



# THE UHI BULLETIN

The Weekly Newsletter of United Hebrew Institute, Kingston, PA

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



*Dear Parents,*

The festival of Chanukah is upon us. By now, most families have celebrated the holiday in some way. By celebrating I am not referring to the exchange of gifts. Gifting is not a traditional manifestation of Chanukah. I believe that the basis for gifting is in response to the Christmas celebration. There is a custom of giving

“Chanukah gelt” that is, Chanukah money. In Yiddish the word gelt means money. I believe that the reason parents gave gelt is for the children to play draidle. As a child, my father gave me a roll of pennies and then proceeded to play draidle for quite a while. It seems that an insignificant gesture like giving some pennies grew and morphed into an elaborate ritual that has become in some cases lavish. Some families exchange gifts each night throughout Chanukah. My own opinion is that this process may diminish the more spiritual aspect of the holiday.

Chanukah, in contrast to Purim, has no specific law to have a meal. (I know it is hard to imagine that there is a Jewish holiday that is not closely linked to food.) Even though we do eat foods that are made with oil to remind us of the miracle of Menorah in the Temple, it is not mandated to do so. This is because the Syrian Greeks did not wish to harm us physically. Their assault was on the spiritual essence of the Jewish people. They wanted to have Jews leave the study of Torah and the observance of Mitzvot. Had we done that, the Greeks would have left us alone, and might even have embraced and befriended us.

In an ironic twist, many Jews see Judaism the same way as the Syrian Greeks did. Most Jews support the notion of religious freedom and that all people should have the choice of observing Mitzvot or abandoning them. This view would explain some interesting new perspectives that have developed in recent times.

In modern Hebrew, this holiday is called “Chag HaUrīm” The Festival of Lights. This name reflects only the celebration of the holiday, not its essence. Chanukah means to renew or rededicate - as in the Temple and the commitment of the Jewish people to G-d. You will also hear the expression that Judah Maccabee fought for religious freedom. In actuality, Judah Maccabee fought for Judaism, period. He did not tolerate the Greek culture known as Hellenism and eradicated as much of it from Judea (as Israel was called at that time) as he could. Think of the Maccabees as the Jewish fundamentalists who were quite intolerant of Hellenism.

The ultimate irony in our times is that in Israel and in many Jewish communities we host sporting events called Maccabean. Organized sports is clearly a Greek cultural innovation, one which the Maccabees sought to purge from the Holy Land. Today, we “celebrate” Chanukah with events that are the antithesis of why the Maccabees waged their wars.

I wish everyone a very happy Chanukah. I hope you have the opportunity to celebrate it in the uniquely Jewish way by focusing on the story of Chanukah and its eternal message. We are here today because the Maccabees stood up for Torah study and the Jewish way of life. By sending your children to a Jewish day school you are perpetuating that miracle.

*May we all see the final redemption speedily and in our days.*

*Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Raphael Nemetsky*

## A NOTE FROM TALY



There was a festive spirit in the air as well as the aroma of gourmet food awaiting to be served at the PTA sponsored Hanukkah luncheon on Monday. The children were thrilled with this celebration of Hanukkah and the merriment and abundance of delicious food was enjoyed by all. A special thank you to Molly Rutta who chaired this special luncheon and to Adriane Kaplan, Patty Schwartz, Rabbi Lerner, Lydia Lerner, Dror Levi, Barbara Bell, Christine Deutschman and Malka Seewald who helped to make this possible. There was such an overflow of volunteers that we actually had to turn them down; but we look forward to their participation in future events! This overwhelming response is heartwarming and shows the dedication of our UHI families.

Also, a special thank you to Tammy Engel who chaired the Teacher/Staff Gift effort at UHI. She handled this overwhelming task with grace and made it appear effortless. Because of her efforts and your generosity, those who provide our children with the unique and nurturing environment that is UHI were shown our appreciation.

At this time I wish every UHI family a very healthy and happy Hanukkah. Enjoy your time off from school and your time together.

*Thank You and Happy Hanukkah!*

*Taly Kornfeld, PTA President*

## CALENDAR OF SCHOOL EVENTS

- ◆ December 24 to January 2, - Winter Break, School Closed
- ◆ January 5 - School Resumes
- ◆ January 11 - UHI PTA Spaghetti Dinner and Bingo “Fun” Raiser, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., at UHI
- ◆ January 15, between 9:00 and Noon, Dr. James Ziegler will conduct a hearing test to all UHI children and staff.

