

Maimonides Community

ויקהל
פקודי

Community Newsletter of the Maimonides Hebrew Day School of the Capital District
404 Partridge Street Albany NY 12208 (518) 453-9363/3434 www.maimonidesschool.org
produced by Rabbi Mendel Rubin & students in the TNT (Torah 'n Technology) Program
Maimonides is accredited by the NYS Board of Regents & is a beneficiary of UJF-NENY maimonidesschool@gmail.com

Candle-Lighting:
6:50
Shabbat Ends:
7:51

SCHOOL IS OUT, BUT VERY ON!

Maimonides School closed on Monday - as the Albany school district closed (before learning of a confirmed case in our school community - see below). We quickly (quite remarkably!) transitioned to a robust remote learning program, thanks to our teachers, students and families. More on this remote/distance/online learning inside this MC Newsletter. Our kids have learned very nicely this week from home.



MAIMONIDES
404 Partridge Street
Albany NY 12208

LOCAL CORONA EXPOSURE

Emails were sent midweek from Morah Rochel to Maimonides school families and from R' Ruvain Kudan to Shomray Torah community to notify people that they may have been exposed to someone not showing symptoms at the time who was later confirmed (mid this week) to have the coronavirus. We heard today that a Purim guest here has now also tested positive. As per CDC it is recommended those who were exposed self-quarantine at home for 14 days from the date of their last Shomray Torah or Maimonides visit (anytime March 9-15), or 72 hours after all illness symptoms (if any) subside, whichever is longer. If you have more questions about this exposure (and there are most likely other local exposures as well) please contact Morah Rochel, Michael Caras and R' Ruvain Kudan. Also please note that this is widespread in Jewish communities of New Rochelle, Teaneck & especially Brooklyn (and elsewhere) so if we were exposed to anyone coming from those areas many health professionals from those areas consider that to be a form of (secondary) exposure as well. Some other people in multiple overlapping circles in and out of our local Jewish community now say they are showing mild symptoms (for many milder symptoms will be the extent of it). Therefore "Stay at Home" and "Social-Distancing" is all the more highly recommended for almost all people (most certainly older people and those with compromised immunity), to help "flatten the curve" and slow the spread of this highly contagious virus. May everyone be well!

A SPECIAL SALUTE

To health care workers, food providers, utilities and others who remain at work to provide necessities we all rely & depend on!

CORONAVIRUS' JEWISH ONLINE

There's so much material online in the Jewish internet about the Coronavirus, ranging from serious medical concerns to clever humorous comic relief, lots of meaningful inspiration and opportunities for study and engagement. Like our school's transition to online for our students, many classes and programs have gone virtual with people & communities connecting in many different ways. It's beyond the scope of the MC newsletter to list all these resources and opportunities, but if people want to save good memes, & start sending links and lists to mhdsnews@gmail.com perhaps we can explore that if/as this situation continues.

THE SPECIAL & HARD SHABBAT

This weekend is rare & unique Shabbat as a great many Jews from all walks of life, all around the world will be home - and staying home - for Shabbat with their families. It presents a special opportunity for more of us to keep Shabbat in some way and to do things to make it special, but can also be more of a challenge (especially for Shabbat observant and for those who are alone) to enjoy a long Shabbat day without technology that has been connecting us through this ordeal. Please be sure to connect with people before and after Shabbat so that all feel connected. It is notable that this week's Parsha opens with gathering of the Jewish people and the laws of Shabbat.

CUOMO: ALL QUARANTINE!

As we went to "print" (publish) Gov Cuomo announced all "non-essential" workers: STAY HOME! Act as if we are all under quarantine. This makes the specifics in the column on left mostly moot at this point. Please all stay home unless absolutely necessary!

*This MC Newsletter is
dedicated in memory of*

Moshe Losice

Yartzeit this Shabbos, Adar 25

*R' Moshe was always an earnest
advocate in heartfelt prayer & Teshuvah
especially in times of need. May he be a
good advocate in heaven for the Albany
Jewish Community and our people
everywhere at this challenging time.*

WHY A SHIUR ON MINYAN?

