

THE FORDS FORUM



From The Virtue Village



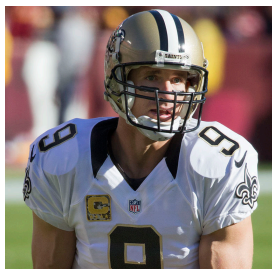
"Remembering a Middle School Icon"

(Image Courtesy of The Haverford School SmugMug)



A Letter from The Vice President

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The NFL 100: Drew Brees

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Importance of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

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From The Student Council



A Letter From The Middle School Vice President

by Ethan Lee (Form II)

Dear Middle School Faculty and Students,

I hope everyone is well adjusted to the Virtue Village at this point in the school year. I personally feel that this transition has gone very smoothly and that life in our space is comfortable. Let's keep that good energy going!

I once again wish to remind everyone of this year's theme: Kindness. I hope everyone is thinking about this once in a while. Small things like picking something up, not leaving stuff in the locker room, and keeping a space tidy in your homeroom are all things that you can do to help others and be kind in the Virtue Village.

Also, please be sure to have an ID card. This is very important as it is now required regularly for daily life in The Haverford Middle School.

Anyway, let's keep this school year going strong. I applaud all of your efforts so far this year and I ask you to keep it going. I look forward to the continuation of our school year, and I'll see you around school.

Sincerely,
Ethan Lee
& Your Cabinet

Fords Forum Word Scramble

Hello fellow contestants, and welcome to to the Winter (Feb.) Fords Forum Word Scramble! The objective of this competition and newspaper tradition is to find the marked letters in this issue of the paper and unscramble them to find a hidden word or phrase! To compete, all you have to do is find the letters and unscramble the message! Once you have the message unscrambled, contact Ms. Nelson during break, lunch, or through email and tell her you have the message. If you are the first in your grade to do this, congratulations! You might have just won a dress down day!

The letters may appear anywhere throughout the paper, so be thorough! There are a total of **12** letters you must find. The 12 letters combine to form **2 words**. Each letter will appear bolded and underlined. It might look something like **T**his (The example is not a part of the Word Scramble).

HINT: It may help to know that the Word Scramble is related to the upcoming *Willy Wonka*.

Transport & Aviation



Airline Comparison

by Pierce Laveran (Form II)

Air travel is a growingly common way for people to travel, establishing connections between nations and people. Over the next decades, the number of airline passengers are expected to increase dramatically, especially in developing regions of Asia. The demand has led to the creation of hundreds of airlines, and below is a list of airlines comparing some of the world's leading carriers in different aspects such as destinations, aircraft count, and passengers carried.

Countries Served (Destinations)

10. United	60
8. (TIE) KLM.....	66
8. (TIE) Egypt Air.....	66
7. Emirates.....	70
6. Delta.....	71
5. Qatar.....	73
3. (TIE) Air France.....	78
3. (TIE) British Airways.....	78
2. Lufthansa.....	83
1. Turkish Airlines.....	106

Aircraft Count (2016)

10. RyanAir.....	349
9. Air China.....	384
8. Air Canada	404
7. China Eastern.....	429
6. China Southern.....	515
5. Federal Express.....	588
4. SouthWest.....	720
3. United.....	1,229
2. Delta.....	1,330
1. American.....	1,789

Passengers Carried (Rounded to Nearest 1/2)

10. Lufthansa.....	62.5 Million
9. Turkish Airlines	63 Million
8. Easy Jet	73 Million
7. China Eastern.....	81 Million
6. China Southern.....	85 Million
5. Ryan Air.....	120 Million
4. United.....	143 Million
3. Southwest.....	152 Million
2. Delta.....	184 Million
1. American.....	199 Million

"LAX International Line-Up 2"

Image Courtesy of Alan
Wilson via
Wikimedia Commons

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The Growth of American Airlines at PHL

by Christopher Schwarting (Form II)

In today's world, aviation and air travel are becoming a serious backbone of people's lives. The increasing accessibility and affordability of traveling on an airplane has led to a worldwide boom in passenger numbers and airlines, and this very rapid growth is also important in our home airport of Philadelphia International Airport (PHL). The hub carrier for the region, American Airlines, has been rapidly expanding its hub-status network in hopes of attracting Philadelphia region customers into the area, instead of traveling to New York's Newark Liberty and John F. Kennedy airports as alternatives. The noticeable presence of American Airlines could lead to the future financial stability of the airport, and could be your next incentive to travel from PHL.

