

The Stream

Bringing news to the
Volume 4



online community
issue 1



at left, Freshmen (from left to right) Penina Stewart, Talia Weiss and Deborah Giller visit their new lockers; at right, Mrs. Serfaty visits a science class to talk about our research program, Science Chair Mrs. Gila Stein is at the far right



BACK to SCHOOL



above, Ms. Elana Flaumenhaft meets her Senior Honors Tanakh class; at bottom left, Mrs. Abbie Rabin, Director of College Guidance, gets ready for this year's college application process; at right, Talya Adler '10 smiles in anticipation of enjoying her Ma'ayanot themed donut, an opening day treat to all our students





Parshat Nitzavim/Vayelach
A D'var Torah by Ms. Shira Billet

This week's Torah reading presents a hopeful and optimistic picture of the possibilities of the future at a moment of beginning and transition. The Israelites stand at the cusp of a new life in the land of Israel. Their tried and true leader is soon to pass on, and he smoothly transfers the torch of leadership to his loyal disciple. The entire nation stands together in seemingly perfect equality and representation, across socioeconomic lines, citizenship lines, and gender lines: "You stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God – your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel, your children, your wives, even the stranger within the camp, from the woodchopper to the water drawer – to enter into the covenant of the Lord your God..." (Deut. 29:9-11).

The nation has been told, and is now reminded, of wonderful and fearsome things that might happen in the future – the possibility of terrible curses in the case of infractions, and the possibility of unlimited blessing for obedience. They are told that even when they enter a wayward path in the future, there will always be the possibility of return to the idyllic life that is promised them. They are strongly encouraged not to be afraid or despair, because the good of the future is truly attainable:

Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. It is not in the heavens, that you should say, "Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us that we may observe it?" No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart to observe it (Deut. 30:11-14).

In a true affirmation of the simplicity and equality of this covenantal moment, the people are told that the Torah is inside of each and every one of them; the possibility of repentance (which this passage is really about, according to most commentators) is within the heart of each and every one of them. As Seforno says, they will need no prophet to find it for them, nor will they need to send letters to a great rabbi who lives overseas to explain to them what to do. The choice, Moshe says, is theirs: "See, I set before you this day life and prosperity, death and adversity... Choose life... by loving the Lord your God, heeding His commands, and holding fast to Him (Deut. 30:15; 19-20).

But is it really as simple as Moshe makes it sound? Is the Torah really inside of each of us in a way that is accessible to and understandable by us? Is it really so easy to choose the correct path? Are the answers as clear cut as the choice between life and death seems to be? It's interesting to consider how Hazal – centuries later – came to understand the idea that the Torah is "not in heaven." In the famous story of the Oven of Akhnai (*Bava Metzia* 59a-b), this phrase is used to resolve a complicated *halakhic* case about whether or not a particular type of oven is pure. Clearly, it was not very easy at all to figure out the "right" answer, because the majority of the rabbis actually incorrectly interpreted the *halakhic* status of the oven. Only the lone Rabbi Eliezer understood the correct answer, as evidenced by the supernatural miracles that occurred in support of his position, as well as the *bat kol* (divine voice) that declared his correctness. "It is not in heaven" was marshaled by Rabbi Yehoshua, the leader of the majority of the rabbis, to say that actually,

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Parshat Nitzavim/Vayelach (continued) A D'var Torah by Ms. Shira Billet

(Continued from page 2)

interpretation of the Torah is extremely complicated; it's not simply about a choice between correct and incorrect, which is most often difficult to discern. "It is not in heaven" does not mean the correct answer is inside of us and easily accessible; rather, it means that in order to figure out what to do in complicated cases (as many cases in life are) we need to look to what the majority of the rabbis say – we cannot look to heaven or heavenly voices to give us the answers.

