, Dr. Kenneth Malia of the Luzerne Intermediate Unit spoke to the parents on what the LIU does and what it can do for UHI. A special Thank You to Kathy Roth for helping on Picture Day!

Thank You!

*Taly Kornfeld, PTA President*

**◆ JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES**

- ◆ Always accepting Kosher, non-perishable food for Sarah's Table.
- ◆ JFS is offering Operation Mattahias and will provide Chanukah gifts to children up to 16 years of age. Special circumstances will be considered. Donors and those interested in participating are to call Lisa Morgan at 823-5137 before December 12.

**JCC COMMUNITY NOTES**

- ◆ November Activities for Children Program at the JCC, contact Gina Malsky, Youth Director, at 824-4646 for details.
- ◆ Sunday, November 16, Jewish Community Center and Jewish Family Service present Ron Eliran appearing at the Jewish Community Center, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Reception to follow. For more information call the JCC at 824-4646 or JFS at

**PTA NEWS**

- ◆ **Chanukah/Holiday Boutique co-chaired by Janice Zarad and Jenny Rizel will be held on Sunday, December 7, at UHI. Watch for details. Volunteers are needed, please call Janice at 283-9269 or Jenny at 287-7071.**
- ◆ **Pasta/Bingo "Fun" Raiser to be held on Sunday, January 11, at UHI from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed, please call co-chairpersons Zivit Bruce at 283-1710 or Lydia Sarnevit-Lerner at 690-1015. Adults \$6, Children \$4, and \$20 maximum for family. Janice Zarad contacted Barilla Pasta and they have donated 100 pounds of pasta to UHI. Thank you, Janice!**
- ◆ **School Lunch Program starts soon. Watch for Details next week!**



**DON'T FORGET TO HELP OUR SCHOOL GET FREE EQUIPMENT**

Please remember to register your Price Chopper Advantage Card for UHI school code 17362. Our school will automatically earn credit every time you use your card. If you signed up last year, you do not need to re-register. Call UHI 287-9600 with any questions. Please spread the word!

*Friends Helping Friends*

*There are many ways to become a partner with UHI as you are remembering loved ones, extending wishes for good health, or taking note of a special occasion. Please use one of the following to make your special contribution.*

Happy Event, Memorial, Good Health Donation::

*\$5.00 (minimum) Regular Card, \$8.00 Scholarship Fold Over Card; and \$18.00 Chai*

Library Fund:

*\$10.00 per book.*

Donations for Continued Education:

*\$100*

Tree of Knowledge:

*\$180 Leaf, \$1800 Brick*

Memorial Plaque (Auditorium):

*\$300 (Annual notification of Yarhzeit)*

*(The price of a Tree of Knowledge Leaf is \$180, a mistake was made in 10-31-08 Bulletin.)*

**UHI PARTICIPATES IN THE 2008 PENNSYLVANIA STUDENT MOCK ELECTION**

*Teacher: Barbara Welch*



*Abby Schwartz, Glenn Kaplan, Ben Engel & Meitar Dougherty are sworn in to do their duty to help voters on Election Day!*

Teaching our young charges to become informed participants in the democratic process is an important feature of any strong academic program. At UHI, we had the opportunity to reinforce the importance of civic participation when grades first through seventh cast their votes for United States President, attorney general, auditor general, and state treasurer as



*Our very own identification cards!*

part of a state-wide student mock election coordinated by Pedro A. Cortes, Secretary of the Commonwealth, and Dr. Gerald L. Zahorchak, Secretary of Education.

Prior to “election day,” the students in grades first through seventh became familiar with the election issues and the voting process. In addition, the fifth through seventh grade students completed an eight-day journal where the students researched the issues of this presidential

election and wrote their reactions detailing what they learned. To familiarize her students with the voting process, Mrs. Baylor’s kindergarten class also participated by reading the book entitled *Election Day* and casting their votes for their favorite ice cream flavor. Since chocolate won, the kindergarten students enjoyed a chocolate ice cream snack!



