
KOL KADIMA

The Voice of the Memphis Jewish High School

Vol.2 No. 1
Shoftim

17 Elul
Candlelighting 7:29p.m.

August 17, 2007
Havdalah 8:17 p.m.

Schedule of Events

September 3 Labor Day no school

September 10 Open House

SAVE THE DATE: Parent Open House

September 10th 7:00 P.M.

Reminders

We have Schnucks and Kroger Cards

We are set up for memorials and honorials either by calling the office 767-4818 or accessing the web mjhschool.org

Head of School

Our first week of school has been a positive one. The staff was thrilled to see familiar and new faces. This first week everyone was busy getting to know one another and familiarizing themselves with class expectations. Please keep in mind it is never too soon to ask for clarity or help. Please encourage your students to take the necessary steps to insure their successes.

This week at our Town Hall meeting, Mrs. Rebecca Pharr, our college guidance counselor did a workshop with our students on study and organizational skills. One of the tools she encouraged and demonstrated the use of is iCal a program that comes preloaded on the Mac. Students can use this visual plan to help them stay organized. The program has alarms that can be set to remind the students of tasks that need to be completed.

Beginning next week we will be offering Pizza on Wednesday and baked or fried chicken on Tuesday. You will need to have the lunch form and payment in no later than Monday to participate for the month of August and September. We will send the lunch form out monthly.

This week all of our students have been familiarizing themselves with the Harkness guidelines and expectations. The Harkness etiquette is posted in every classroom and used by all staff members. Each student received their own

personal copy of these guidelines and we have emailed a copy to our parent body. It seems fitting that we begin our new school year with the Parsha Shoftim, Judges, which addresses structure and order.

This week's Torah portion, Shoftim begins by commanding the Jewish people to immediately establish a court system that will rule over the cities when they settle in the land of Israel. The judges must be impartial and treat everyone fairly. The judges must be righteous and above taking bribes. The judges should not pervert justice. This is relevant today. How many years have we been addressing the issue of, what is true justice? Our world would be in total disarray and chaotic without guidelines and individuals to enforce these rules, without which, we would not live in a civilized society.

Each of us should ask, what is our role in insuring justice in this world? It is incumbent on each citizen to do his or her share. We must exercise our civic duty and make sure we place the right leaders in public office. Parents and teachers must be ethical and moral role models for their children and the students they teach. Teaching children to be honest and to accept consequences for their actions is a beginning. Basic respect for one another and civility must be a high priority. All members of society should be righteous, impartial, and not pervert justice.

Our community need not look far to see how important it is to maintain a civil society where each of us Jews and non-Jews are respected. We, the citizens of Memphis, we the Jews of Memphis, and we the citizens of the world were adversely affected recently by the murder of Ethan Jacobs. A senseless act of violence claimed his life, which has had a profound effect on this entire community. A lack of respect and sense of justice lead to the very worst. Deviations from social norms, however small they may seem can lead to the worst of results. Each time one practices and models a lack

of respect and deceit the societal norms otherwise demanded by society as a whole are eroded. Remember we are all responsible to set good examples for one another.

Shabbat Shalom

Adrian Weissman
Head of School

Parent Corner

Know the three W's: where your teen's going, who she's/he's with, and when she'll/he'll be home.

Parent Involvement is Vital to School Success

Ever wonder why there is so much emphasis on parent involvement today? The reason is simple. **Research shows parent involvement makes a big difference in students' school success.** One area where parent involvement can have a direct effect is **attendance.** Involved parents make sure their students are in school ready to learn.

Here are seven key findings from recent research about the relationship of parent involvement to children's school success:

1. **The family provides** the student's primary educational environment.
2. **Involving parents** in their teen's formal education improves student achievement.
3. **Parent involvement** is most effective when it is comprehensive, long-lasting, and well-planned.
4. **The benefits** of parent involvement are not confined to early childhood or the elementary level. There are strong positive effects from involving parents continuously throughout **high school.**
5. **Involving parents** in their own student's education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the school.
6. **Students from** low-income and single families have the most to gain when schools involve

parents. Parents do not have to be well-educated to help.

We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another. We must see how they interconnect with each other and with the world at large.

Dean of Jewish Studies

When I arrived in the USA about a year ago, I learned a new interpretation to the word 'Success' which I still did not find in any professional dictionary. Someone **successful** is someone who makes a lot of money and gains different powerful positions in his community or his society. I even remember the following remark from a student about a relative: "He is a carpenter, **but** he is very successful".

Think for a moment of how our modern lives are manipulated to always try and be successful like someone else. Do the role models of our modern society have anything successful about them besides their material possessions? Are we aware of what turns them into heroes, leaders and someone we all want to be like one day?

I am not here to answer this question, but I just want to quote the Torah's requirements of the elected **king of Israel**, the nation's leader and role model, which appear in this week's Parasha. It may give you something to think about over Shabbat.

(Deuteronomy Chapter 17)

15 *Be sure to set as king over yourself one of your own people*

16 *Only he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses...*

17 *Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.*

20 *that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel.*

Shabbat Shalom,

Avi Gellman

Dean of General Studies

Here we are at the beginning of our second year, a confirmation that what we are doing we do well, and that the Jewish community in Memphis wants us to keep doing it. And it is a real pleasure to be part of this altruistic endeavor: the education of our next generation. What higher calling could there be? We put such stock in their promise and their potential that we spend hours—days in fact—planning what we will teach, how we will teach it, and how all of it dovetails with the formal requirements of states, reviewing agencies, parents' expectations.... A tall order, but we believe in what we do.

Beginnings. For the kids, this is the start of another school year. For the freshmen, a new school, a new setting, new friends. For our veteran sophomores, a reunion, familiar faces, sliding comfortably into the old routine—of course, always with the best of intentions to do much better this time. Already we are seeing that this bright-eyed crop of kids has set their sights high: they are even more cooperative, even more willing, more courteous, more focused than we had expected. What a pleasant prospect it is to enter a new year with this lovely bunch!

And what is life but a series of preludes? I said this before, and I think it is right to say it again. All of life is beginnings. We are made new by circumstances, by the progression of life's challenges, by the simple fact that the closing of one episode of our lives leads to the opening of the new and untried. We enter into the new, unknown territory with some trepidation—fear, anxiety, excitement. We are regularly, throughout our lives, on into old age, thrust into novel roles and unfamiliar environments, until one would think that the simple certainty that nothing lasts, that all is change, would prepare us to walk confidently on the slippery surface of

the here and now. But we never really get used to the changeableness of experience. Even now

I feel the same nervous flutter I felt as a child in school, the same thing the kids must feel on meeting new friends and teachers, sounding out the new responsibilities and expectations, figuring out how to swim in this new stream. At least *I hope* they feel some nervousness. It's a warning to step carefully and a sign they are alive. It's why we travel to new places, take on new responsibilities when we could just go on and on in the same old way, like sleepwalkers. Change is what life is all about.

Yes, if I had one piece of advice for the children entering into my care—and into this wonderful caring place—I would tell them to embrace the beginnings, the feeling of uncertainty, of possibilities and opportunity, to embrace life.

What you can do, or dream
you can do begin it;
Boldness has genius and magic
in it.

—Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe

So welcome to academic year 2007-2008!
Welcome back to Memphis Jewish High
School!