

# The B.A.S.H.E.R.T. Bulletin

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Baltimore Area Support for Home Education with Regard to Torah

## Thoughts on Dolls and Other Toys

Do you enjoy writing? Please help us make our newsletter interesting and useful by submitting articles for the newsletter. The newsletter is published on the 1st of each month. All submissions for the newsletter should be submitted by e-mail or mail by the 20th of the month before. Classified ads of interest to our group as well as announcements of accomplishments, birthdays, or simchas are also welcome. E-mail submissions to:

penina@

The following article was written by Rabbi Nathan T. Lopez Cardozo of Machon Ohr Aaron in Israel. Instead of writing an article myself this month, I thought that this article might be of interest to B.A.S.H.E.R.T. members.

One of the most unique talents which human beings are blessed with is the faculty of imagination. Unlike any other creature in

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the world, human beings have a nearly unlimited potential for constructive fantasy. In fact, our civilization is built on imagination. Without it no progress could ever be made, whether in science, literature, philosophy, art, music or commerce. Only

when human beings try new and not yet utilized pathways will our world sustain itself and develop. It is for that reason that every generation must make sure that its youngsters have enough opportunities to develop a healthy imagination.

Children's toys have become a major industry. In the last few years we have seen an outburst in the manufacturing of the most sophisticated toys. Today it is possible to buy dolls which can walk, sing, speak with other dolls, sleep, cry, smile and even need diapers. No doubt it is a matter of a few more years and the doll industry will confuse its clients with dolls so sophisticated that the owner will see the need to go to city hall to register a new member of the human race. The same is true with electric trains, boats and planes, etc. Some of the electric cars which one can buy in toy stores can go at a speed of

50 kilometers an hour, have radios, computers and rain wipers included and need petrol or drive on solar power.

While our society welcomes these developments and sees it as a great benefit to our children and grandchildren, we believe that this is a major educational mistake. The Torah is often called a toy. King David said: "Were not Your Torah my plaything, I would have perished in my affliction." (Tehillim 119:92) This concept is found throughout many parts of Tanach. Just like playing gives joy to a human being, so does the Torah. But of what is this joy made? No doubt one of the many elements which contribute to the joy of play is the use of the faculty of imagination as George Santayana once wrote. (Persons and Places, The Middle Span, p.1) Joy is the art of seeing great possibilities. When people learn Torah it is not

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just the information which they receive which is enjoyable, but, above all, the possibility to create new insights, chidushim. It is not the passive intake of knowledge but the development of one's own imagination in the pursuit of understanding the Torah. This is one of the reasons why the Oral Torah was never completely recorded and why the Torah and, later, the Talmud were written in a most cryptic script which requires the student to read between the line to fully grasp its profundity. It allows the mind to expand and demands much creativity. "It is impossible that a beth hamidrash (house of Torah study) will not contain a chidush. (Chagiga 3a) One needs to use his own imagination to add what the text itself does not reveal.

One of the most important benefits of playing with toys is the need for children to pretend. Children do not play with a toy itself but with what they imagine while they play with that toy. And the greater the distance between the toy and the product of the child's imagination,

the more intensive and the more beneficial will the play become. The child will have to use all her imagination to create the world in which she wants to find herself.

It is, for this reason, highly undesirable that toys should approximate reality. A doll which can speak, cry or smile is not a real doll, exactly because it is so "real." A child is not able to pretend because the manufacturer has already done it for her. Because grown-up people have much less imagination than children, they believe they need to produce toys which look real. What they do not understand is that the child herself will imagine the part which is missing. To be sure, the child initially will be very pleased with a highly sophisticated doll which can sing and smile. She is not a child psychologist. But, as we all have observed, she will soon become bored. There is little left for her imagination. In fact, more and more, parents complain that the more expensive the toy, the faster it gets neglected. The toy industry today no doubt makes more money than it ever did before, but it does

not improve the child's education. We need future adults who are gifted with a healthy imagination. For that we need a simple educational doll. Whether we succeed will depend

### Of Interest:

The next meeting of B.A.S.H.E.R.T. will be held on Monday, November 4, 2002 at 7:30pm at the home of Penina Taylor. The topic will be a review of the book "The Well Trained Mind" and a discussion of the different stages of learning.