On October 30<sup>th</sup>, the seventh grade students who conducted the election for UHI, made ready the polling place, secured the ballot box, and took the oaths of office for



*First Graders were very interested and happy with the voting process! Samuel Schwartz is signing in and Natalie Zarad is next in line with her ID in hand!*



*Kindergarten Class shows their identification*

such roles as judge, inspector, clerk, and overseer. Then, the students, armed with their forms of identification, lined up in Room 12, received their ballots, entered the “voting booth,” and then

placed their completed forms in the ballot box. Our results were then sent to Pennsylvania’s Department of State where they were added to the votes of other participating public and private schools across Pennsylvania. Access the website [www.dos.state.pa.us/mockelection](http://www.dos.state.pa.us/mockelection) to learn of the results by school, county, and state.



*Oriel Bruce casts his vote!*

The UHI teachers impressed on their students that voting is not only a right but also a responsibility, and to not participate in the voting process is to give others the power to make important decisions – the impact of which will affect each one of us. Psychologist and

philosopher William James said, “There is but one unconditional commandment, which is that we should seek incessantly, with fear and trembling, so to vote and to act as to bring about the very largest total universe of good which we can see.” The students at UHI learned that we, as Americans, should be grateful and enthusiastic participants in the voting process to bring about positive change.



*Seventh Graders: Thank You, Ben Engel, Meitar Dougherty, Glenn Kaplan and Abby Schwartz*



**LEARNING THE ALEPH-BET IN 4Y**

*Judaic Teacher: Morah Jenny Rizel*

The students in 4Y started learning the Aleph-Bet last week. The children were so excited to talk about all of the objects that start



with the letter Aleph ( א ).

They enjoyed trying to stand like an Aleph with both of their hands in the air and both feet on the ground. They also thought it was so much fun to sit like a Bet ( ב ), and giggled when they had a bouncing ball on their tummies just like the letter Bet.

The Aleph-Bet trains were so much fun to make and the children were so proud to bring them home and hang them on their walls. There were a lot of smiles when we practiced writing the letters Aleph and Bet on the table in shaving cream. But, most of all, 4Y loved eating Aleph-Bet cookies!

*Thanks for joining us on our Aleph-Bet adventure!*



*Shlomo Kornblatt, Esther Brownstein, Kaci and Madison Kranson proudly display their Aleph-Bet dictionaries, great job 4Y!*



**UHI VOTED  
IN 2008!**



**INTERVIEWING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**

*Teacher: Lesley Baltimore*

Third grade is learning about community. They conducted interviews so they could learn about their family and community. The students learned how important it is to plan an interview by making a list of questions to guide the interview, record the interview, and thank the person for the interview. They learned to listen carefully to the person speaking and not to interrupt the person. The students did an excellent job.

Chava interviewed Kristen Degnan, Lili interviewed her father, Haley interviewed her mother, and Jacob interviewed his neighbor. The students shared their interviews in class. Two of the students recorded the interview so it was fun to hear the person's voice. Jacob found out that John grew up in Nanticoke and he is now a PNC Bank Manager. He has three children and likes the community because it is safe. Chava learned that Miss Kristen started ballet at age five and after retiring from being a ballerina, started a school and is a teacher, choreographer, and director. Kristen believes that it is important for a community to have dance because it brings joy and unity to the region. Lili told us that her father loved growing up in Russia and he learned a lot in school. He moved to America because he won a lottery and chose not to waste the opportunity. Mr. Drak works in technology assembling airplanes. He appreciates the beautiful nature in this community. Haley's mother grew up in this area and graduated from Temple University with a pharmacy degree. She works in the hospital dispensing medicine to the patients and educating them on the importance of the medicine. She explained how important a pharmacist is to the community. She loves living here because she is close to her entire family.

The students loved this activity because they had a chance to practice their interviewing skills and learn that their community has a variety of people and jobs.



*Third Grade interviewers: Lili Drak, Haley Rudofker, Jacob Kaplan and Chava Kornblatt. They are behind their very own communities, designed and constructed by them! Great Job!*