The Essential ESTER

This Sunday, 2:00 A.M. becomes 3:00 A.M., as we Spring Forward.

Next Friday, March 19, we still have a 2:00 dismissal.

Tuesday, March 16, is Rosh Chodesh Nissan and NOAM (Night Out At Max’s). Stop the cleaning (temporarily), get treated to supper, and benefit our kids’ school.

Wednesday, March 24 – Last day of classes before Pesach. No post-3:30 Shiurim or Girls’ Sports that day or on Tuesday, March 23. We will have P.M. Day Care.
Dear Parents,

This was a week of important milestones for our kids. It began on Sunday with the Fifth Graders’ Siyum on Maseches Megillah and celebration of beginning Gemarrah. Each young man very eloquently recited and explained a Mishnah (from Megillah) of his choice and also received his own “volume” of Perek Tefillas HaShachar. Many, many thanks to Rabbi Hoffman for inspiring our boys and for coordinating the beautiful spread and the details of this EVENT. It was a beautiful program, with parents, a grandparent, and siblings in attendance. It was also an opportunity for my Chavrusah and myself to make our personal snow-delayed Siyum on Gemarrah Megillah. We thank our sponsors for making it all possible, and we are greatly appreciative of all who assisted in preparing, purchasing, picking up, setting up, and/or cleaning up. For fear of excluding someone, we will not single out anyone. May we all continue to see Nachas Shel Torah from our children.

On Monday, both 3B and 3G marked the completion of Parashas Toledos.

Wednesday’s Kindergarten Aleph-Bais Siyum was a resounding success. It had the desired effect of raising the kids’ (already sky-high) level of excitement about their achievement. To put things into proper perspective, this is our children’s entrée into Tefillah and Talmud Torah, the raison d’être of the world. From my perspective, the most outstanding and significant feature of the occasion was the enthusiasm so obviously emanating from our kids. If we could package and distribute the excitement so apparent on the faces of our boys and girls, we’d all really be in fantastic shape. Orchos Tzaddikim says that a Mitzvah done with joy warrants 1,000 times the reward of the exact same act performed without emotion. May we continue to see Nachas Shel Torah from all our youngsters. Special words of HaKaros HaTov go to Morah Rochel, Morah Miri, Morah Mack, Morah Lisette, Morah Bracha, Morah Shulie, Morah Glicka, and Morah Elaine. The unique Aleph and Sav cookies were the masterful, tasty handiwork of Rochelle Ferneau. In the unsolicited help department, we thank all who helped clean up.

**Coming Up in the Blink of an Eye**

**Sunday, March 14** – 5th/6th Shiurim.
**Monday, March 15** – 4B play at 9:25.
**Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, March 16, 17, and 18** – Full post-3:30 line-up, including Girls’ Sports on Wednesday.
**Wednesday, March 17** –
- Nut House pizza. Thanks to all in-house help this week.
- KG in the A.M. and KB in the P.M. will visit Snider’s.
**Friday, March 19** – 2:00 dismissal.
**Monday, March 22** – 5B/G to the Capitol.
**Wednesday, March 24** – Last day of classes before Pesach.
**Wednesday, April 28** – MD Science Center coming.
**Friday, April 30** – Second Annual Grandparents’ Day.
**Tuesday, May 25** – 6G poetry program and Girls’ Choir end-of-year performances – 7:30 in school.

**Today’s Attachments**
- Olomeinu for Nissan.
- SOVEYA newsketter.
We wish a heartfelt Mazel Tov to:

udiant, his parents, Michelle and Dan; his siblings, Eli and Ari; and his entire family, upon his becoming a Bar Mitzvah.

 deported, and Aviva Kramer, Tuvia Moses, and their entire families upon the marriage of their great grandmother, Mrs. Florence Binstock Avigan to Dr. Joel Avigan.

 Tzivia Lutch, her parents, Rabbi Hershel and Mrs. Ariel Lutch, and Meira, upon their actual move to their new home in Baltimore. We will miss them, and we wish them much Hatzlacha.

 Dena Kotek, Maya Kotek, and the entire Kotek family, upon the marriage of Effi Kotek to Miriam Kadden.

 May they continue to be blessed with Simachos.

 We express HaKaras HaTov to:

 Simmy Pollock, for covering the front desk on Sunday.

 Karin Tulchinsky Cohen for facilitating and our generous PTA for sponsoring a number of our teachers’ attendance at the “Diamonds in the Rough” two day seminar.