At the start of 2020, American Airlines introduced a new widebody jet to the Philadelphia market, the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Being one of the newest aircraft in the American fleet, it is set to replace the aging Boeing 767 fleet that currently sits in Philadelphia. With an ultramodern economy class cabin, and the reintroduced 'Flagship Business Class,' the Dreamliner is now flying from PHL to locations in western Europe including Manchester (UK), Amsterdam, and Zurich. Along with the new aircraft will come upgrades to the lounge facilities that American uses at PHL.

Route growth from the Philadelphia hub has already left Philadelphia with one of the most extensive route networks between the United States East Coast and Europe. Last year, seasonal flights to 'exotic' destinations such as Dubrovnik, Croatia, and Budapest, Hungary were inaugurated on top of an already extensive network

that serves destinations other airports would dream to be able to offer their customers. Coming this year will be Philadelphia's first direct flight to Africa: Philadelphia to Casablanca. Operated by a Boeing 757-200, this route will be American's first foray into the economic possibilities that may be present at PHL.



"American Airlines 787-8 Dreamliner"

Image Courtesy of North West Transport Photos
via Flickr

(Creative Commons 2.0)

Route expansion internationally has been very strong, but the increased domestic possibilities through American Airlines have also been extremely helpful in providing a stable and usable hub network for passengers traveling in and out of PHL. This winter saw one of the first direct flights between Philadelphia and The Eagle/Vail County airport, possibly aimed towards leisure travelers for snow-bound activities in the winter months.

As Philadelphia International Airport continues to expand, the amount of passengers traveling through its terminals may also increase. American Airlines is always looking for opportunities to open new markets for profitability, so if the new European network is successful, passengers and consumers may begin to see the development of routes to South America and Asia from PHL, a first for the region.

XCursions in Review



In the two days before Winter Break, Middle School boys were given extended learning opportunities to learn or experience something that would normally not be included in a traditional classroom curriculum. These alternative learning opportunities were titled 'X-Cursions.' A number of students have reflected upon their experiences in their different X-Cursions, which will be viewable below. The full list of X-Cursions that took place include:

The Amazing Race Philadelphia, Atlas Obscura Philadelphia, Cooking Without A Kitchen, Escape Rooms, Fighting Gravity (Rock Wall), Fishing, Foodies & Restaurateurs, Korean Culture, Live Action Role-Play (LARP), Philadelphia Historical Trip, Pro-Sports Combine, Survivor Haverford, Woodworking, and Zoos & Botanical Gardens...

Cooking Without A Kitchen Recap

by Russell Yoh (Form II)

Cooking Without a Kitchen was great! It was run by Ms. Hallman and Ms. Faralli, as well as Grayson Morgan, the student leader for the X-Cursion. On the first day, we split into groups. Within those groups we had to choose a food to make under the categories of appetizer, simple dinner, and dessert. Once all of the groups decided what they wanted to make, we all went to Acme and gathered our supplies with a budget of \$40 per group. We then came back and started our first round, appetizers. Although we did not have a kitchen, we still had many kitchen supplies like a blender, toaster oven, waffle maker, and portable grill. The appetizer round went very well. The winning appetizer was a Cilantro Dip. **N**ext was the dinner round. Some groups made quesadillas, paninis, and even steaks. The winning food for this round was the panini. The next day was the day of desserts. Groups made waffles, milkshakes, and a banana split. The winning dessert was a classic vanilla milkshake. We ended our day with a Gingerbread decorating competition. Overall, the Cooking Without a Kitchen X-Cursion was a lot of fun, and would recommend it if it take place next year.