Rabbi Rubin offered a conference call shiur for several days this week on the Talmudic background on the issue of whether a minor can be counted in a Minyan. Why this topic? Since we can't pray together in a Minyan these days (CBAJ and Shomray Torah among most Shuls across the USA are closed for social-distancing and to flatten the curve) learning about a Minyan connects us with that.

MANY THANKS!

Over a weekend our school switched to remote learning and we're now ending our first week of this new system. While tweaks need to be made, it worked much better and more robust than expected and that's thanks to all of our teachers (both Jewish and General Studies), our students of all ages, the parents and families and the technology! who make all this work with eagerness, resilience and flexibility. 6th grade and up do all learning online using Google Classroom; younger grades have a mix of packets and books with additional online resources and teacher interactions.

LIVE MODERN TALMUD CASE

7th grade Talmud was learning this week about expected vs. unexpected damages, that owners only pay half-damages if regular animals get violent unexpectedly. Then, on Thursday morning, one student logged onto Google Classroom with this very unexpected story: His family moved to a more rural area and got some chickens, but on Wednesday night the neighbor's dog came over and killed 2 of their chickens! So this became a great study question: Was this type of damage



something the dog's owner should have anticipated and protected against or not? And what degree of protection would be considered adequate?

THE DOG IN TALMUD CLASS

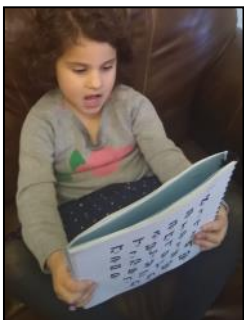
Learning at home over Google Classroom's "Meet" video feature can facilitate some interesting scenarios such as a dog named Jackson joining our Talmud class atop the lap of one of the students. This was cause to retell the story of when some rowdy boys brought a stray dog into Rabbi Rubin's class in 1973 Brooklyn and how he handled that.

BIOLOGY EXPERIMENT CONT.



Last week before all this went down, Ms. Brown's 6/7 biology students started an experiment to see if the size of the container influences the size of the plant. But then school closed (physically) so she took the plants

home and students can peak into their progress via video in Google Classroom.



THEIR "SEGOL" BOOKS

Kindergarteners march on with their Hebrew reading practice - this week they started a new booklet all focused on "Segol" the vowel with the 3 dots in a triangular shape under a letter. It seems like a comfy couch is a preferred study spot for both these students who sent in pictures. They are also working on illustrating their Haggadah booklets, thanks teachers for having all this material ready in time!

NET IONIC EQUATIONS

HS Chemistry is learning to focus on (& write the equation for) the parts of compounds that are involved in the reaction, which net ionic equations reflect, not parts of the compound unaffected by the reaction or change. We are certainly experiencing a lot of change in our lives right now!



PARENTS MAKE IT WORK

While we are impressed with our students independence and responsibility with our school's remote learning (and as Ms. Ramsay also proudly notes: students helping each other online!) it could not happen without parents support and involvement, especially at the younger grade levels. This can be extra challenging for parents working from home but everyone is working to make it work well.

BETTER TOGETHER ESSAYS

Attention our middle school students: These essays are due March 26th (or at latest before Pesach) and all who enter get a \$20 gift card! You can write about your visits with seniors, bringing them Challah or soup, singing for them and with them, putting up Mezuzot on their doors or putting on Tefillin, hearing their stories and sharing yours. It can be lessons learned from seniors, it can be about aging or your own intergenerational experiences outside school etc. It has to be based on truth and not fiction, it can be within our school's Better Together program or outside of it, but it can't be about family members. Length is 2-4 pages, 2.0 line spacing, 1 inch margins, 12 point font. Parents (and teachers) can help you but it must be mostly students' own work.