Thus, what in the Torah seems to be about the simplicity of the interpretation of Torah – the easily accessible knowledge of how to repent and lead a correct way of life – becomes, for Hazal, a statement about how we need to act in light of the fact that interpretation is actually extremely complicated and difficult. I think Moshe understood that the picture he presented – at the cusp of a new future for the Israelites – did not reflect the reality of how complicated life is and how difficult it is to know the right thing to do. *Parashat Vayelech* concludes as Moshe is about to tell a new version of the nation's future – a much more complex and painful version – this time in the form of a *shirah*, a poem. The words of the poem, which we do not read until *Parashat Ha'azinu*, are difficult to understand. And, like all poetry, they are subject to multiple meanings, many different possibilities of interpretation. This version of the nation's future is not black and white. Choices are not simple. The correct interpretation is not at all obvious.

But why would Moshe first represent the future in a narrative of simplicity, and only then complicate it? As we now enter our own new beginning – the beginning of the school year here at Ma'ayanot – I would like to think about the importance of simplicity that leads to complexity. On the first day of classes, there is a clean slate. Like the Israelites at the covenant, everyone is equal. Nobody has a better or worse grade. Nobody has fallen behind in the homework, nor has anyone gained extra credit. The transfer of leadership from last year's teachers to this year's teachers is smooth, and full of endless possibility. We tell ourselves: We can choose what this year will look like for ourselves. It is simple. It is within us to access the knowledge of how to make good choices for the new year. But then, beginning on day two, things change. Judgments are formed, people fall behind in their work. Unexpected life events happen that force us to make difficult choices. And we find that life is much more like a poem than it is like a simple choice between two paths. And yet, it is always helpful to look back at the hope and beauty of the moment of a beginning to remind us of what we dreamed then – and to help us continue to strive toward those goals.

It is my prayer and hope for all of us this year that we find ways to read the poetry of life that are the most meaningful, the most successful, the most generous to those around us. Let us, when faced with difficult choices, choose the path filled with the most love and kindness and *chesed*. Best wishes for a wonderful school year!

Shabbat shalom,



Ms. Shira Billet, English Department

Charter School Moves Our, Ma'ayanot Moves Up!

It's a commonly held misconception that, during summer vacation, school buildings stand shuttered and unoccupied. Here at Ma'ayanot, some exciting changes were taking place.

The Teaneck Charter School, which had occupied space on the second floor and in trailers outside



One of our new classrooms, in the process of being set up

the MPR, moved across town into a new home of its own. This opened the door, both literally and figuratively, for Ma'ayanot to expand. Among other changes, a conference room was created for our teachers and a new office area was provided for Mrs. Rivka Kahan and the admissions committee.

One addition that will certainly prove to be popular with our students is the newly created Fitness Room. According to **"Coach" Eileen Schwartz, Athletic Director**, this room will provide what is

called "circuit training" - weight stations that each provide a workout for a different part of the body. The equipment for this room was donated by a gym in New York City, thanks to the effort of **Mrs. Michelle Ritholtz, Mom of Annie Ritholtz '11**. On "Coach" Schwartz's "wish list" for the future is the addition of cardio workout equipment as well.

The Fitness Room will be available to student teams and Phys Ed classes under the supervision of a member of the Phys Ed Department.

Want to come out and cheer on our teams? Now you can do so with spirit, style and comfort thanks to the addition of



Ms. Laura Schuette, our new Phys Ed teacher and Assistant Athletic Director, demonstrates an "abs toning" routine

new bleacher seating in our gym, donated in part by **the Arussy Family**.



Feel like dining alfresco? Shani Lewitter '11, Jordana Blum '12 and Shifra Arnheim '12 try out our new picnic table

Ma'ayanoters Ba'Aretz

-From our "Foreign Correspondent," **Mrs. Andrea Winkler** of our Office Staff, who is completing a sabbatical in Israel:

On Thursday night, September 3, 15 Elul, Rabbi Winkler and I were privileged to meet with some of our Ma'ayanot graduates who are currently attending *Midreshet HaRova* and spend an enjoyable evening learning with them before the *Yamim Noraim*. Rabbi Winkler was asked to deliver the opening *shiur* to the women at *Midreshet HaRova* in the Old City of Jerusalem. The girls, who had arrived a week earlier listened attentively to a class focusing upon appreciating the opportunities that God presents us... as a way of doing *Tshuva*. Rabbi Winkler emphasized the importance of the girls' coming year in Israel and, using the text of *Sefer Yehoshua*, explained how we are all responsible for creating an atmosphere conducive to the study of Torah and *gemillat chasidim*.