**Mazel tov to:**

Eileen Trompetter on her 85th birthday  
 Todd Eachus on assuming the position of Majority Leader  
 Mr. & Mrs. William Davidowitz on the Bar Mitzvah of their grandson, Harrison

**Get Well to:**

Irma Fischer  
 Geverett Pernikoff  
 Wayne Baer

**Condolences to:**

The Friedman Family in Memory of Pauly  
 Carole Panunzio in Memory of her Aunt, Geraldine Ashbridge  
 Dr. & Mrs. Joan Meyer and Joan Brozena in Memory of Agatha Viti  
 Mrs. Brenda Vilensky in Memory of husband, Morris

**Operation Warm-Up**



There will be a collection of new and gently used winter gear. This includes but is not limited to hats, gloves/mittens, scarves, coats, blankets and snow boots. Barrels will be placed at Temple Israel, JCC, Temple B'nai B'rith, and UHI for donations. This is a cooperative effort by Congregations Ohav Zedek, Jewish Community Center, Temple Israel, Temple B'nai B'rith, Bais Menachem, Jewish Federation and the United Hebrew Institute.

**JCC COMMUNITY NOTES.**

- ◆ Calling all children 2nd Grade and up. Join the JCC every Wednesday from 4:15 to 5:00 p.m. for the Jewish Community Choir directed by Cantor Ahron Abraham. The choir will perform at the Chanukah Community Celebration, Purim Carnival and other community event. Call the JCC at 824-4646
- ◆ December 26, JCC Winter Camp at the JCC. 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., activities include swimming, bowling, gym, challah baking. Dodge ball, lunch, snack and more. Call JCC 824-4646.
- ◆ December 28 (Sunday), 2008 Summer Day Camp Winter Reunion from 1 - 4 p.m. (slide show at 1:30). Cost \$5/pp, staff free, call JCC for more information.
- ◆ December 30, Split Rock Indoor Water Park, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Leave from JCC at 10:00 a.m., pick up at JCC at 8 p.m. Please register w/payment of \$50.00. In-House program at JCC will also be available upon request. Cos \$20.00 9 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- ◆ December 31, New Year's Eve Party, 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., \$20. **10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 Happy New Year!**

**UHI LUNCH PROGRAM MENU**  
 Week Four of the First Session

**Tuesday (12-23): Chicken Nuggets & French Fries**


Lunches will resume on Tuesday, January 6  
 Fresh fruit and salad served at every lunch

**PTA NEWS**

- ◆ Happy Hanukkah to all UHI families and friends!
- ◆ Spaghetti Dinner and Bingo Night "Fun" Raiser, Sunday, January 11, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., \$6 per adult, \$4 per child w/a \$20 family limit. Come and enjoy good food, fun and great people!
- ◆ Please remember to use Price Chopper Scrips when buying food for the Holiday!

If anyone has a copy of the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 PTA Parent Handbook, please contact UHI at 287-9600 or bring the copies to the school at your earliest convenience.  
 Thank You! Sandy Himelstein

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*Please remember to use Price Chopper Scrips over the Holidays! Available at UHI and the JCC. Thank You!*

**◆ 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.

## *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 Yahrzait)*

*We are collecting \$1.00 donations for the two-year old boy who was orphaned in Mumbai. Please call UHI 287-9600 or drop off your donation at the school. Please see last week's Principal's article for more information. Thank You!*

## **Hebrew Language Program**

**UHI is offering an afternoon Hebrew Language Program led by Ms. Einat Davidowitz.**

**Please see the accompanying flyer.**

**The first two sessions are FREE so you can "try before you buy." The cost is minimal, 12 sessions for \$60.00, and it includes a snack. Call the office at 287-9600 to join.**

## **LEARN-A-THON**

UHI is conducting a "Learn-a-Thon" over the mid-winter break. This will be wonderful for students to continue studying Torah over vacation. Please check your child's backpack for the flyer and sign-up sheet.

