



The Emery/Weiner School

Connecting with the Past, Preparing for the Future

Highlights - Kotarot

A quarterly report on news and happenings

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A (NOT *THE*) PASSION

STUART J. DOW, HEAD OF SCHOOL



Stuart J. Dow,
Head of School

This article is *not* about Mel Gibson or anti-Semitism, though it does relate to the recently-released, widely-discussed movie of similar name. In anticipation of a panel discussion organized by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a group of high school students, parents, and teachers saw the film. And despite my having contributed to another sold-out theater, I'm glad that I did because the experience re-affirmed for me the beauty and power of our own religious tradition, and reminded me of a different sort of passion that characterizes our school. Allow me to explain.

I begin with theology. The Maharal, a sixteenth-century Rabbi from Prague, said the following: "Out of love for reason and knowledge, you should not summarily reject anything that opposes your own ideas, especially if your opponent does not intend merely to provoke you, but rather merely to declare his own beliefs. And even if such beliefs are opposed to your own faith and religion, do not say 'Speak not, close your mouth.' ... For one who causes his opponent to hold his peace and refrain from speaking demonstrates the weakness of his own religious faith. This is the opposite of what some people think: namely that when you prevent someone from speaking against religion this strengthens religion. But that is not so, because curbing the words of an opponent in religious matters is nothing but the curbing and enfeebling of religion itself."

The on-going relevance of The Maharal's words is clear. If Gibson, or any other purveyor of strong religious ideology, intends to cause harm — or to expand the idea, knows that harm is a likely consequence — then we need not engage in discussion. But, if the proponent of a competing faith is espousing out of well-intentioned belief, then we should not seek to stifle it, for an enhanced religiosity for all can emerge. Again, leaving aside Gibson's motivation, what occurred to me after viewing the film was a deep appreciation for how we seek to inculcate Jewish identity in our students. For Christians, Jesus is central, particularly his suffering and crucifixion for they epitomize his sacrifice. For Jews, however, identity is not inextricably linked to a single strand of theology. At Emery/Weiner, for example, we refer to ourselves as *vigorously pluralistic*. That is to say, we expose our students to a wide range of choices

within the spectrum of Jewish identity: from religious options ranging from Orthodox to Reform and Reconstructionist, to secular affiliations ranging from humanist to ethnic and cultural, we teach that all are valid assertions of Jewish identity. And we are passionate about that.

We are also passionate about how our kids think. We do not expect, nor do we want, our students to accept all that they hear or read at face value — no matter what the source. In short, we want students at Emery/Weiner to evaluate critically. Which is why when several asked about assessing Gibson's film without having seen it, we agreed to go as a group (so long as they received parental permission, of course). However, in discussions that followed the viewing, we reminded the kids of not blindly accepting that which appeared on the silver screen as scripture — and, of not necessarily even accepting scripture as unsullied truth! In short, we implore our students to be intellectually acute and open-minded.

Lastly, as passionate as we are about our students being mentally-engaged, we are just as committed to their being emotionally-engaged. Specifically, we work very hard to develop in our kids a sense of obligation to and connection with others — both Jewish and non-Jewish alike. For instance, at our daily assemblies, we not only host a plethora of Rabbis (both local and from out-of-state), but we also invite speakers such as the Reverend Jim Nutter of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church, so that our kids are introduced to leaders of other faith communities. In addition, we have recently begun a collaborative program with YES College Prep, an inner-city, charter high school that caters predominately to Hispanics, so that our kids develop meaningful relationships with teenagers from very different backgrounds. (In fact, several YES students joined us for the ADL presentation.) And while the ultimate results of these efforts may take time to emerge, some are immediately palpable. For example, just this year alone our students have donated money, supplies or time to organizations such as Make-a-Wish Foundation, National M.S. Society, and Habitat for Humanity.

In the end, ours is not a production that reaps much press or any box-office receipts. But Emery/Weiner is very much about passion: a passion for academic achievement, spiritual growth, and moral development. And surely there can be no controversy about that!

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE NAME BRAND?

JONATHAN L. SILVER, HEAD OF UPPER SCHOOL



Jonathan L. Silver,
Head of Upper School

Is it possible, in one “think-piece,” to make a connection between the college admissions process and MTV? Bear with me as I make the case.

Our “Pioneer Class” is entering a phase of high school life that has been anticipated with some anxiety for nearly three years. From Emery High School’s perspective, preparation

for this phase began in earnest this past autumn, when junior class members and their parents began meeting with our college counseling staff to review expectations and formalize plans. From the perspective of many of our students and their parents, preparation for this phase began long ago, perhaps even before those months of decision-making about which high school to attend. But, alas, the time for preparation has now passed, and the college selection and admissions process is at hand: SATs, college visits, admissions interviews, summer enrichment, and college applications.