 Mrs. Malka Koretzky, SLP for sharing details of her profession with our Kindergarten.

 All people who made purchases from Lands’ End and designated us. We just received a check from Lands’ End for $56.17.

 Totals Dept.

 After 11 weeks, 6B Masmid Govoha minutes have reached 40,319.

 After 3 weeks, 5B MTT minutes are up to 4,953.

 Parshathon donations are at $15,159.73.

 Have Extra Chometz?

 We are participating in the Capital Area Food Bank Drive until March 24th. The collection box is right outside our main office.

 Chessed Opportunity

 We are still looking for girls and ladies to donate their hair (10 inches or more) to Chai Lifeline’s program to make a hairpiece for a child in need of one.

 Appointments are still available for a FREE haircut with Debbie White from Cartoon Cuts. Please call Jennifer Stiber (301-691-9091) for more information and to schedule an appointment.

 What 'Sup?

 In math, we’re learning about $ (credit cards haven’t been mentioned), fractions (by making paper pizzas), polygons (using tangrams), rounding decimals to tenths, hundredths, thousandths, ten thousandths, etc. (using magnetic decimal #’s), elapsed time, more time and less time, the values of pennies and nickels and what it says and shows on them, dividing, using various strategies for double digit division, angles, dividing by 10, 100, and 1,000, and a few more topics.

 All classes are into Pesach, the Haggadah, the Seder, and Yom Tov projects.

 In Science, we discovered why a balloon sticks to the wall after rubbing it on hair, compared and contrasted types of storms, got into rocks and minerals, and learned about different types of scientists.

 1G brought in stuffed animals to display the categories of creatures created during Ma’a’seh Bereishees.

 In Social Studies, we made a Mayan pictograph on simulated “bark” (crumpled up brown bags), delineated the hemispheres, located places on maps using latitude and longitude, made Aztec number glyphs, got deeper into the Revolutionary

 Pesach on the Horizon

 Checks for Maos Chitim can be made out to Od Yosef Chai and sent to our office.

 ✓ Ooroo LaTefillah.

 ✓ Classroom Close-ups by Mrs. Chani Mendlowitz.

 ✓ Rosh Chodesh Sponsorship flyer.
War, and are working on a number of research pages.

- In PE, everyone got a heavy dose of racquet skills.
- 5B, in their intro to Gemarrah, learned different terms used for quoting Ta’na’im and A’mo’ra’im. They also found out about Halachic variable hours.
- Lots of kids are writing their own Divrei Torah for their Haggados.
- 6B were introduced (once again) to the Ke’ri (the way a word is read) and Ke’siv (the way a word is written) style in Tanach and its ramifications.
- In music, 3G, 4G, 5G, and 6G completed their “Musician of the Week” projects for this year, featuring interviews, instrument creations, performances of musical interviews, musical games, video presentations, etc.

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

Yitzchak Charner
Headmaster
You may wander near the first grade girl’s classroom one day and find us marching around the room with Chumashim in hand. You may even find us standing on our chairs or making unusual motions. Are we having fun or learning Chumash? Actually, both! Learning Chumash is a new type of learning for our first grade girls. It also involves a significant amount of sitting time while we review Pesukim and learn new ones, and this is a challenge! Therefore, we need to develop creative methods to maintain the levels of interest, stimulation and ability to remain focused on the learning at hand.

The girls are very excited about learning Chumash, and, initially, the enthusiasm and the privilege of learning starts them off. The first day we started Chumash, we excitedly recited the Berachah of ליום בהרב תורה, to be involved in the study of Torah. The girls now understand the importance of this Berachah. In fact, on Shushan Purim, when we did not have time to learn Chumash, one of the girls questioned why we made the Berachah.

Each girl has a sticker chart on her binder which she fills up, thereby earning prizes. Stickers are given for good translating, following along, and insightful questions. Each old Possuk is reviewed numerous times using various methods. We say some using funny voices and sometimes we put motions to the Possuk. Our favorite game is the dice game where the girls spin a die, and we do the Possuk to the action written on the die, such as march, be the teacher, move backwards, switch seats and more!

The new Possuk is introduced, and the words are magnetically hung on the white board. The girls then attempt to translate independently whatever they are able to. Any new words are translated by the Morah. It is amazing to see how quickly the girls are able to translate on their own. In fact, last week I gave the girls a challenge - to translate two new Pesukim totally on their own and then teach them to the class! They were so excited with their success!! I often encourage the girls to try to think of places where they have seen some of the words of the Chumash in Tefillah, and it is so empowering to them when they are able to do so. The Hebrew language is certainly taking on a new life for them as they find words throughout Tefillah that contain Shoroshim we have learned. When we learned the Shoresh of בדיל, we figured out the reason why Havdalah is called Havdalah! Many girls went home and confidently shared this information with their families. What a great feeling.