## **THE MISHRA AND THE GEMARA**

*Advanced Talmud Teacher: Rabbi Raphael Nemetsky*

The Advanced Talmud class has begun studying one of the most famous discussions in the entire Talmud. Talmud is different from almost all other areas of study in that it requires abstract thinking and critical analysis. In addition, it does not necessarily resolve that one opinion is correct and the other incorrect. Rather, it seeks to analyze and understand the underlying logic and application for each opinion.

The Talmud consists of two parts: The Mishna (completed approximately 250 C.E.), which contains the laws of the Oral Torah, and the Gemara (completed approximately 450 C.E.), which explains the Mishna. Together they are referred to as the Talmud. Our students are continuing the chain of this study, which is the hallmark of Jewish scholarship.

The Talmud we are studying is the one traditionally taught to students just starting to study this advanced subject. Broadly speaking, the students are learning how (legally speaking) one may keep an item that is realistically impossible to return to its rightful owner. In other words, how is it that a person loses his ownership of an item that he once owned?

As many times as I have taught this Gemara over the last twenty-five years, it never fails to excite me to teach it. It is so encouraging to see the students "take sides" in a discussion to defend their positions. The students are already thinking more critically and analytically. The students must not only answer questions, but they follow the reasons and rationale all the way through to its logical conclusion. They now expect every answer they give to a critical thinking question will be followed by the question, "Therefore, what?"

## **DON'T FOGET TO HELP OUR SCHOOL GET FREE EQUIPMENT**



Please remember to register your Price Chopper Advantage Card for UHI school code 17362 and to use Price Chopper Scrips to purchase your Holiday food orders. Our school will automatically earn credit every time you use your card.

Deadline cut off date is 2/14/09. If you signed up last year, you do not need to re-register. Call UHI 287-9600 with any questions or to request a form. Please spread the word! Thank You!!!

**ORIGINAL MENORAHS AT CHANUKA**

**Judaic Teacher: Rabbi Yaakov Rizel**

The past few days have been very exciting for the second and third grade students. So much so that the students chose to stay in class rather than go to recess. The students are the proud designers and builders of their very own menorahs. The



*Zachary Kornfeld's original design!*

original design and preparation of all the raw materials was done by Rabbi Nemetsky. However once the materials were brought into class they took on a life of their own. I originally presented the students with the wood, glue, and a specific design that I had in mind for the menorahs. Zak

Kornfeld asked if he could build his menorah differently. The design that he presented was one that I had not even thought of before today. Before you knew it, one student was placing the legs closer to the center, another put the shamash (the tallest candle) in the middle, while another one put it on the side. Once the assembly was completed we let the menorahs



*Oriel Bruce admires his design!*

dry overnight. The next part, the painting of the menorahs, was even more fun and allowed the students to display more of their unique creative abilities. The end result as you can see from the pictures is ten different menorahs, no two are the same, but they are all very impressive.



*Haley Rudofker is very happy with her design!*



*Finishing touches by Samson Tillman. Left: Brooke Lieberman is enjoying the early stages of her menorah design!*



**DISCOVERY IN 3Y**

**Teacher: Sara Eneboe**



*Julianna Good's turn to play miniature Golf!*

Music is often played for dance and parade complete with musical instruments. The children enjoy singing and dancing with our very own baby beluga whale to her very own song (it is a stuffed white whale). Letter F is fun as we pretend to be fish.

Our three year old students have been learning all kinds of wonderful things through discovery play. They have reviewed the letters A through G during the past weeks; and we "swung" into G with a mini golf practice right in our own 3Y room.



*3 Y worked very hard on their snowflake fingerprint project!*



*It's Chloe Levi's turn at Golf! Everyone enjoyed playing!*

The bean bag toss is very popular as we count and reinforce color recognition. We have a surprise this week as we learn the letter H. Shhhhh! Hint it has four paws. Did you guess that it was Samantha the Hamster?!

Circle time is full of favorite songs along with learning about the calendar and weather. Stories are shared by student interaction with books being read about animals, people and places. Each Friday we continue to share through show and tell and this is a popular experience for the children to speak about the chosen item.

Please visit our bulletin board to view the gifts of "four" and the snowflakes of triangles. Watch the transformation of UHI's large front windows into a winter wonderland.



*Enjoy this Chanukah season with your families and friends!*

*Cole Kranson was a natural - a really good putter at miniature golf!*