Escape Room X-Cursion Recap

by Tate Conklin (Form II)

The Escape Room X-Cursion was a huge success this year. We spent the first-morning watching celebrities attempt escape rooms to get a better understanding of how they work, followed by using 'Escape **T**he Crates.' They were very engaging and helped us understand clues and hints. In the afternoon, we split up into three groups among three different rooms and began creating our escape rooms. We came up with our escape rooms' themes and began planning out how we would place our clues and hints. We began the second day by going to Expedition Escape in Montgomeryville. We were split up into four groups and each group was assigned a certain escape room. The four escape rooms were Escape the Quarantine, Escape the Candy Shop, Escape DaVinci's Office and The List. Everyone escaped and had lots of fun. We ate lunch at Expedition Escape and returned to the Virtue Village in the afternoon. We got back into our three groups from the first day and finished up our escape rooms. Once we had all finished, everyone tried each other's escape rooms. All in all, this was a great X-Cursion, and many thanks to the faculty who made it possible.

XCursions in Review (Cont.)



Foodies/Restauranteurs X-Cursion Recap

by Andrew Glaser (Form II), Thatcher McCoy (Form II), and Jack Cimino (Form II)

The Foodies/Restaurants X-Cursion was great! We went to the Reading Terminal Market, the Schulson Restaurant group, Bryce's Catering, and Matador. We also tried a variety of food which included five different cheesesteaks, a pasta that we made, Mama's Banana Pudding, buffalo chicken spring rolls, chicken quesadillas, Patatas bravas, and many other delicious foods.

On the first day, we started by taking the train to Jefferson station. We then walked over to Reading Terminal Market where we spent 45 minutes exploring it in little groups. At Reading Terminal we went to two different cheesesteak restaurants. Although these mini shops could probably fit between your legs, they made an extremely good cheesesteak. We then walked to Giuseppe and Sons. There, we tried two pizzas, three different specialized cheesesteaks, and tortellini that we personally made by hand. Mr. Schulson also told us what running a restaurant is really like and how he does it. He has staff running each restaurant, he has offices that control the entire operation, along with the different managers, chefs, and other staff. It was amazing to see how to run such a big food company. We also got a tour of the restaurant Locusta that was opened a few days prior to the X-Cursion.

We started the second day by talking to Mrs. Spranger who runs the food aspect at Haverford. Our group then went to a catering company. We met with Mr. Nelson who told us about the difference between a catering company and a restaurant. Following, we arrived at Matador where we were served some delicious and authentic Spanish foods.

The Amazing Race X-Cursion Recap

by Ian Rosenzweig (Form I) and Brady Cross (Form I)

The Amazing Race is a game show that runs on CBS. The show follows teams of two people who complete challenges around the world in a big race. In our X-Cursion, we did our own version of the show in Philadelphia. On the first day, we were split into three groups. Each group member had a job. One person in each group downloaded an app called Goosechase, where Mrs. Brown and Ms. Lesko created a list of challenges for us to complete in the city. Our first challenge was to figure out where to get off the train in order to most efficiently complete challenges. Various challenges challenge us to find locations, purchase items, and complete other various tasks. We earned between 100-500 points for the completion of a challenge. We had two major check in points - each group had to make it to Reading Terminal Market and check in at a bakery by noon or points were deducted every minute. At Reading Terminal Market, groups bought lunch and completed more challenges. Each group also had to make it to the train station by a specified time. Points were tallied up, and the groups tied, leading to each group getting to choose a date to dress down.

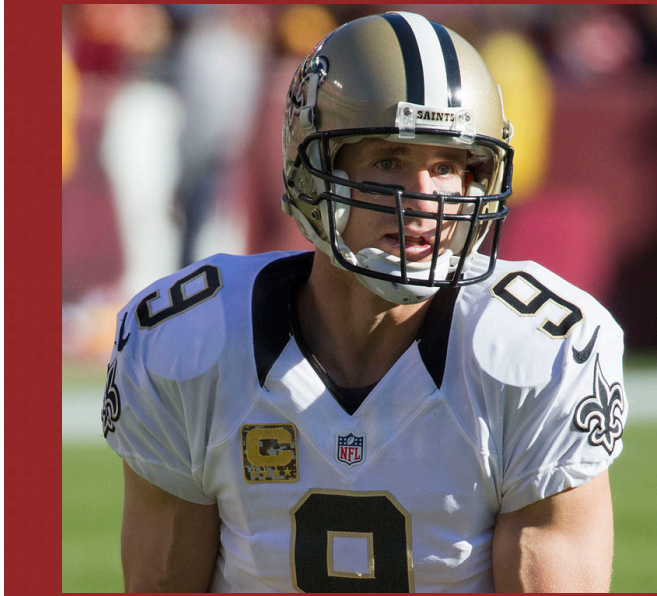
We used the second day to recap our experiences downtown, and to learn more about the process of producing a show like The Amazing Race. We FaceTimed Mrs. Brown's brother-in-law, who was a two-time contestant on The Amazing Race. He told us what it was like to be on a Reality T.V. Show, what the race was like, and his overall experience. After this, we watched part of a season of the show, and we made videos explaining our previous day to be shown at the X-Cursion assembly later that day. Come and join the Amazing Race X-Cursion next year!