SEPARATION OF OLD & YOUNG

One of Israel's key findings in Coronavirus outbreak is how young people can often be carriers with milder symptoms and should be kept separate from the older generation much more susceptible to this virus and can be more dangerous for them. Intergenerational activities & connections are a big deal at Maimonides through the Better Together program so we hope this too shall pass when the virus does! In the meantime it is best for all who can to be self-quarantined, "Shelter in Place" or just good ol' "Stay at Home" until health officials gives further notice.

FAMILIES AT HOME

We asked TNT students to share remotely of what their families are doing at home during this time (aside for all their schoolwork, of course):

- It is nice during the day but we had chilly nights so we enjoyed firepits, roasting stuff.
- Cleaning up! Both for Pesach and in general. Organizing clothes, pantries, papers...
- Virtual Tours! Famous buildings, museums, zoos with live webcams.
- A few families ordered and built trampolines in their backyards. One made a Zip-Line. You have to know how to make that safely.
- Taking walks is OK (even when quarantined) and very recommended as long you keep distance from others outside your household. We are lucky in Albany, many people in Brooklyn don't have this same luxury.
- Zoom or Hangouts online get-togethers with family and friends in other places or even down the block - as everyone is home!
- Getting the yard or garden ready for Spring.
- We are enjoying the DDR (electronic dance) won at the school auction a few years ago.
- Online art classes. Baking shows. Learning some new skills. Listening to music.
- Learning how to ride a bike. Riding bikes and scooters and skateboards.
- Puzzles! Especially the big ones you leave out on the table and keep coming back to!
- Star-gazing! As UAlbany shut many of its lights it is easier for those nearby to see stars in the night sky on a clear night.
- Baking cookies and pancakes & other treats.
- Making all kinds of things with playdough.
- Playing outside: driveway basketball,
- Using up food from freezers, making creative recipes using ingredients already in the house.
- We've been playing a lot of cards (poker, cribbage, hearts, Texas Hold 'Em) and watching some movies.
-



THE GREAT DEPRESSION

No, this isn't current events (we hope!) this is Ms. Ramsay's HS history class exploring the roots of the Great Depression within the Roaring 20's. But there are always lessons to be learned, and in some ways history does repeat itself.

READ & WRITE SCREENPLAYS

6/7 English class with Ms. Tang first read screenplays (they read "Toy Story") and are now writing their own using a similar template and format.

JUDAH AND TAMAR

Some schools skip this, not Maimonides! 4th graders just finished this complicated story using audio from Morah Dini, Chumashim and peer study - all from home!

PRIMARY SOURCES

5th grade is learning about how history is based on primary sources so they were each assigned to keep a 14-day journal to record their Coronavirus Covid-19 experiences.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

6th grade history is learning about ancient Greece and Alexander the Great and all the big changes happening on a global scale at that time. Lots of global change now, too!



DOING FOR OUR PARENTS

5th grade Chumash learned this week about Yaakov explaining to Yosef what he did for his wife (Yosef's mother) Rochel, and how it was the best he could do given the circumstances. Interesting how nowadays many people are trying to do things for their parents but it has to be in ways that don't feel so great because of the distancing circumstances and a more serious possible risk to the older generation.



SEEDLESS PLANTS

Mosses, ferns, liverworts and horsetails are plants that reproduce not using seeds but spores. 6/7 grade science is learning about this in science class with Ms. Brown.

ON BEING "ALONE" & MORE

Rabbi Mendel and the HS Girls discussed several Jewish texts on solitude and loneliness including a new twist on a beautiful quote by R' Shamshon Ostroplier: "Solitude is best among people" and how that may apply and be understood in the current situation. They also analyzed 3 questions about a HaYomYom quote about the Alter Rebbe and Rebbes and Chassidim not being alone. Another Corona-related text they explored (not lonely-related) was the dramatic contrast between Talmudic and Chassidic interpretations of "Thought is Potent or Effective" (Sanhedrin 26b vs. opening of Lekutei Dibburim) why both interpretations (as different as they are) are relevant today.



