

# RTA Stellar Education for Every Jewish Child

# וְאֶחָדָתָה... V'ahavta...

April 5, 2019      29 Adar II, 5779

· Sefer Torah for Yossi	1
· S'mores Solar Lab	4
· Gr. K Performs at JCC	5
· Purim at Beth Shalom	7
· Gr. K & 3 Celebrate Purim	8
· Art at RTA	13
· Parsha	19



## Candle Lighting

Friday, April 5  
7:18 p.m.

Saturday, April 6  
Shabbat ends  
8:22 p.m.

## Dates to Remember

Monday, April 8  
7th/8th Grade Model Seder  
10:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. @WJCC

Art Club  
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 9  
Meat Order Pick up  
@ Shaarei Torah  
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10  
8th Grade Popcorn Cafe  
(Please see flyer on p. 12)

Thursday, April 11  
Pasta Lunch  
(Please see flyer on p. 11)

Computer Coding  
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.

Soccer  
3:40 - 5:00 p.m.

This week's V'ahavta is sponsored by  
**Dr. Bob Weisberger**

## Sefer Torah for Yossi ob'm

For many it was a once-in-a-lifetime event. Our entire school joined the Richmond Jewish community to celebrate an inspirational and joyous event two weeks ago, with the completion and dedication of a Sefer Torah written in memory of a beloved young man - Yossi Paley ob'm - who passed away shortly before his bar-mitzvah 18 years ago.

The Torah was completed at Keneseth Beth Israel synagogue by Rabbi Adam Lessin (son of our very own Mrs. Judy Lessin).

After the last letter was finished, a celebratory parade, with the special Sefer Torah truck leading the way, escorted the Torah to its home in our very own Yeshiva of Virginia.

The joyous song and dance, the achdus (unity) demonstrated by this event, and the love of Torah that shone on the faces of all truly made this a day for Jewish Richmond to proudly treasure forever.



photo by Max Taylor

The Paley family gratefully thanks all of the parents, staff and students for participating in this beautiful tribute in honor of the Torah and in memory of Yossi.

In the words of Yossi's Mom, Leah Paley: '*As long as Jews love the Torah with such a fierceness, there is no outside force that can ever bring us down.*'

(continued on page 2 . . .)

Thank you to the Paley family for donating art supplies.

### Sefer Torah for Yossi ob'm

(. . .continued from front page)



(more photos on next page. . . )

## Sefer Torah for Yossi ob"m

(. . .continued from page 2)



photos by Max Taylor

## S'mores Solar Lab

The 7th/8th grade science class studied all about the many alternative energy sources currently being researched in the US: from wind energy to solar energy to biomass. We concluded our study with a solar collector project. We lined boxes with black paper, placed s'mores inside, then covered the top with plastic wrap. We placed the boxes in the sun for about 20 minutes, then got to enjoy some yummy, gooey s'mores!



## Kindergarten Performs at JCC

### Ready for Broadway

Last Friday, the RTA kindergarten class dazzled the JCC Preschool at its school-wide Shabbat Party. Dawn Kowal graciously introduced our class who sang two songs. The first song was *Mishenichnas Adar*, a song about the month of Adar that we know very well. The second song was *Laitzan Kattan*, a song about a little clown. We wore bright red clown noses for the song. While we were dancing on stage, some of our noses fell off! This amused our audience. We were glad that we were able to make them smile and laugh, just like clowns like to do! The kindergartners wowed the crowd, and made a great impression. So are our kindergartners ready for Broadway, or perhaps Broad Street?

Thank you to our chaperones, and all those parents who joined us at the JCC to support our performance!



(more photos on next page . . . )

## Kindergarten Performs at JCC

(. . . continued from page 5)



## Purim at Beth Shalom



## Kindergarten and Third Grade Celebrate Purim

### Purim Memories!

The kindergartners had a wonderful time preparing for Purim. We made delicious hamantashen that we enjoyed eating in class. We had so many opportunities to dress up in our very own castle, and become either kings, queens, or clowns. We designed some amazing crowns, and enjoyed the "royal treatment" we received. The climax was on Purim day! What an adventure! We were dressed up in such great costumes, that it was sometimes hard to identify who we were. (Not everyone understood that Morah Perel and her family were dressed up from the Stone Age - as the Flintstones! Morah Perel was Wilma). But it didn't matter - because we all had a great time! And the kindergartners listened very patiently to the whole megilla being read. We loved the costume parade, eating our meal, and getting yummy mishloach manos. It was truly a day to remember!