The anxiety that many of our students and their parents feel at this time of year is palpable, and it will no doubt build as the decisions over where our graduates will attend seem to slip from our collective grip into the hands of anonymous college admissions officers. **The root of this anxiety is not so much about the life-course change that moving on to college represents. The root of this anxiety, I would suggest, is in the fact that where our students attend college matters; it matters to them and to their parents, and it matters to the school. Why does it matter so much? It matters because “who we are” has become all wrapped up in a name.** I’ll come back to this, as it relates to college admissions, in a little bit.

During this past *Winterim*, Emery/Weiner teacher Sarah Olverson and I facilitated a class called “Youth for Sale: A Contemporary and Historical Glimpse of Advertising and Its Impact on Youth Culture.” A central thesis of the class was that adolescent identity formation has become increasingly and inextricably linked to consumption. What this means in

contemporary terms is that “you are what you buy.” Of course, while the focus of the class was on advertising and youth, the idea that one can literally *buy* social status and acceptance is not an objective and behavior restricted to those experiencing adolescence; the emergent set of consumer and marketing skills that today’s teens possess has been well endowed by their parents and grandparents. This is an argument that Thomas Hine makes in *I Want That: How We All Became Shoppers*. The acquisition of goods has been a central

mechanism of social status attainment throughout human history; and, in the late twentieth century, consumer goods became increasingly marketed to appeal not to our *needs* but to our desire for acceptance, attractiveness, and power.¹

On the first day of class, Sarah and I showed a PBS *Frontline* program, first airing in February 2001, entitled “The Merchants of Cool: A Report on the Creators and Marketers of Popular Culture for Teenagers.”² In short, the program explores the symbiotic and disquieting relationship of corporate America with America’s teens – corporate America eager to attract the billions of dollars

our American teens spend, and American teens, eager for certain brands, associating the consumption of these brands with social acceptance. The producers of the program expose how corporate America utilizes “spotters” and teen focus groups to determine the latest buying trends and interests; and the featured purveyor of what is “cool” is MTV and its many corporate sponsors and underwriters: media giants, the soft drink and fashion industries, and so on.

By now I’m sure you see the connection I’m making. It’s the same connection Alissa Quart makes in *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers*.³ **For many of us, our sense of self is wrapped up in the name recognition and reputation of the college we attend, just like it’s wrapped up in the name brands of the clothes we wear, the cars we drive, and the foods and drinks we consume.** MTV markets products that are associated with what teens think is “cool,” and

FROM THE 2001 PBS *FRONTLINE* PROGRAM “THE MERCHANTS OF COOL”

- There are 31.6 million 12-19 year-olds in the U.S. - the largest generation ever. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000)
- Teens are exposed to an estimated 3,000 ads a day. (Adbusters)
- 65% of U.S. teens have TV sets in their own rooms. (Kaiser Family Foundation)
- 83% of U.S. teens reported going online last year. (Teen Research Unlimited)
- Last year, U.S. teens spent an estimated \$105 billion and influenced their parents to spend an additional \$48 billion. (Teen Research Unlimited)
- In 1998, U.S. companies spent nearly \$200 billion on advertising. Worldwide ad spending is estimated at \$435 billion. (Advertising Age and the United Nations Human Development Report, cited in Klein)

(Continued on page 3) →

Congratulations! Mazel tov!



SPELLING BEE

(L to R): Aaron Picus (third place), Lisa Schwarz (first place), and Yarden Ran (second place).



SCIENCE FAIR

(L to R): Meredith Diskin (third place), Gerald Rich (second place), and Eric Helfman (first place).



MATH COUNTS

(L to R, Top Scoring Team): Joshua Cantor-Stone, Matthew Hochman, Michael Glombicki, and Shai Bernstein.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE NAME BRAND?

(Continued from page 2)

similarly, colleges and universities market themselves in ways that get them associated, in the eye of the public, with certain ideas about status, social acceptance, and power. Brand names matter because they allow people to show their position in society and to gain a sense of personal control over their surroundings. Getting accepted to and attending certain name brand colleges and universities help us achieve the same thing.