We know that our girls will achieve the goals they have set for themselves while spending a meaningful and fun filled year living, learning and exploring *the simtaot* (alleyways) of Jerusalem's Old City and all of *Eretz Yisrael*. We wish everyone a *Ketiva V'chatima Tova*, a *Shana Tova U'metukah*, a very healthy year, and I look forward to greeting you back in Ma'ayanot after *Sukkot!*

from left to right are **Carly Davis '09**, **Zahava Hoffman '09**, **Sara Schild '09**, **Mrs. Andrea Winkler** and **Nikki Press '09**



Ma'ayanot students spending the summer in Israel took time out of their busy days to participate in a new Israeli tradition-welcoming *Nefesh b'Nefesh* flights. From left to right are **Tamar Berger '11**, and **Allison Alt '11**, with other members of their "welcoming committee," who greeted the new *olim* when they arrived on August 4, 2009. Other Ma'ayanoters were in attendance, but not in the photo.

Flying Camels and Rollerblading?



You might think that flying camels appear in our "Mythology" curriculum, but you would be wrong. Similarly, you could conjecture that rollerblading is a Phys Ed elective, or perhaps part of a physics demonstration, but you would be wrong again. In reality, **Mrs. Tova Warburg Sinensky**, a member of our *Talmud* Faculty, wrote an article entitled "Flying Camels and Rollerblading: Active Learning in Teaching Talmud" for *Jewish Educational Leadership*, the Lookstein Center's journal on Jewish education, Volume 7:3, Summer, 2009. The article is based on a lesson that Mrs. Sinensky uses in her tenth grade *Gemara* classes. Want to find out more? Ask your daughter, if she was in Mrs. Sinensky's class!

Back to School for Our Teachers!

Summer always seems too short, even this year when Labor Day was the latest date possible, September 7, effectively making summer vacation one week longer than it is most years.

That said, Ma'ayanot's teachers, administrators and staff all assembled on Thursday, September 3 for a series of meetings and programs to "kick off" the new academic year and to get ready for the first day of school for students, Tuesday, September 8.

Everyone had a chance to say hello and catch up on one another's summer activities over coffee and cake in the MPR. The formal program began with a series of presentations: **Mrs. Rookie Billet**, our Principal, offered words of welcome and set a tone of redirecting ourselves to student growth and professional standards; **Mrs. Rachel Feldman**, Administrator, went over some procedural details; **Mrs. Ruth Wang Birnbaum**, Associate Principal, spoke about academics; **Mrs. Evelyn Gross**,

Associate Principal, gave an overview of guidance procedures and staffing; **Ms. Elana Flaumenhaft** and **Mrs. Nina Bieler** spoke about student programming, **Mrs. Orly Nadler** introduced the educational technology program and email; an overview of our dress code policy was given by **Mrs. Dena Knoll**, **Mrs. Lynne Kraft**, **Mrs. Shayna Goldberg** and **Mrs. Suzanne Cohen**; **Mrs. Tamar Appel** introduced our new *Tikvah* program and **Mrs. Enid Goldberg** spoke about what our Writing Center can offer.

This series of presentations was followed by an in-service workshop, "Formative Assessment: Its Role in Teaching Students to Think and perform Like Experts" which was led by **Mrs. Dena Knoll** and **Mrs. Tova Warburg Sinensky**. Formative assessment is a four step process in which the assessment is used to enhance student learning. In this workshop, examples were taken from *Gemara*, English and Chemistry, but the philosophy and strategies are applicable to any subject area.