Sports and Technology



The NFL 100: Drew Brees

by Brady Cross (Form I)



"Drew Brees 2015"

Image Courtesy of Keith Allison
via Wikimedia Commons

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In celebration of the National Football League's 100 year anniversary, the NFL released a list of who they think are the best players in NFL history. Most of the names on the list are agreed upon, but some great names are not on the list. One in particular is The New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees. Drew Brees is undoubtedly one of the best quarterbacks currently in the NFL, and in my opinion is one of the best of all time.

Drew Brees has a long list of accolades, and highly impressive statistics to back them up. Brees is a 13 time Pro Bowler. Out of the 10 quarterbacks on the list, only 2, Tom Brady and Peyton Manning, have more, at 14 selections. Brees has also been named NFL Offensive Player of the Year twice. The accomplishment has only been matched by two other quarterbacks in history, Manning and Brady. Brees' stats are arguably even more impressive than his accolades. He has led the league in completion six times. Brees has also led the league in completion percentage six times, including the last

three years. He has been the league leader in passing yards seven times, the leader in touchdowns four times, and has led the NFL in quarterback rating twice. Wrapping up an impressive list of accolades and stats, Brees is a Super Bowl Champion and Super Bowl MVP, showing his ability to win and pull a team to victory.

As the NFL only put 10 quarterbacks on their list, picking which one to replace with Drew Brees is very challenging. As NFL offenses have turned into much more pass-heavy offenses, it is hard to compare Brees to the quarterbacks such as Johnny Unitas, Sammy Baugh, and Otto Graham, who were around in the 1950s and 60s. The quarterbacks I have decided could be replaced by Brees are Brett Farve, Dan Marino, and John Elway. First we will look at Farve. Farve is an eleven time pro bowler, who played twenty years for the Falcons, Jets, Packers, and Vikings. Along with his Pro Bowl appearances, Farve is a Super Bowl champ, first team All-Pro, and three time MVP.



A Recap of OC6 Keynote: Day One

by Jack Ford (6th Grade)

Every year, Oculus, a Virtual Reality Company owned by Facebook, hosts a huge VR press conference called Oculus Connect, which is divided into two keynotes. This year, Oculus Connect 6 (OC6) was hosted at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center in California on September 25th and 26th, 2019. In Keynote Day I, Oculus released some shocking stats, showed some incredible games, and announced some crazy features coming to the Oculus Quest and Rift S from late 2019 through 2020.

This year, OC6 started out with a bang. The beginning of Keynote Day I began with Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, coming onto the stage and talking about the success of Oculus sales. Then, he proceeded to drop a bombshell, revealing that the Oculus Store had gotten over \$100 million just from selling games to VR users. Then he told everybody about a new feature called Oculus Link, which allows you to play all of the Oculus Rift games on the Oculus Quest! To make this connection, all you need is a gaming PC and a USB-3 cable.



"Oculus Link: November"

Image Courtesy of Upload VR and Oculus Inc.

This news was extremely exciting to all Oculus Quest users without a Rift, because they would now be able to play Rift games that are not available on the Quest. He then went on to talk about how, with the Quest, they had removed all the clunky and annoying VR equipment, like the external sensors, cable, and gaming PC. Next, he announced that they would also be getting rid of the controllers, with hand tracking features coming to the Quest in early 2020! (Feature Out Now!)