I hope that the freshness and enthusiasm with which they learn Chumash now will stay with them for a lifetime!
Berachah of the Week

"Who has provided for me all my needs."

This blessing is a general “thank you” to Hashem for supplying all our needs. However, the Talmud (Berachos 60b) explains that it specifically expresses our gratitude for being able to tie our shoes and put them on.

“My Prayer” (pg 37) explains:

The connection between this blessing and the tying up of the shoelaces is explained by the Avudraham in the following way. As long as a person is barefooted, he cannot go out to work, but, when he puts his shoes on and ties them, he is ready to go out and take care of this need.

In making this blessing, we declare that all our needs are actually provided by G-d. Note that the past tense is used in this blessing (“provided”). The reason is that we express our conviction that all our needs are already provided by G-d, even before we start the day, for it has already been decreed by Divine Providence how much each person should earn that day. It is up to us to go out and make the necessary effort to “collect” what has been set aside for us. Our efforts provide natural channels to receive that which has already been decreed for us by the supernatural blessing of G-d.
Rosh Chodesh Nisan is Coming...

Each Rosh Chodesh, the PTA provides treats to our students. The PTA is seeking sponsors for this coming month’s Rosh Chodesh treats.

For a $25 sponsorship, your name and message (in recognition of, in honor of, in appreciation of, etc), will be distributed to each class and read aloud to the students. This is a great way to also show your children’s teachers your appreciation.

Please return the form below (attention: Rosh Chodesh Sponsorship), with payment, to the office by March 15, 2010.

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please call the school at 301-962-8003, x 2300.

We would like to sponsor Rosh Chodesh treats for Rosh Chodesh Nisan. Enclosed is our check for $25, payable to TSWG PTA.

Message:  _________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
Torah thought on health and wellness:

“When you come to the Land and you plant any food tree, you shall treat its fruit as orlah; for three years it shall be orlah to you, they shall not be eaten. In the fourth year, all its fruit shall be sanctified, a praise to HaShem. And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit - in order to increase its crop for you - I am HaShem, your G-d,” (Vayikra 19, 23-25).

We learned last week that the mitzvah of orlah teaches us that delaying physical gratification is not necessarily a form of deprivation. Rather, it’s an essential instrument in our spiritual growth by applying appropriate boundaries around our desires for instant satisfaction.

But a question still remains. Why does the last verse describing this commandment say, “And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit - in order to increase its crop for you - I am HaShem, your G-d.”? Isn’t fulfilling G-d’s Will, and enjoying the pleasure of consuming the fruit in its proper time enough of a motivation? Why does HaShem have to lure us with the promise of an increased crop in the fifth year, as a reward for keeping the mitzvah of orlah?

Rashi offers an invaluable insight that’s extremely relevant for our times: “Rebbi Akiva used to say, The Torah spoke toward the evil inclination, that a person should not say, ‘Now, for four years I am troubling myself (by caring for the tree) without any benefit. Therefore it says, ‘(HaShem) will increase its crop for you.’ I am HaShem Who makes this promise and am trustworthy to keep My promise.”

Despite our loftiest intentions, we still may question how HaShem can expect us to do something day in and day out, week after week, month after month, for four full years before benefiting from the complete harvest. The yetzer hara in all of us often focuses on the “here and now”, encouraging us to quit a project or commitment if we don’t taste the fruit of immediate results.

How many times have we given up a diet because we didn’t lose “10 pounds” during the first week, even though it’s an unhealthy and unrealistic goal? How often have we thrown in the towel after a few days of a new exercise regime because our inspiration wanes, or we’re not observing any sudden changes?

HaShem promises us that if we stick to a program that is sound for our mind and body, we will eventually receive a significant return on our investment - even more than we would have anticipated. Whether or not we see instantaneous results, we need to continue to apply ourselves on a daily basis to those actions that provide us optimal physical, emotional and spiritual health. We need to be confident that we are doing the right thing, even if it requires effort, and even if it lacks a perceived immediate gain.

We need to trust the process. We need to trust HaShem.