HELPING COOK

One big change of having kids home is that many more are helping cook suppers and cook for Shabbos. Some kids are making their own lunches for a change. Some families are coming up with creative recipes based on what they have!



MOON COOKIE ARRANGEMENT

This Shabbos we read the seasonal bonus reading (last of 4) called "HaChodesh" which tells us the Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh and the Jewish calendar. One Kindergarten students made the cycles of the moon using a few mini-Oreo-style cookies. Like the moon, we wax and wane, hopefully this current darkness will wane and it will usher in a beautiful new light.



HAGGADAH ILLUSTRATION

Kindergarten sent home the Haggadah pages this year so students can still make their own Haggadahs. Try to keep them Chametz-free so they can be used at the Seder. Each page has nice visuals and good discussion points so our students can be well-prepared for Pesach.



MYSTERY OF WOODEN SPOON

You know that wooden spoon in every Bedikat Chametz set? Why is it there? What role does it really play? Rabbi Rubin's next conference call shiur will focus on the sources, reasons and customs behind it. Call/text Rabbi Rubin 518-423-4103 or email RRAlbany@gmail.com to get the conference call info and times.

ROCKWOOD SHLOSHIM

This week marked the Shloshim (30 days since the passing) of Adrienne Rockwood, obm. We were able to transfer old technology in time to get the family the video of our school's interview with her in the 2005 "Partridge Street Oral History Project" a wonderful treasured memory. Once we get back to things this Oral History is something our school may revisit as recording memory is an incredible gift for both family and community.

PERSONAL FINANCE

This week's 12th grade Personal Finance subject is about lending and loans.

CHANGE OF DYNASTY

Jehu takes over Ahab in Navi class this week and the changes that happened with the change of government. Another theme of big change that reflects our world today.

HANDWASHING

Handwashing! It's a big deal now and HS Halacha class has been learning about the laws of handwashing in Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law).



WOMENS CONTRIBUTIONS

This week's Parshiot (double-header) speaks about Mishkan contribution and construction and HS Girls learned about women's unique contributions in both the mirrors for the Kiyor washbasin (again handwashing!) and the uniquely spun and woven goat-wool and the dyed sheep's wool. And how all of this is a lesson for women today!

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

Morah Rivi's 6/7 Ivrit students had to fill in missing parts of sentences to transform the past into future or future into present etc. Right now we are living in a strange limbo between past and future, but even now must make the most of the present and not simply see it as limbo or a waiting period.

PROVING TRIANGLES

HS Geometry is learning about proving how triangles are similar based on formulas.

SIGHT WORDS

Kindergarten are practicing their sight words, the more reading they do at home it supports the things they are learning. Many resources online for them to practice their words! Mrs. Hoffman just emailed home today a set of Spring sheets, that's a bright sign in a worrisome time!

EXTRA TEHILLIM - PSALMS

It is customary to say extra (or the whole Tehillim) on Shabbos Mevorchim (this week) and given the situation and those who need a recovery it is a very good time to say it.

FARBRENGEN SAT NIGHT

R' Michoel Caras is an arranging for a Motzai Shabbos Mevorchim farbrengen this Sat Night. Stay tuned for video conference link or call in numbers. And a Zoom or Hangouts Channel for community coming this week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

at Maimonides and in the Community

Online Resources

As we (nearly) all stay-at-home, practice social-distancing, no congregating there are no upcoming communal events (for now!, may they return speedily!) In the meantime we'll substitute with some online resources for kids and families to enjoy at home (in addition to school-work, of course). This is a partial list, in formation, in random order, please email us mhdsnews@gmail.com so we can add to it next week for everyone's benefit:

Some of these are free all the time, some of these listed below usually have a paywall or subscription but are now free due as a courtesy.

Obviously all the links below should be with parental guidance and with respect for family values and style. They have not been individually vetted, the content may vary greatly within each.