"Oculus Hand-Tracking"

Image Courtesy of the Outerhaven Network

This exciting advancement could draw more users to virtual reality because they will not have to learn how to use the confusing and often unintuitive controllers. It will also be a nice change for VR users who already own The Oculus Quest, making it a win-win situation. Zuckerberg then announced Facebook Horizon, a VR Chat-like social experience made by Facebook themselves.

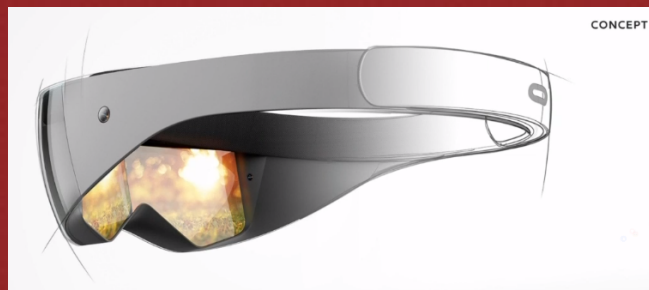
Andrew Bosworth, Facebook's Vice President of AR and VR, took the stage. Bosworth talked about the future of social interactions in VR, and showed a video of him using VR to watch basketball with his father as if they were in the same room.



A Recap of OC6 Keynote: Day One (Cont.)

by Jack Ford (6th Grade)

Bosworth continued to announce that Facebook/Oculus will be developing AR (Augmented Reality) glasses, which will allow people who like the VR experience apply it to reality.



"Oculus AR Glasses"

Image Uprooted From Reddit Platform



"Beat Saber 360"

Image Uprooted From Twitter Account
@BeatSaber

Bosworth then passed on the mic to Stephane Lue, who talked about the new improvements to the Passthrough system, called Passthrough+, and 'Passthrough on Demand', which should be released early next year. She also mentioned that they are working on bringing over fifty popular Oculus Go games to the Quest by the end of the year. Vladimir Hrincar and Jan Ilavsky from Beat Games, as well as the creators of the popular VR game 'Beat Saber', joined the keynote and talked about how 360 Mode for 'Beat Saber' would be released in December 2019.

Other developers talked about games like 'Vader Immortal', an action-packed Star Wars VR adventure, and 'Medal of Honor VR', a World War II VR game. Finally, Michael Abrash showed full face and eye-tracking in VR, with no release date, and it is not expected to be anytime in the near future. He also showed full-body tracking, which is in a highly early version and prototype.

In conclusion, Oculus Connect 6, Keynote Day 1 was an exciting press conference that released and showed some games and features that could change the face of VR for years to come. *(If you would like to learn more about Oculus, visit Jack Ford's YouTube Channel: 'Shynnee')*

An Editor's Note:

The Middle School Newspaper has been a long-standing club at Haverford, going through multiple design changes, editors, and name revisions. As the legacy of The Fords Forum continues, I would like to congratulate Ian Rosenzweig and Brady Cross for being selected as next year's newspaper co-editors.

Guess That Faculty Member!



Have you ever wondered how well you know the Middle School faculty? Well, here's is a chance for you to test your knowledge. Some members of the Fords Forum have gone to 4 faculty members and asked them a predetermined set of questions. Below, each of the teachers have been listed with the questions and their answers. If you are able to determine the unknown teachers correctly, and share your answers with Ms. Nelson, you might have just won a dress down day!

The first student in each grade, as well as the first faculty member to submit all of the correct answers are eligible for the dress down day. Good luck!

Faculty Member #1

1. What college/university did you attend (undergraduate)?

Answer: None

2. Who is your favorite author?

Answer: Janet Evanovich

3. What is your favorite book?

Answer: *The Stephanie Plum Series*

4. Who is your favorite actor/actress?

Answer: Morgan Freeman

5. How many years have you been at Haverford?

Answer: 24 years

6. What is your favorite place on campus?

Answer: Virtue Village

Faculty Member #2

1. What college/university did you attend (undergraduate)?

Answer: St. Joseph's University

2. Who is your favorite author?

Answer: Bryan Stevenson

3. What is your favorite book?

Answer: *The Storyteller's Secret*

4. Who is your favorite actor/actress?

Answer: Denzel Washington

5. How many years have you been at Haverford?

Answer: 6 years

6. What is your favorite place on campus?

Answer: Palmer House

The Teacher Questions for "Guess That Faculty Member" are continued on the next page!