Good שabbat.
News, information and practical advice:

**Challenge of Change (Part 8)**

Recap: In parts 1-8, Yoni Lichtman’s best friend, Nachi Halberstam, has made resolutions for the new year to eat healthier and exercise more often. But Yoni is worried that Nachi isn’t making a good enough impression on the new boy in the class, Ahron. Yoni is glad that Aaron is interested in being his friend. Meanwhile, Yoni and Ahron’s friendship continues to develop, putting a wedge between Yoni and Nachi.

As the phone rang on the other end, I started feeling a little uneasy. How was I going to explain this one to Nachi? He was already a bit angry at me for ‘uninviting’ him to go biking with us that time in the park. Yikes...

"Hello?" It was Nachi.

"Hey, Nach, how’s it going?"

"Great! Guess what I just spent the whole past half hour doing? I made these really clear study sheets, with all sorts of possible test questions that Rebbi might give us. Just you wait, Yoni - we’re gonna ace this test!"

Uh oh.

"So, are you almost ready?" Nachi asked.

I paused. "Uh...Nachi..." I started.

Gosh! What should I do? The wheels in my brain churned furiously. On the one hand, if I studied with Nachi I’d pass this test with flying colors and we’d have one of our fun studying sessions, something we hadn’t had in a long time. On the other hand, I really wanted to go to Ahron’s house. And truth be told, I was scared of Ahron’s reaction if I backed out on him. He’d think I favor Nachi over him, and he thinks Nachi is weird. Actually, he’s starting to convince me that Nachi is weird. But Nachi isn’t weird - he’s just acting different lately, more mature. Oh, I don’t know - I’m so confused!

"Yoni? Are you there?"

"Uh huh," I mumbled, grinding my thoughts to a halt.

"So, when are you coming?" I could tell he was getting impatient.

"I guess, um, in twenty minutes?" I said haltingly.

"Sounds good. Okay, I’ll see you."

"Wait, Nachi? Um, I can only stay for about forty-five minutes, okay?" I was figuring that I’d go to Nachi for a little bit and then head on over to Ahron’s place.

"Forty-five minutes? I don’t think we’ll get everything done by then..."

Nachi was getting tired of all my procrastinating. "C’mon, Yoni! We already talked about this and you were fine with it! Just come over for a couple of hours and we’ll study well and relax after. Like we always do. Or is Ahron stopping you?" Nachi’s tone was getting dangerous. I rarely ever heard him like this. I started feeling trapped.

"Listen, Nach, I can only come for forty-five minutes. But...but next test we’ll spend more time. Okay?" I pleaded.

"Fine. I guess I’ll see you soon." He said begrudgingly.

I hung up with a horribly unsettled feeling in my stomach.

... to be continued

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**Heart Disease Markers Found in 3-Year Olds**

Recent research has shown that children as young as three-years-old have the same kind of body-tissue inflammation markers that adults with heart disease have. Carey Lumeng, a pediatrician who studies obesity and inflammation at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, says that’s especially important because of the high levels of obesity among American children.

Doctors "are very worried about this," and what these long-term obesity and inflammation will mean for the health of America’s children as they age. With over a third of children overweight according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "we’re talking about decades of inflammation," Lumeng says.

Normally, inflammation is healthy, a part of the body’s fight against infections. But when it happens in response to obesity, it can contribute to numerous ills, such as fatty liver disease, type 2 diabetes and atherosclerosis, says Anthony Ferrante, a medical professor at Columbia whose research focuses on obesity’s affects.

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**PESACH RECIPE CORNER**

**SWEET POTATO KUGEL**

**Ingredients:** 6 small sweet potatoes, peeled and grated, 3 apples, peeled and grated, 1 cup raisins, 1 cup ground almonds, 2 tsp cinnamon, 1 cup fruit juice or water

**Instructions:** Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Mix ingredients together. Press into large baking dish. Bake 45 minutes at 375 degrees until crisp on top.

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SWITCHH is a coalition of Jewish Day Schools committed to effecting real and lasting changes toward our approach to eating and nutrition. The Wellness Initiative uses a Torah educational approach combined with practical tools and the latest news and information to inform and empower parents, teachers and students about the obligation to properly care for our bodies by developing and enjoying healthy eating habits. SWITCHH is presented by Soveya, providing nutrition & wellness coaching, educational programs, teleconferences, seminars, and newsletters concerning health, nutrition, and obesity prevention.

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For more information, contact the Torah School of Greater Washington 301-962-8003 ext.2300 or wine@tsgw.org