Google's Art & Culture - virtual tours of many famous museums and buildings. Always free.
Scholastic Learn at Home - username: Learning20 Password: Clifford.
GetEpic.com Code: yjc6476 access to thousands of books, e-books and videos.
Zoos & Aquariums - many now offering free live cam views (some on all the time, some at specific times) including the Cincinnati Zoo, the San Diego Zoo, Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Georgia Aquarium, and via Explore.org.
Mo Willems Lunch Doodles - learn to draw with this kids book author & illustrator weekdays 1pm via the Kennedy Center. Good for little ones, too.
Otzar HaChochma with its vast scholarly online library of Jewish texts now has free access - it's usually expensive to use.
NYPL.org has 300K e-books and audio-books to download for free.
UnclePinchey.com offers (now free) Small Wonder Puppet Theater shows to watch.
TorahTots.com has music videos, some learning
Yeshiva.net has adult learning & lectures and now kids stories, too.
torahgames.org free games to help kids learn!
torahlive.com/schools/ use code: TORAH to access free vieos, games, and more!
jewishbedtimestories.com/stories
Chabad.org is an always free and always a loaded mega resource with articles, text learning, many levels of Torah, multimedia, how-to etc.
TorahPalace.com - a local resource, not only free but you can also win some prizes!
Kids.NationalGeographic.com has animal

ZOOM (OR HANGOUT) CHANNEL FOR COMMUNITY...

While our students are learning wonderfully online, we'd like to start doing something similar for community, at set times and same link each day, with varied speakers, discussions, on topics like Pesach and the Hagagdah and overall inspiration during this challenging time. Stay tuned for announcements and details on this in the early week ahead.

videos, brain boosters and all kinds of learning.
Seussville.com Seuss-ian activities and learning.
Bit.ly/freemakerstations has 3 weeks of maker-station activities using household everyday items.
KhanAcademy has lessons and tutorials for all ages: toddler through High School.
CBAJ on Facebook has Rabbi Feldman doing live classes and pre-Shabbat programs etc.
Vivify has STEM resources.
ABCYA is a popular primary education site.

Wishing all of our readers and the entire community a happy, healthy, Good Shabbos and week ahead!

For next week's MC:

- Send us reports and pictures of your home learning and activities.
- More useful online educational and entertainment resources.
- Lists, links and Memes and messages of meaningful inspiration, study and learning, and humor for this time.
- Tips for family time, Pesach cleaning, indoor and outdoor activities.
- How your Shabbos went this week.

Email to: mhdsnews@gmail.com

KOSHER PRICE CHOPPER

Price Chopper is open and has a lot of Kosher (and Kosher for Passover product) but this is not the year to leave it to last minute. Plans should be made to minimize trips and shop efficiently as we are only supposed to leave the house as needed.

Your Support is Appreciated

While the Maimonides building and physical school is closed, school is still very on and working in a remote virtual way. Teachers still have to be paid. While this is a difficult time for many, those who can contribute online (we are not checking the mail as regularly now) are very much appreciated. You help ensure continuity in a time of crisis, luminous learning in a time of darkness, and assured confidence in a time of uncertainty. **THANK YOU!**

[tinyurl.com/maimonidesschool](https://www.maimonidesschool.org/donate)
<https://www.maimonidesschool.org/donate>

RE: "SOCIAL-DISTANCING"

Every hand we don't shake must become a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid, must become a verbal expression of warmth & concern. Every inch we physically place between us, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise.

(widely shared over the Jewish internet last week).

A NOTE ABOUT THE ANNUAL SCHOOL DINNER

Many schools and communities around the country are rethinking their annual dinners and gala events in light of the Coronavirus (may it speedily pass!). The school is now also exploring other not in-person dinner options for this year. Our school's funding needs and communal support are as necessary as ever (or even more so) so we hope we can count on our parents, friends, community and alumni to support this year's alternate dinner fundraiser.



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Founded in 1980, Maimonides is chartered by the NYS Board of Regents and is a JF-NENY Beneficiary "A Beautiful Blend: Torah & Worldly Experience!"

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