Teachers in both Judaic and secular studies were encouraged to become involved in our religious enhancement activities, such as "Monday Morning *Mussar*," *Parsha* Club, *Tefilla* Club and Thursday evening *Mishmar*.

After lunch, each department met as a group, followed by *Mehanechet* meetings and a *Tikvah* faculty meeting for those teachers who are involved.

Little do our students know how hard their teachers and administrators work to plan for a successful and exciting year!

Ma'ayanot Students Selected as Tikvah High School Scholars

Ma'ayanot is proud to announce that we are among the seven schools in the *Tikvah* High School Scholars Program. Students who have been selected as **Tikvah High School Scholars** will have the opportunity to participate in a leadership program that offers advanced, inter-disciplinary coursework in Judaic Studies and liberal arts. Out of sixteen applicants, six of our Seniors were selected: **Aliza Gottlieb, Michal Greenspan, Rachel Friedman, Talia Friedman, Adena Kleiner** and **Rikki Novetsky**.

Applicants to the *Tikvah* Program had to go through a rigorous selection process in which they were asked to submit three essays on topics relating to Jewish philosophy and Jewish communal life, previous writing samples, their transcript and a personal interview.

The text-based program will be based on six mini-courses, exploring topics such as Foundations of Society, Science and Judaism and Comparative Law and will be explored from the Jewish perspective. **Mrs. Tamar Appel**, History Chair, is the Faculty Advisor, and Ma'ayanot faculty members who will participate are **Rabbi Donny Besser, Ms. Nina Bieler, Ms. Shira Billet, Mrs. Enid Goldberg, Mrs. Leah Herzog, Mrs. Rivka Kahan, Ms. Samantha Kur, Mrs. Ariella Rosenbaum, Mrs. Esther Slomnicki, Mrs. Gila Stein** and **Ms. Devorah Wolf**. Outside experts will be brought in to participate in some of the sessions. All *Tikvah* students from the seven participating schools - Ma'ayanot, SAR, The Frisch School, Ramaz, MTA, Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy (Silver Spring, MD), and Gann Academy (Waltham, MA) - will attend a series of 3-4 day retreats that will culminate in a final project that will, according to *Tikvah literature*, "explore an enduring Human question from a Jewish perspective."



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE WALK

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2009

AT VOTEE PARK IN TEANECK

1 PM - REGISTRATION, 1:30 PM - WALK

2:30 PM - FRIENDSHIP FAIR

AND UNCLE MOISHY CONCERT

AT MA'AYANOT

1650 PALISADE AVENUE

*WALKERS, VOLUNTEERS AND

DONATIONS WELCOME!

New Faculty Faces

This year, we are pleased to welcome six new additions to our faculty. Students should not think that they are the only ones to accrue homework assignments; our new additions were given the "assignment" to share a bit about themselves for "The Stream."

Tammy Rubin Abramowitz reports, " Soy la nueva profesora de español." Mrs. Abramowitz will be teaching Spanish I and II. She has a BA in Spanish Literature from Washington University and an MA in Jewish Education from JTS. She has lived and worked in several Latin American Countries. Working for the US government, she established an International Development office in Costa Rica. Mrs. Abramowitz has taught since high school and has taught all grades including at the University level (as Adjunct Professor at Montclair State University). She taught at Ma'ayanot last year as a "sub" and is thrilled to be back with the Ma'ayanot students and faculty. She teaches her class all in Spanish and uses drama to convey new subjects.



Our new Science Research Coordinator, **Mrs. Phyllis Serfaty**, shares the following: "I am very pleased to be a part of the Ma'ayanot faculty this year. I have been a Science Research Advisor for many years and have sponsored many students who have won both national and international science competitions.

I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, and did my undergraduate degree at Washington University where I met my husband at a Hillel function. We have lived in New York City for 41 years. My children attended Yeshivat Ramaz. I also hold masters degrees in Developmental Embryology from Hunter College and Supervisory Education from Baruch College. I have 5 grandchildren, 4 boys and 1 girl. Three of my grandchildren live in Petach Tikva, Israel. My major hobbies are crafts – knitting, crocheting, sewing. As a young woman I made all my own clothes because petite sizes had not been marketed yet. I also love to ice skate and do so whenever I can.