(more photos on next page. . . )

## Kindergarten and Third Grade Celebrate Purim

(. . .continued from page 8)



(more photos on next page. . . )

## Kindergarten and Third Grade Celebrate Purim

(. . .continued from page 9)



# Pasta Lunch



Thursday, April 11

Pasta

Tomato Sauce

Cheese

Garlic Bread

Salad

Brownies

Lemonade

(all this for only)

\$5.00

# 8th Grade Popcorn Cafe

**Wednesday, April 10th**  
**\$1 per bag**



**8th Grade  
Pre-Pesach  
Flower Sale**



**A beautiful bouquet for your  
Pesach table  
\$5 - \$15**

**Wednesday, April 17th**



## Container Animals

by the Art Club

Building the animals was so much fun, but painting them was the best!  
Finishing touches included eyes, mouths, noses and much more. Some even have leashes!



*Yehoshua Aronowitz*



*Katie Holi*



*Malky Goldberg*



*Rachelli Aronowitz*



*Eliana Rakofsky*



*Lilah Knopf*



*Simmy Winston*



*Avi Fitzgerald*



*Shayna Chandler*



*Moshe Goldberg*



*Abe Sherman*



*Yali Plotnick*



*Danielle Holi*



*Isaac Nichols*



*Dena Cantor*

(more art on next page...)



## Self Portraits

by the Kindergarten



Moussia Friedman



Abe Sherman



Simmy Winston



Maya Farzad



Malky Goldberg



Dena Cantor



Moshe Goldberg



Yoshi Mizrahi



Judah Oberstein-Gordon



Yali Plotnick



Rachelli Aronowitz



Hillel Shlomo Follick



Hadara Weinberger

(more art on next page...)



## Aluminum and Glue Texture Boards

by the 5th and 6th grade

The 5th and 6th grade art class drew a design on mat board. They glued on top of the lines which were inside the inner rectangle or square.

Heavy aluminum foil was glued on top and was colored with permanent markers. The idea was to continue the design from within the rectangle to the borders of the mat board.



Doni Plotnick



Nathaniel Rakofsky



Salome Eichelberg



Eliyahu Aronowitz



Skyler Legano



Amalya Weinberger



Eliyahu Francis



Avi Gruber

(continued on next page...)



## Aluminum and Glue Texture Boards

by the 5th and 6th grade

(continued from page 15)



Daneel Olihnenco



Miri David



Maya Yadin



Chanah Rochel Follick



Katie Holi



Avraham Tzvi Chandler



Yehoshua Gunzburg



Ezra Holi



Alexander Klestzick



Akiva Chandler

(more art on next page...)



## How Do We Move?

by the Fourth Grade

The 4th grade art class used wooden manikins to find an interesting pose for their figure.

After duplicating their original pose, they created a background environment to show where the action is taking place.

As the completion to their unit on the human figure, they placed a cyclist on a map. They colored the map to complete the adventure.

Some examples of student work are shown below.



Zemorah Coon



Reuven Lusk



Elina Habib



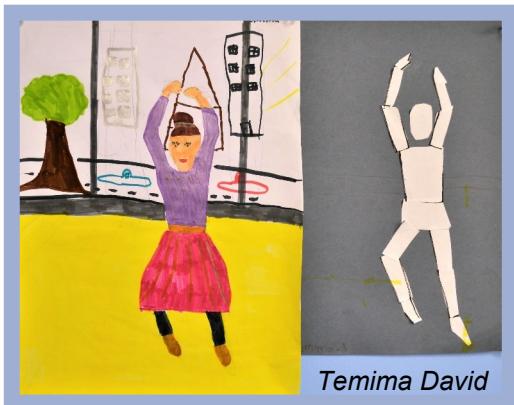
*(continued on next page . . .)*



## How Do We Move?

by the Fourth Grade

(continued from page 17)



## Parsha Points

Each week we feature an article on the weekly Torah portion.

### Tazria (Leviticus 12-13) Rosh Chodesh (Numbers 28:9-15) Parshat Hachodesh (Exodus 12:1-20)

#### The Power of Speech

*One man spread a rumor about another. He later felt regret, and went to the rabbi to ask how to make amends. "Go to the store and buy a bag of seeds," said the rabbi, "then go to a big open field and scatter the seeds into the wind. Do so and report back to me in a week." The man did as he was told, and came back the next week to find out what to do next. "Now," said the rabbi, "go back to the field and pick up all the seeds." "But," protested the man, "those seeds have scattered far and wide! I'll never find them all. Many have even already taken root!" "Exactly," explained the rabbi. "Now you understand. When we speak badly about another person, the effect is far and wide. And it is damage that can never be fully undone."*

One of the most difficult sections of the Torah to understand is this week's parsha which discusses *Tzaraat*, a skin disease commonly mis-translated as "leprosy."

In truth, *Tzaraat* is a physical manifestation of a spiritual deficiency. The Talmud (Arachin 16) says that *Tzaraat* comes specifically as a consequence of "*Loshon Hara*" -- negative speech about another person. For example, we see that when Moses' sister Miriam spoke *Loshon Hara*, she contracted *Tzaraat* (Numbers, chapter 12).

What is the connection between speaking badly -- gossiping about another -- and contracting this skin disease?