### Wednesday, Nov. 6, 1:00pm

Field trip to National Colonial Farm in Accokeek, Maryland. We will experience either the Life of the Colonial Child program which centers on the daily life of an 18th century farm child or one of the other programs, depending on ages and amount of children. Cost is \$3.50 per student and adults, 4-5 year olds are \$.50 and three and under are free. Please sign up at the September meeting.

## Upcoming Events

### Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra offers programs during the week for children from preschool through 8th grade. All programs are performed at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall and cost \$5.50 per person. There are group discounts and a free chaperone ticket for each 15 student tickets that are purchased. The programs available this year are:

### Tiny Tots (Pre-K - Kindergarten)

Thursday, November 21, 2002 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Its Raining and Dogs!"

Tuesday, February 25, 2003 at

10:00 and 11:30am AND Wednesday, February 26 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Peter and His Instrument Friends"

Wednesday, April 2, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am "All about Opposites"

### Prime Time (Grades 1-3)

Tuesday, December 3, 2002 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Its Raining Cats and Dogs!"

Tuesday, March 4, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am AND Wednesday, March 5, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Peter and His Instrument Friends"

Thursday April 3 at 10:00 and 11:30am AND Friday April 11 at 10:00 and 11:30am "All About Opposites"

### Music For Youth (Grades 4-8)

Wednesday, October 23, 2002 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Beethoven: A Musical Hero"

Tuesday, January 7, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am "A Musical Portrait of Picasso"

Wednesday, March 26, 2003 at 10:00 and 11:30am "Brilliant Brass"

Please consult program guide for information about each concert.

## More Upcoming Events

### ICE SKATING

Penny Dubin, ice skating instructor at Northwest Ice Rink is offering Ice Skating lessons for homeschoolers beginning on Wednesday, Sept 25th from 1:30 - 2:30pm. Cost is \$65 for 6 weeks. Classes are mixed gender, all ages, all levels. Call Penny at 410-363-8655 for more information or to register your child

### ALGEBRA 1 CLASS

Penina Taylor is offering an Algebra 1 class for students who have completed most or all of a Pre-Algebra course. Class will review Pre-Algebra concepts and complete 1 high school credit of Algebra. Class will be taught keeping all learning styles in mind. Discussion, manipulatives and worksheets will be used. No textbook will be required but there is a cost of \$60 per student to cover materials. This class will meet twice a week throughout the school year on Mon. and Weds. from 10:15 to 11:45am. If you anyone who might be interested, we will hold the class open until

Wednesday, October 23. After that time, no new students will be accepted.

### AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

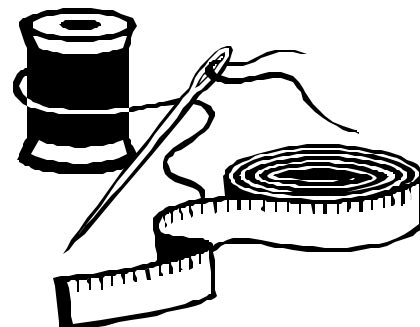
Penina Taylor will also be offering ASL classes for beginners on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 2:30pm beginning Wednesday, October 16th. The first series will be eight weeks long and is open to anyone over 6 years old who can sit and pay attention for an hour and a half. American Sign Language counts as a foreign language for college preparation. Two series of ASL count as 1/2 high school credit for Foreign Language.

Classes cost \$100 per student. Call Penina for more information 410-358-9704,

### Sew Perfect

Sew Perfect, a home economics course run by Yakira Cluster is now offering classes in sewing (including clothing, gifts, mending, etc) as well as decorative needlework. Additionally, she is

offering a full home economic curriculum including household and time management skills. Flexible schedule, reasonable rates. Hurry, space is limited and classes are filling quickly. Call Yakira for more details 410-764-8425.



### Learn over the internet!

Rabbi Y. Pollack of Toronto, Canada has created an online Yeshivah. Contact Rabbi Pollack for more information.

[ypollack@sympatico.ca](mailto:ypollack@sympatico.ca)

### Oversight Program

If you would prefer to be under the oversight of a Jewish Organization, to be reviewed by a homeschooling mom just like yourself, perhaps you should consider joining the Lubovitch Home School Program. Run by Celia Greenberg, under the supervision of Rabbi Baron of Columbia, LHSP provides accountability required by Maryland Law without having to report directly to County officials. For more information, contact Celia Greenberg at 410-997-3950.