My special contribution to Ma'ayanot this year will be to mentor students in classes in a nascent Science Research program at Ma'ayanot. There will be both a freshman/sophomore class and a junior/senior class. The classes will meet once a week on alternating Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The goals of the program are to broaden the challenges students have in science with the opportunity to use what they learn in class and apply that knowledge in new ways. During the school year, students will learn to read peer-reviewed scientific articles and to write scientific papers. Students will also make PowerPoint presentations on various scientific topics of interest to them. Members of the classes will participate in various science essay competitions such as the NSTA/Toshiba ExploraVision competition or The Dupont Challenge essay. Students will be encouraged to apply to hands-on summer apprenticeships in accredited research laboratories in the New York/New Jersey area, at Universities around the country and even in Israel or Russia. Those students that do participate in summer research will have the opportunity to submit their research papers to higher level national and international science competitions.

I look forward to a great year!"

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New Faculty Faces (continued)

(Continued from page 8)

Mr. Michael Lowy tells us a little bit (just a byte?) about himself: Michael Lowy joins Ma'ayanot as Technology Associate. He has served as an IT Analyst and Manager to various corporations and organizations. As part of Ma'ayanot's technology department, Michael will help to ensure the smooth functioning and usage of the schools technological resources. Mr. Lowy lives in Bergenfield, NJ with his wife and 4 children.



Dr. Oshra Cohen, at left, shares the following: Dr. Oshra Cohen is a graduate of the Clinical Health doctoral program of Yeshiva University . She has worked at CAPS of Rockland county as a clinical psychologist. Additionally, Dr. Cohen is a clinical instructor and researcher at The Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Currently, Dr. Cohen has a private practice in Rockland county where she works with children, adolescents and adults. She lives with her family in Manhattan and is excited to join the Ma'ayanot staff.

Ms. Laura Schuette, at right, introduces herself: My name is Laura Schuette. I am the new Phys Ed teacher, Assistant Athletic Director and Basketball Coach. I graduated from Rowan University in 2007 with a BA in Health and Exercise Science, which prepared me to teach

health and physical education.

While at Rowan, I played intramural sports and was a cheerleader for three years. I am a very outgoing and active person, and I love to play sports and be outside. My favorite spectator sport is football, but my favorite sports to play are basketball and volleyball. I love teaching and being able to help shape my students' minds and bodies and guide them toward a healthy and active lifestyle. I look forward to teaching at Ma'ayanot this year!



Rabbi Uri Goldstein joins the faculty at Ma'ayanot to teach Modern Jewish History to some of our tenth graders. He is a member of the Social Studies Department at The Frisch School in Paramus. Rabbi Goldstein is a graduate of Yeshiva University, and he received *semicha* from YU (RIETS) as well.

Rabbi Goldstein is the Rabbi of Congregation *Ahavat Achim* in Fair Lawn, where he lives with his wife, Mrs. Julie Goldstein, formerly a Ma'ayanot faculty member, and their children.

Student Orientation Day

Excited chatter, hugs and smiles were in evidence as Ma'ayanoters returned to school for Student Orientation Day on September 8. Freshmen arrived first and proudly received their new *siddurim* as they took seats in the *Beit Knesset* for their first *tefilla* as the Class of 2013. This was followed, in Ma'aynot tradition, by a bagel breakfast after which came an orientation program, which included welcoming words from **Mrs. Rookie Billet**, Principal. **Molly Brodsky '13** gave an interesting and well prepared *dvar Torah* on behalf of her classmates. Other members of the administration were introduced and the GO put on a *ruach*-filled skit, in which they introduced themselves to the tune of "Mamma Mia." Students learned about our dress code and were assigned lockers before proceeding to a mini day, in which they



Molly Brodsky '13 shows her notes for her dvar Torah

got to greet teachers and new classmates. As if this were not enough, next came meetings by *Mehanechet*, during which *seforim* were distributed and ninth graders met their "big sisters" and spent time "bonding" and making beaded bracelets.



at left, GO officers introduce themselves in song and dance



(Most) members of the Class of 2011 take the stage

Grades ten through twelve, although proud to be more experienced Ma'ayanoters, each had an orientation program on September 8 as well. Their programs included many of the same activities as the freshmen, as well as College and Israel Guidance sessions and GO strategy meetings to kick off the year's activities.

