

Elsa High School's 2016-2017

Weekly Daf



Huge congratulations to the cast and crew for a simply wonderful production of "Fiddler on the Roof" last night, and a special thanks to our inspired Director Mr Swart and talented Choirmaster Ms Celia Leung. Well done, everyone!



Chag Sameach! Wishing everyone a good Yomtov.

Dvar Torah: Bamidbar

This week's parashah is called Bamidbar, which directly translates to "in the desert".

At this point in the Torah's storyline, the Jewish nation are still wandering the Sinai desert, on their way to the Promised Land. G-d tells the people to conduct a census of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the parashah is filled with a lot of data: we are, for example, given information on the populations of Judah (74,600), Issachar (54,400), Zevulun (57,400), Reuben (46,500), Simeon (59,300) and Gad (45,650), plus many others.

Each tribe has its own leader and flag and most walk in the desert in formation.

There is a strong connection between a desert and the Torah which we were given on Shavuot. For example, the desert is open land; nobody owns it. The Torah also does not belong to any one person alone. Every Jew has an equal share in the Torah.

Another thing we can learn from the fact that the Torah was given in the desert is that life in a desert is difficult: it is hot, dry and there isn't a lot of food or wildlife. When our forefathers received the Torah in the desert,



they had to depend on HaShem for all their needs: for food, water and clothing. But they didn't worry. Instead, they eagerly received the Torah with joy and trust.

We should learn this lesson from them. Even if we sometimes feel that we need things, we should not worry about them or let our needs disturb us from studying the Torah and doing mitzvot. We should trust HaShem and rely on Him to provide us with the things we need, just as He did for our ancestors in the desert. Living in such a busy, lively city as Hong Kong, it is often easy to forget to feel spiritual and to return to our holy roots; however, we must find time in our busy days, amongst our work, iPhones and social media, to give time to G-d and ourselves.

We are lucky at Elsa as we have tefillah every morning and we have Jewish Studies throughout the week, but we must always remember to give ourselves time to reflect and time for spirituality, and to thank G-d for all the things He has given us.

Shabbat Shalom!

Hannah Hipwell-Serfaty - G10

Class of 2017 — Graduation Photos



Before the Graduation Ceremony, students, families and teachers enjoyed a champagne reception.



Halfway through the Ceremony, the audience were treated to a sneak preview of the Elsa High production of "Fiddler on the Roof"



Throughout the Ceremony, speeches were given by distinguished guests, students and the Carmel School Association Principal.

Class of 2017 — Graduation Photos



After the Ceremony had formally ended with the "Switching of the Tassel", guests and students enjoyed refreshments and took photos with families, teachers and friends.



Congratulations once more to Joanna, Ariella, George, Simon, Avraham, Varun, Natalie, Saar and Edward!



Fiddler on the Roof - Review



For those of you that didn't make it to last night's rendering of "Fiddler on the Roof", let me tell you personally that you really missed out.

Prior even to the start of the play, the actors were greeting the audience in character, welcoming them to Anatevka on Shabbat, and reminding them to turn off their electronic devices. It really added to the mood and made us feel like we were entering the village of Anatevka.

The play started out with a fantastic whole-cast rendition of the song "Tradition". The choreography in that scene, as in all the others, was astonishing — and all the credit has to go to Grade 9's Sammy Yeung for putting it all together.

As the play progressed, you could not help but fall in love with the character of Tevye, who was played by Ori Razon. His battle with the influences of a nonreligious world and his struggle against assimilation shone through in his character — his wit and humor was also amazing. Well done, Ori!

All of the main cast, though, were exceptional, and brought the story to life through their acting, singing and dancing. A special mention must also go out to the Fiddler, Scott Chua, who musical talent was fantastic to behold.

Praise must also be given to the choir, because as Mrs Friedmann said once the play had finished, "no better sound had ever been made in our auditorium". Many thanks to Ms Celia Leung, the Elsa Choirmaster

For those not mentioned by name here, including the remaining cast, stage crew and anyone else who helped out in the production — you were amazing too! This year's musical was the best production I've seen at Elsa, and hopefully the next one will be able to reach such heights again!

Many thanks to the cast and crew for their efforts in putting this show together, and of course to Mr Swart for his tireless efforts in directing and producing the play, and Ms Celia Leung for her excellent work as Choirmaster.

