



# THE UHI BULLETIN

The Weekly Newsletter of United Hebrew Institute, Kingston, Pennsylvania, USA

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Rabbi Nemetsky

Welcome back everyone from the Passover break. Reports from all over indicate that the weather was gorgeous and that a good time was had by all. With this refreshing and rejuvenating lull behind us, we begin the final push to continue the learning process until the very last day of the year.

The beautiful weather, the blooming flowers, the anticipation of summer seems at odds with the essence of these days, according to the Jewish calendar. We are now in the midst of counting the Omer. The Omer count marks the forty-nine days from the exodus from Egypt until the Torah was given to the Jews at Mt. Sinai. Originally, these interim days heralded the celebration of formally becoming Jews. In time, this period has been overshadowed with the mournful recollection of tragic events that have befallen the Jewish people.

The most well known suffering is the death of Rabbi Akiva's twenty-four thousand students around the same time of Roman Emperor Hadrian's persecution of the Jews -- approximately 130 CE. When Jews moved to Europe in great numbers, springtime was a favorite time for killing Jews. Thus, in the Jewish calendar, we are subdued in our celebrations.

(In an ironic twist, Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, is commemorated in the Jewish month of Nisan when it is forbidden to mourn, while Yom HaAtzmaut is celebrated in the Jewish month of Iyar when it is forbidden to celebrate. The explanation for this inconsistency is that these two events were not promoted or endorsed by most leading (traditional) rabbis of the last two generations.)

However, we are looking forward to Lag Baomer on May 2. Besides the usual festivities, Lag Baomer has special significance in our community. The original cause for Rabbi Akiva's students' untimely death was that they did not accord the respect due one another. As the community gathers together to celebrate in unison, we gain opportunities to create achdut, unity with all Jews. I am happy to report that most religious and communal organizations are either directly involved with the

celebration or are actively supporting it. Many of the activities will be run by the Bais Menachem students whose energy can match those of the children who will enjoy a wonderful day outdoors.

As this year Lag Baomer falls on a Sunday, it presents unique opportunities as well as challenges. Parents who are generally not working on Sunday can join us for this family oriented occasion, and we are not sacrificing any classroom time when UHI partakes in this event. The challenge is that families may choose other activities for this day, as it is a day off from a usually hectic week at work and school. I hope that parents will see Lag Baomer as a great day to bond with their family, friends, and the Jewish community of Wyoming Valley.

Please mark and clear your calendars for Sunday, May 2, so that we can all enjoy a truly happy day together. I look forward to seeing all of you.

As this article goes to press, the exact time and location has not yet been finalized. We are working to include the Hebrew schools, UHI, JCC, temples and synagogues and are coordinating with their administrators to achieve maximum participation. Please watch your emails and UHI bulletins for details.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Raphael J. Nemetsky

Sunday  
May 2



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 4/20 Yom Ha'Atzmaut Courthouse 9:30
- 5/2 Lag B'Omer
- 5/9 Mothers' Day
- 5/12 Yom Yerushalayim
- 6/2 Field Trip to Frances Slocum Park K-4

## Springtime Creations Sara Eneboe, Teacher

The art room is all abuzz with spring fever. We can't wait to paint outdoor scenes of the green grass and sunshine flowers. Students have studied the features of the human face. Learning the correct proportion can be a trick. The 3rd through 8th grade used mirrors to draw their self portraits. These are displayed in the art room.

Currently, 4th grade is studying relief sculpture. They will "carve" or emboss images on a thin clay area over a wooden board. This technique simulates monuments and ancient wall art around the world.

The kindergarten and 4Y groups have learned about pinching clay for animal features. We viewed animal photos and sculptures of animals to imagine our finger puppets' form. The animal personalities will sing and dance when the puppeteers command.

The second grade students had a wonderful time designing their own clown. We talked about the circus coming to town. The clowns make a splash of color for our lobby. Our kindergarten class is making a collage circus train carrying animals to the circus tent. Look for our "train" in the lobby soon. As we were discussing the circus, the train rolling outside started to blow its horn. The students were so delighted.

After all the hard studying of the face, the 6th through 8th grade students "clowned" around after class.

There is so much to create. Enjoy the spring time.



Chloe Levi shows her finger puppet. Ita Brownstein and Chezky Rizel concentrate on their sculpture.



L to R: Gavin Lehrer, Sarah Newman, Joseph Schwartz, Zahava Griver and Sholomo Kornblatt enjoy creating their animal collage for our circus train.



Laurel Roth, Madison Kranson, Beka Kornfeld, Gavin Lehrer talk about how to make animal ears.



Eric Berley paints with our fresh watercolor paints. Great clown!



8th graders "clowning" around!

## Growing Crystals Carole Panunzio, Teacher

Crystals have fascinated humans for centuries. People can wear and admire them or eat them on their cereal or French fries. Crystal shape is a property of the way a mineral grows. Each mineral has a characteristic crystal shape that is useful in its identification.

The eighth grade students recently conducted a lab investigation in order to observe crystal formation. They carefully heated water in a beaker and slowly added copper sulfate while stirring with a glass rod until no more copper sulfate would dissolve. They then repeated this procedure with sodium chloride (table salt).

The students next soaked a ten centimeter cotton string in each of the solutions and placed the strings on a Petri dish in order to dry. When the strings were nearly dry, they put the beakers containing the saturated solutions into an ice-filled tray and replaced each string in its original solution.

The eight grade students then observed the results with a hand lens and discovered that by "seeding" the string they were able to quickly grow small crystals on it.

Our students enjoyed observing the interesting and characteristic crystal shapes. They even wondered if they could develop a technique for growing synthetic gemstones, because if jewelers knew the conditions under which gem crystals grow best, they could duplicate those conditions and use pure materials and optimal conditions to make gem crystals that are larger and more pure than those found in nature.



The Counting of the *Omer*  
Jennie Rizel, Teacher

The time period between the holidays of *Pesach* and *Shavuot* is called the time of the *Omer*. We count the days between *Pesach* and *Shavuot* because we are so excited to receive the *Torah* on *Shavuot*. We have an *Omer* chart in the classroom, and the children love crossing off the days leading to *Shavuot*.

We constructed an abacus out of beads for the children to practice their counting. There are forty-nine beads representing the forty-nine days between *Shavuot* and *Pesach*.

The time of the *Omer* is also a serious time because many of the students of Rabbi Akiva were not as nice as they should have been to each other. We spoke about the importance of being nice to everyone, and we sang songs about “*Ve’ahavta Larayachah Kamochah*” – loving your friends as you love yourself.



Do Opposites Really Attract?  
Amy Baylor, Teacher

The first grade children were fascinated to learn about magnets in science. They learned that a magnet is a piece of iron that can attract things that are usually made of iron. *Lodestone* is a natural magnet which is found in the ground.

The children found objects in the classroom that are attracted to a magnet. Paper clips, pencil ends and desks attract, but chalk, glue sticks and pencil points do not. In addition, they learned that magnetic force can pass through objects such as paper.

The first grade children enjoyed making their own magnets. By rubbing a paper clip against a magnet several times, the paper clip itself turns into a magnet! Wow!

Making a compass was also fun! The children floated a plate in a tub of water. After placing a bar magnet on the plate, they saw how the magnet always faced north even after the plate was spun. Groovy!

A magnet has a north and a south pole. The north is attracted to the south and the south is attracted to the north. In the case of a magnet, the first graders found out that opposites do attract!