Members of the Class of 2012, at right, gather in the MPR to say "cheese"



Kos Hakavod

We are pleased and proud to announce that

Shira Marder '10

and

Rebecca Peyser '10

have been recognized as

2010 NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP SEMI-FINALISTS

First Mishmar of the Year a Huge Success

Close to 70 (that's not a typo!) students and faculty members stayed after classes on Thursday, September 10, for our first **Mishmar** of the year. The program began with music, song and a replay of our GO's end-year slideshow, "Images of Ma'ayanot." **Rabbi Donny Besser** and **Rabbi Zev Prince** each offered words of inspiration for the new year, as well as inspirational thought on *Shabbat* preparation. **Daniella Ginsberg '10** and **Allison Alt '11** each spoke to the group about personal growth and maximizing our potential in the upcoming year. **Mrs. Suzanne Cohen** of our *Tanakh* and Israel Guidance Departments played the guitar, encouraged by the presence of **Mrs. Shayna Goldberg** (*Halakha* and *Mehanechet*), **Mrs. Rivka Kahan** (Assistant Principal), **Mrs. Evelyn Gross** (Associate Principal) and **Mrs. Rookie Billet**, our Principal. Apologies to anyone who was inadvertently omitted.

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IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

MA'AYANOT
מעיינות



invites you to join us for a
Community Yom Iyun

Sunday, September 13, 2009 - 24 Elul 5769

7:00 - 9:30 PM

Keynote speaker: Mrs. Shayna Goldberg
Member of our Halakha Faculty
and Yoetzet Halakha for Congregation Rinat Yisrael (Teaneck)
and Congregation Ahavath Torah (Englewood)

"In God We Trust? Hope and Fear in Psalm 27"

With additional shiurim by our distinguished faculty:

Rabbi Daniel Besser

Mrs. Dena Knoll

Ms. Elana Flaumenhaft

Mrs. Lynn Kraft

Ms. Sarah Gordon

Rabbi Zev Prince

Mrs. Leah Herzog

Mrs. Merav Tal-Timen

Mrs. Rivka Kahan

Ms. Devorah Wolf

Men and Women Welcome

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Mrs. Rookie Billet, Principal
Mrs. Ruth Wang Bimbaum, Associate Principal
Mrs. Evelyn Gross, Associate Principal
Ms. Elana Flaumenhaft, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Rivka Kahan, Assistant Principal
Mrs. Rachel Feldman, Administrator



REMEMBERING...

After *tefilla* this morning, students and faculty watched a moving memorial program prepared by Juniors **Alona Stewart**, **Evie Notis** and **Rachel Ullman**. To see the video component of that program, point your browser to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZV2L0EM08I&feature=related>



Save the Date

Sunday, September 13: Community *Yom Iyun*, 7 - 9:15 PM

Tuesday, September 15: Freshman Day, details to follow

Wednesday, September 16: "Navigating the Senior Year" for Seniors and Parents, 7:15 PM

Friday, September 18 - Sunday, September 20: *Rosh Hashanah* recess:

Monday, September 21: *Tzom Gedalia* - Fast Day schedule, 1:50 PM dismissal



The Stream

is a publication of

Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls
1650 Palisade Avenue Teaneck, NJ 07666

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Mrs. Evelyn Gross and Mrs. Ruth Wang Birnbaum, Associate Principals

Ms. Elana Flaumenhaft and Mrs. Rivka Kahan, Assistant Principals

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visit us on the web at www.maayanot.org
to learn more about our school and for back issues of this publication