Ian Lyons - G10



See next week's Daf for more photos of and writing about the Production!

SCMP Visit

South China Morning Post

This Monday, a reporter from the South China Morning Post (SCMP) came to Elsa High School to write a piece on our school.

Sarah Cohen, Jeffrey Yao, Agnes Yeung, Ofir Razon, Ellie Amias and I were asked to detail our personal experiences and stories from our time at Elsa. We discussed how the school assisted us in various ways, whether it be teaching us English, or in creating a friendly and welcoming environment for new students. We also spoke about the diverse methods through which the school devotes time to our special interests in sports, cooking, public speaking and many other pursuits. For example, I discussed my involvement in public speaking and the Model United Nations, in addition to being an active member of the newly formed STEM club.

The reporter was softly spoken, and did not ask many questions; he was more interested in what we had to say about the school. For some of us it was our first interview and we were prone to a bit of anxiety. Those who already had experience of being interviewed, such as Ofir, Ellie and Agnes, spoke with great eloquence and skill.

We are all looking forward to seeing the article in print! Many thanks to Romy Serfaty, our Marketing and Communications Consultant, for arranging this interview.

Rachamim Zamek - G9



PSHE — Lauren White

On Monday, Grades 8 and 9 experienced a fantastic talk delivered by Lauren White, a personal trainer and fitness model. During the talk, Lauren discussed issues concerning alcohol, drug and several other forms of addiction.

Lauren, as a past addict and sufferer of eating disorders as well as depression, was very insightful on these topics, and she enlightened us on her past addictions, how she overcame them, and the ways in which we can avoid them completely.

Whilst being an inspiring speech, the talk also helped to provide me and other students with a sense of security, knowing that even in times of severe trauma, there is support out there, and there's no reason to feel the way that she once did.

Reflecting on the speech now, I would say that Lauren was a truly inspiring figure, seeing as she came from a background similar to that of most Elsa students, yet struggled with difficult issues and overcame them. It was phenomenal to hear about how she was able to overcome everything and pursue all that she wished to pursue.

We all thank Lauren for sharing her story, and for educating us, and inspiring us all.

Louis Efron - G9

CCA Reflections - Basketball



Every year students at Elsa High School have the opportunity to sign up for a Co-Curricular Activity (CCA). This year I chose to join the basketball team again, since I have always been passionate about basketball and have had many experiences of playing for club teams outside of school.

This year, though, I was presented with a new challenge of becoming the team captain; the challenge for this was to try to win games, and we were able to achieve this goal, even though I was one of only three returning players from last year.

By the end of the year we were able to achieve our goal of winning a few games, which helped everyone gain a lot confidence.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our coaches, Alex, Mathew, Gio and Kingston, for helping us become better players on and off the court. Lastly I would like to thank Mr Julian for giving me the opportunity to play competitive basketball while representing the school.

Alex Rowse - G10

CCA Reflection - Sailing



Every year, we are given a booklet in which we have choices listed for our Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) for the year. There is a huge variety, but I was looking for something unique this time. When I saw that there was an option for sailing, I was extremely excited, and I talked to my parents about it.

In addition to the fun of sailing, I also discovered that taking people sailing can be a great job to do during university or over the summer. It is also great for your CV.

Just this week, I passed my Level 2 course. I started out with no experience, so I think it's pretty cool that I can now rig a boat, sail it, bring it back, and de-rig it all on my own. I learnt all of this in two years.

I think the real reason I have done so well is because of my sailing instructors. My first instructor, Calvin, taught me everything: all of basics of how to sail a boat. My second instructor, Dominic, taught me all the theory. Sailing is pointless without knowledge of the wind.

Many thanks to both of them and to Mr Julian for making sailing such a fun and enjoyable CCA.

Dan Hasofer - G7

French DELF Exam



This Tuesday, Luis, Elina, Andrea and I took our French Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF) Exam in Jordan, Kowloon.

The DELF exam is a way for non-native French speakers learning French to be recognized for their skill in the language.

There are four different levels: A1, A2, B1, and B2, and all relate to different levels of French. All of us decided to take the A2 exam this time, and then in the future, we can continue to take higher levels of examination. The exam consists of four different parts: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Overall, it was a great experience and I think each of us is happy we did it; now, though, we are anxiously awaiting our results in the hope that we will receive our diplomas!

Tyra Dahlberg - G10