Of course there are differences between the consumable products market, like soft drinks, and the higher education market. If Soda X is the “coolest” with America’s teens, the Soda X Corporation sells more and produces more, and its consumers don’t have to compete with each other for a gulp. On the other hand, if College X is the “most prestigious” and “coolest” with America’s teens, acquiring it (getting in) gets more difficult. **Competitive admissions to the top fifty or so colleges and universities has turned childhood, according to Quart, into one long entrance exam. Our students shift their energies from learning to become informed consumers of higher education to learning how to market themselves to colleges and universities.** Whereas participation and leadership in co-curricular and extracurricular life, performing community service, attending tutorials, and studying for exams **used to have intrinsic value in the enrichment of high school life, increasingly students (and their parents) view these things as critical components to the college admissions application process.**

College preparatory schools are culpable too. Their “placement records” get judged, and the public makes assumptions about who they are as schools. This, of course,

has an impact on both student and faculty recruitment, critical factors to their bottom lines. So, in order to support their students in the college selection and admissions process and to maintain some semblance of control over their missions (and the public’s perception of these missions), they staff college counseling offices, offer advanced placement courses, sponsor a slew of extra-curricular clubs and activities, encourage additional standardized test preparation, and so on. Are there inherent virtues in each of these elements of a college preparatory program? Absolutely; but, in the final analysis, college placement is a measure of the business success of college preparatory institutions.

So, what does all this mean for members of the Emery High School community? First, though we may not like the fact that our identities seem inextricably linked to what we buy or that we experience considerable anxiety as we begin the college selection and admissions process, **we need to be more self aware and judge what matters more thoughtfully and deliberately.** And, we also need to set our consumerist tendencies aside every now and again, and focus on those things that we can give or produce instead. As one of my own mentors said to me many years ago, happiness in life is not about fulfilling needs, but by the quality of our deeds.

(Footnotes)

¹ Thomas Hine, *I Want That: How We All Became Shoppers* (NY: Harper Collins, 2002).

² You can view scenes from the “Merchants of Cool” at the following website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/>

³ Alissa Quart, *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2003).

KENNETH J. MCKENZIE TO SERVE AS HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL



Kenneth J. McKenzie

Head of School Stuart Dow recently announced that, after a nationwide search for candidates, he has selected current Acting Head of Middle School, Kenneth J. McKenzie, for the permanent position. Having completed a five year tenure at Emery/Weiner in positions including Dean of Students and Director of Technology, Ken is a natural fit and perfect choice.

In addition to his academic and administrative experience, Ken's background has included work in the educational quality movement. After receiving certification in Total Quality Management from the Juran Institute, Ken served as an examiner for Quality Texas carefully reviewing organizations for their performance, quality, and customer satisfaction ratings.

In his role as Acting Head of Middle School this past year, Ken has utilized his previous quality training to help navigate the school's curriculum and co-curricular programming. "Everything is on the table," commented Ken.

Ken's extensive work experience has spanned the middle school, high school, and college levels in both academic and administrative roles. Prior to joining Emery/Weiner in 1998, Ken taught high school business and technology classes and also served as an adjunct faculty member teaching undergraduate management courses. His administrative roles at the college level have included Assistant Director of Continuing Education, Academic Advisor, Assistant Director of Transfer Admission, and Associate Director of Admission.

"We should take a look at all aspects to see where we can make improvements, and we should stretch ourselves to be the very best."

- Kenneth J. McKenzie

Education has always been of great importance to Ken. "I knew at seven years old that I wanted to be a teacher," he said. "My love of teaching drove me to this position. My love of kids drives everything, as nothing is more important." This passion for education prompted him to pursue a B.S. in Business Education at Bryant College (Smithfield, RI), from where he also later received an M.B.A. in Management.

"We should take a look at all aspects to see where we can make improvements, and we should stretch ourselves to be the very best."

Indeed, discussions for next school year are already underway. "I am committed to finding ways to excite kids," Ken said. "They should be passionate about their culture and who they are, and we should find engaging, powerful ways to do that for them."

"Under Ken's guidance, the middle school is assured of continued and expanded excellence," commented Stuart. "The extraordinary reaction from the community since my announcement has re-affirmed my sense that this was the right move." Ken's background combined with his familiarity of the school community and traditions truly make him the perfect fit for Head of Middle School. Please join us in wishing Ken congratulations and continued success.



Adam Feldman, Seventh grade student

I Have A Dream

I have a dream that black, yellow, red, and white can live in the world equally. They can eat, live, study, read, and write together, without discrimination. They are happy. They don't kill. They don't need bulletproof vests. They don't fight. We will be equal.

יש לי חלום

יש לי חלום שחור, צהוב, אדום ולבן גרים בעולם שווים. הם אוכלים, גרים, לומדים, קוראים וכותבים ביחד. אין הפליה. הם שמחים. הם לא הורגים. הם לא צריכים מגן, הם לא נלחמים. אנחנו נהיה שווים.