Guess That Faculty Member!



Faculty Member #3

1. What college/university did you attend (undergraduate)?

Answer: Boston College

2. Who is your favorite author?

Answer: J.K. Rowling

3. What is your favorite book?

Answer: *The Little Prince*

4. Who is your favorite actor/actress?

Answer: David Tennent

5. How many years have you been at Haverford?

Answer: 5 years

6. What is your favorite place on campus?

Answer: The Library

Faculty Member #4

1. What college/university did you attend (undergraduate)?

Answer: Brown University

2. Who is your favorite author?

Answer: Anthony Bourdain

3. What is your favorite book?

Answer: *The Glass Castle*

4. Who is your favorite actor/actress?

Answer: Javier Bardem

5. How many years have you been at Haverford?

Answer: 4 years

6. What is your favorite place on campus?

Answer: The Library

See Willy Wonka!

Jai E. Bonaparte (Form II)
Chase Nelson (Form II)

Dates:

Jan. 31/Feb. 1 @ 7:00 PM
Feb. 2 @ 2:00 PM



Come out to see your friends and fellow classmates in this year's fun-filled, high energy Middle School production of *Willy Wonka* featuring Render Ford as Charlie Bucket. Based off of the original Roald Dahl novel, watch this story come to life as Charlie Bucket struggles to find a golden ticket for a chance to tour the Wonka Chocolate Factory and watch other larger than life characters like Violet Buaraguarde, Mike Teevee, Veruca Salt, Augustus Gloop, and the man himself, Willy Wonka conquer the stage!

Personal Writings



Snakes Had a Use for Hind Legs

by Seth Virmani (6th Grade)

Snakes are weird, slithery, legless, creatures that everybody seems to be scared of. Most people think that snakes never had legs. However at a point in time snakes did indeed have legs. Recently, paleontologists found a snake fossil. After putting the fossil together, the paleontologists found that the snake had two hind legs. They were only hind legs, and they extended out of its rib cage. This is a huge breakthrough in science because it shows us new evolutionary patterns for snakes and may prove all past evolution patterns are incorrect or incomplete. The snake's species was called *Najash rionegrina*. This snake is, unfortunately, now extinct and is only known to have existed during the Cretaceous period. This snake is the only snake known to have legs that extended out of its rib cage and pelvis. For years, many people made a false assumption that snakes had no legs. The leg pattern can also be seen on other reptile species, except in the opposite manner. Some lizards had legs, but lost them over millions of years. Some examples include the California Legless Lizard and the European **G**lass lizard.

After millions of years, most snakes have lost their legs, and today, we know snakes as legless creatures. An African myth also tells the story of why snakes have no legs. The myth tells that a snake was stealing from a farmer, and the farmer wanted to know who was stealing the farm's food. He laid out tar that night, and when the snake came he got stuck in the tar. The next morning, the farmer found out that the snake had been stealing. When the snake tried to get out the tar, it lost its legs and became a legless creature. The snake continued to live this way for the rest of its life.

Studies have shown that some snakes species never really lost their legs. The Python and Boa species still have legs. They are buried underneath tissue and muscle but they are there. These invisible legs are not as big as their relatives but they do function and the snakes still use them to move.

So, the belief that Snakes lost all their legs is not true as this only applies to some snakes. It goes to show how advancements in science are changing everyday. Who know what our next discovery will be?



"A Legged Snake Fossil"

Image Courtesy of H. Zaher
via NewScientist



The Importance of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

by Ian Rosenzweig (Form I)

In Middle School, especially seventh grade, a big part of the out-of-school lives of many students is going to friends' Bar and Bat Mitzvah (בר מצווה). The term "Bar Mitzvah" literally means "son of the commandments (Bat means daughter)." The Bar or Bat Mitzvah is "the religious initiation ceremony of a Jewish boy or girl who has reached the age of 13 and is regarded as ready to observe religious precepts and eligible to take part in public worship." Although people have differing levels of religious observance, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, for many families, is a time of great holiness during which the Jewish child is called to the Torah (or the Old Testament) for the first time as a Jewish adult. The child basically steps up to take his or her part in the adult community of Jews.