#### TO BUILD OR TO DESTROY

Speech is the tool of creation. Through it we can build individuals and the world. We can praise, encourage, and give others confidence. By making others feel important, we build them up, as if to say, "Your existence is necessary." This is life-giving and life-affirming.

One of the great American rabbis of the past generation, Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld zt"l, was known to have brought a neighbor back to Torah observance simply by caring enough to say "good morning."

On the other hand, speech can also be used to destroy. Words like "you're worthless" wipes out a person's self-esteem. As King Solomon says, "Life and death are in the hands of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). The Talmud (Arachin 15b) explains that negative speech is even worse than a sword -- since it kills many people, even at great distance.

Remember the expression "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me"? This was clearly not said by a Jew!

Beyond the individual destruction, we have all seen the power of gossip -- a vicious rumor -- to tear apart relationships, families, and even entire communities.

Of course, just as the Torah prohibits speaking *Loshon Hara*, we are prohibited from even listening to it. (Which makes sense -- if I can't listen, then you can't speak it!) By listening to negative talk we fuel the viciousness and become desensitized to its effect on others.

From here we can understand a section of this week's parsha, Leviticus 13:45-46. The Torah says that when someone has been diagnosed as having *Tzaraat*, they must go outside the boundaries of the city and shout "Contaminated!" to anyone who approaches. The punishment is measure-for-measure: If you promote divisiveness amongst others, then you will also suffer the divisiveness of separation from community.

(continued on next page . . .)

## Parsha Points

(. . .continued from page 19)

### LIMITS OF LOSHON HARA

Many people make the mistake of thinking that the Torah prohibition of negative speech is limited only to saying falsity and untruth. But this is not so. Lying falls under a separate prohibition, expressed in Exodus 20:13, 23:7.

*Loshon Hara*, meanwhile, is the prohibition against saying anything negative or derogatory about another person -- even when it's true!

Often, *Loshon Hara* will couch itself in a cloak of rationalizations. It doesn't even matter whether the words are spoken implicitly or implied. If the message can be construed negatively, then it is a violation of *Loshon Hara*.

Be aware of potential *Loshon Hara* situations and stop them before they start. For instance, reunions are particularly rife with gossip: "Oh, did you hear about so-and-so ..."

The Talmud says that the human body was constructed to help a person refrain from *Loshon Hara*. The teeth and lips serve as "gates" to regulate what emerges from our mouth, while the tongue lies in a horizontal resting position. Furthermore, while humans have two eyes, two ears and two nostrils -- we have only one mouth as a reminder to minimize chatter. And, says the Talmud, for what purpose did God create ear lobes? So that if we find ourselves in a situation where *Loshon Hara* is being spoken, we can conveniently turn the lobes upwards as ear plugs!

(An exception to the rule of never speaking negatively about others - We may speak or listen to negative information if we are absolutely sure it is for the constructive purpose of preventing future damage. Indeed – that is generally not only permitted, but required!)

### WHY DO PEOPLE GOSSIP?

What would motivate one person to speak badly about another?

Low self-esteem. When a person feels down about himself, there are two ways to feel better - either 1) make the effort to work and build oneself up (this is a lot of hard work!), or 2) put others down. The reasoning being, if I can lower others, then I don't look so bad by comparison! But that's the easy way, the "quick high." And is that the kind of person you want to be?

The media has built an empire around knocking down big targets -- like movie stars, politicians and business leaders. For the average person who may see himself languishing in mediocrity, it is a source of aggravation to see others' success in life! So, knock them down -- and problem solved!

This may explain as well some basis for anti-Semitism. The nation that holds itself to a higher standard is a constant reminder of the human potential for sanctity and morality. Why is the world so eager to point out every misstep taken by Israel? Because by eliminating respect for that higher standard, the obligation to strive for that standard likewise falls away.

The first step in avoiding *Loshon Hara* is to recognize our own faults and commit to improving on them. When I accept that I alone am responsible for my inadequacies, then I will similarly be less critical and more tolerant of others.

If you find yourself getting "down" about yourself or others, try focusing away from the faults and instead on the virtues. It will lift you out of your negativity. The Torah says: Feeling down? Don't take the easy way out. Work hard and improve yourself.

### SPEECH AND THE PROCESS OF REDEMPTION

The Talmud asks: Why was the Holy Temple destroyed? Because people spoke *Loshon Hara* about each other. Thus, says the Chafetz Chaim (the 20<sup>th</sup> century codifier of the laws of *Loshon Hara*), refraining from gossip is the single most effective way to reverse the damage and bring about the redemption!

There is no better time to undertake this challenge than today. We find ourselves in the season of redemption. Passover celebrates our emergence from slavery unto freedom. Now is the time to break the dissension and divisiveness which plague our people.

Imagine how the world would change ... if all humanity jumped on this bandwagon!