Today, many people are not aware of the significance of this milestone and they might mistake the Bar or Bat Mitzvah as simply just a party, because people frequently celebrate being called Torah as an adult with a party. In this article, I will outline the Jewish Shabbat Service, share the preparation that goes into becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and provide information in order to counter common misconceptions and misunderstandings about Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah service typically takes place on a Saturday morning during the Shabbat or Sabbath service, but the milestone event can occur any time when the Torah is read, or even during a Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat (Receiving the Sabbath) service.

Every week's Saturday morning synagogue service is comprised of Introductory Hymns, The Shema and its Blessings, the Amidah and Repetition, the Torah Service, and the Musaf Service. A Shabbat service normally lasts approximately two and a half hours,

depending on the synagogue. There are parts in English and parts in Hebrew, and the amount of each language used depends on the community. Although many kids preparing for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah will lead various portions of the service, it is during the Torah service that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah takes all that he or she has worked on and puts it into action. During the Torah service, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is called for an *Aliyah*. *Aliyah* means "going up" and the Bar or Bat Mitzvah must go up to the Torah and recite the blessing over it for the first time. "It's this moment of blessing the Torah that really includes the Jewish child into the community of adults, which means that they now have all of the responsibilities of a Jewish adult."

Bar or Bat Mitzvah kids do a lot more than say that one prayer! They chant the week's portion from the Torah, chant the week's Haftarah (a reading from the Prophets), and deliver a D'Var Torah, or a speech about the week's Torah portion, what it means, why it is important, and the lessons that we can learn from it. Services at most synagogues are open to everyone, although you have to be asked to read Torah or deliver a D'Var Torah. At many Bar or Bat Mitzvahs, you will hear about the child's mitzvah project. Mitzvah actually means commandment, but many people think of a mitzvah as a good deed. In most communities, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah takes on a mitzvah project which is like a community service project about a cause he or she cares about.

How much of the service does the Bar or Bat Mitzvah lead? That depends on the synagogue, (Reconstructionist, Reform, Conservative, Orthodox) and the decisions made by the Bar or Bat Mitzvah his or her family.

(The Article is Continued on the Next Page)



The Importance of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah (Cont.)

by Ian Rosenzweig (Form I)

Many may lead the entire service and do all of the readings from the Torah and Haftarah. Others may read an entire portion from the Torah (7-8 Aliyot [segments of reading]), and a whole Haftarah (20-40 lines), while others may only read a few lines of each. No matter how much they read, the moment a boy or girl becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is when he or she is officially called to the Torah to bless their own Aliyah, called the Maftir. Other Aliyot are blessed by those who are being honored such as family, close friends, and members of the community who may be celebrating something significant.

This is the most important part of the service for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The greatest significance of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is not the celebration, but the learning required to fully participate as a Jewish adult. At the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a young Jew becomes fully responsible for keeping the 613 mitzvot (commandments) that G-d gave in the Torah. Rabbinic teachings explain that when ten people study Torah together, there is the presence of G-d, and when individuals observe mitzvot and study Torah, the Divine dwells within them. Although a Bar or Bat Mitzvah typically studies for the service for many months, Jewish learning typically starts long before 7th grade, particularly because the students need to learn to read Hebrew. Hebrew is read from right to left and does not share our alphabet like Spanish or Latin do. The Hebrew alphabet is made up of 22 consonants, some of which have variants that make slightly different sounds or are used when a letter comes at the end of a word. This alphabet does not include vowels. In addition to the 22 consonants, there are 12 vowels, but they don't all make a different sound, much like the English letters 'c' and 'k.' Even if the sound is the same, the Hebrew

vowels cannot be used interchangeably in words.

The Torah is not only written in Hebrew, but it has a melody to accompany the words. The Torah is chanted, and the melody that the reader learns is represented by the cantillation or trope symbols, which indicate the tune of the chanting. There are 26 cantillation symbols, and they frequently occur in patterns. Although students have access to these symbols when they practice their portions, they are not there to assist the reader at the Torah. In fact, Torah scrolls do not even contain vowels! There are only the consonants. Readers must know the words and the tune. This is one of the hardest parts for many people, as you must memorize the tune and anticipate the vowels, because at many synagogues a reader will be corrected if a mistake is made in the reading. The longer the portion, the more you read and the more time you must put into practicing.

The Haftarah, the reading from the book of the Nevi'im, or Prophets, can range from 20-40 lines (for an entire portion), and is read with vowels and cantillation, but requires smoothness and carried tune. There are also specific blessings that precede and follow the reading.

When attending Bar and Bat Mitzvah services, people sometimes begin to imitate Hebrew words or parts of the service. Although no harm may be intended, it may seem like they are mocking the Hebrew language, Judaism, and its ceremonies and traditions. For example, people might start saying "Baruch," the Hebrew word for "blessed" after attending a service. Many Jewish prayers begin with this word and it is frequently used during the service.

(The Article is Continued on Next Page)



The Importance of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah (Cont.)

by Ian Rosenzweig (Form I)

Unfortunately, mispronouncing this word (which is easy to do if you have not learned Hebrew) can sound as if the speaker is mocking the word or the prayers. This problem becomes even worse when students claim they “speak” Jewish.” According to members of the Jewish Affinity Group, this is one of the most common things they hear and must correct. Jewish is not a language, and saying one word does not mean that you speak whole language. While many Jews at Haverford and in other school environments attempt to correct mispronunciations, it takes the individuals who make mistakes like this and their understanding to make a change. Something as small as a mispronunciation of a word can easily escalate into a much bigger miscommunication about ideas or intent.

One of the biggest and most widespread misunderstanding is that a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is just a big party and nothing more. While the level of religious observance varies among families and services, most Bar or Bat Mitzvahs are much more than a party. They are a milestone to the family as well as the child. Form II student Adon Gross said in a recent Jewish Affinity Group meeting “Bar/Bat Mitzvahs actually mean something. There’s a meaning behind it.” We spent time discussing the misunderstandings surround Bar and Bat Mitzvahs in the meeting, and many members were upset by the fact that people do not respect the work they put into the ceremony and make jokes out of it. Form I student Eli Leader said “It takes a lot of work to prepare for a Bar Mitzvah. It’s not just a celebration.”

In fact, the party is just the celebration of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, not the event itself. Hours upon hours of study and work go into preparation for the service. “People

don’t think that there’s any work to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah” said Form II student Gavin Stamps. When a family invites you to share in the pride of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and watch the moment of the child becoming an adult, it’s disrespectful and hurtful to skip the service because you believe the party is more important. Sometimes people have a conflict, and that’s understandable, but the party just celebrates the important part, which is the service. At Haverford, students do a remarkable job of respecting different cultures and religions, but we can all grow and learn more about each other’s traditions. Members of the brand new Jewish Affinity Group have expressed their displeasure and concern at the disrespect their classmates have unknowingly demonstrated. In our meetings, we work to find ways to share information, but first-hand experience is sometimes the best way to learn. I’ve recently begun to hear classmates who attended a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service speak with respect about the beauty of a Jewish service and appreciate the hard work that went into the preparation for the day. They asked questions and seemed genuinely interested rather than just talking about the party.

I have shared information in this article which will hopefully make its way to many people. Those who are open to learning about different cultures and respectful of the commitments their classmates have made to their religion can even help in our mission to educate and change the closed mindsets of students on topics like these. There is much that we can all learn from each other, and you can be the one to start a movement of conversation.

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Upcoming Events:

- Friday, Jan. 31: Middle School Play: Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka, 7 p.m., Centennial Hall
- Saturday, Feb. 1: Middle School Play: Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka, 7 p.m., Centennial Hall
- Sunday, Feb. 2: Middle School Play: Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka, 2 p.m., Centennial Hall
- Friday, Feb. 14 - Monday, Feb. 17: President's Day Weekend - No Classes
- Tuesday, Feb. 18-Friday, Feb. 21: Form I Freedom from Chemical Dependency Week
- Friday, Feb. 28: End of Second Trimester