PRACTICE SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST (PSAT) RESULTS

Emery/Weiner eleventh graders recently took the Practice Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). The scores of the 39 students ranged from the 33rd to the 99th percentile, which is consistent with our mission as a community school of educating students of a broad academic spectrum. **Nearly 40% of students scored in the 90th percentile or higher, with approximately 13% scoring in the 98th percentile or higher.**

Standardized test scores are one piece of a student's academic profile considered by college admissions officers, which also includes transcripts, grade point average, and class position. Also reviewed are a student's record of personal achievements — extra-curricular participation, leadership experiences, volunteer work, and summer experiences — and the compulsory components of the application itself, such as the essay and letters of recommendation from teachers. In sum, colleges are looking for evidence of a mind at work, intellectual curiosity, and personal initiative.

Currently, our juniors are in the process of investigating colleges via guide books, brochures, websites, college fairs, and college visits. At this stage in the college search process, students are focusing their research on the different college types: liberal arts or pre-professional; small, medium or large; public or private; urban or rural, etc. Once a preferred type has been determined, a student is ready to start identifying particular colleges of that type for more in-depth investigation.

Stay tuned for further updates about the Emery/Weiner "Pioneer" Class of 2005 as they embark on the college application process. For more information about the college counseling program, please contact Judy Muir, Advisor to College Counseling and Special Projects, or Melissa Rosenstock, College Counselor, at 832-204-5900.

ROTHSCHILD SOCIETY

As you know, The Emery/Weiner School is the result of an ambitious community dream. It's something we needed and wanted for a very long time. Now that the vision of The Emery/Weiner School is fulfilled, strong community support is essential. At most non-profits and independent schools, operating funds are the most difficult to raise. With the leadership of the first three member families of The Rothschild Society—including **Martha and Donald Freedman** and **Shirley and Bill Morgan**—we are off to a tremendous start in raising such critical money.

In the spirit of Baron de Rothschild, who was instrumental in providing great financial assistance to the early Zionist settlements in the late nineteenth century, this society is comprised of individuals who help underwrite Emery/Weiner in its infancy. For Rothschild, the threats to Jewish continuity were the pogroms and anti-Semitism of Eastern Europe; thus he responded. For us, the threat to Jewish continuity is assimilation and lack of education; thus we too must respond. The embryonic State of Israel could not have been born without Rothschild.

Similarly, our school needs Rothschild-like support. Members of this society will be recognized publicly and permanently with a plaque to be mounted on The Rothschild Wall in the Freedman/Kaplan Commons in addition to being acknowledged through other benefits, including a table at the Joy of Education Dinner for four years. Rothschild Society membership requires a \$100,000 gift, payable over four years (minimum \$25,000 per year). For more information, please contact Amy Grinstein at 832-204-5900, extension 123.

MITBACH - THE KITCHEN CABINET

The head of every organization has a select group of people whom he or she relies on for counsel. These individuals may not have official or designated titles, but they serve a central role in providing ideas and advice. Hence they are often referred to as a kitchen cabinet – for frequently it is the informal conversations that take place around a kitchen table that prove to be the most important in charting an institution's strategic direction.

Emery/Weiner is looking to create its own Kitchen Cabinet – or *Mitbach*, in Hebrew – made up of persons willing to share their expertise and their resources. Members of *Mitbach* will, among other benefits, be recognized permanently with a plaque mounted on The Mitbach Wall in the Freedman/Kaplan Commons and will receive a table at the Joy of Education Dinner. Membership to *Mitbach* requires an annual gift of \$18,000 made for two consecutive years.

For additional information regarding *Mitbach*, please contact Amy Grinstein at 832-204-5900, extension 123.

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE
TO CONTRIBUTE TO ANNUAL GIVING!**

**We still need to raise \$25,000 to reach our goal.
To make a gift, please contact Amy Grinstein
at 832-204-5900, extension 123.**

EMERY HIGH SCHOOL

Upon returning from winter break, Emery students and faculty participated in a two-week *Winterim* program and in the afternoon, they returned to campus to broaden their horizons through unique course offerings. Bend National Park (ninth grade), the Texas Hill Country (tenth grade), and East Texas (eleventh grade). Re

COURSE C

A Brief History of the Western Film

Coffee and *The Times*

Crime Scene Investigations

Five Great Movies You've (Probably) Never Seen

Hollywood, America, and War: Changing Representations of America's Armed Conflicts, From the American Revolution to the Present

Jewish Cooking and Baking

Magic: Theory and Practice

Mutinous Melodies: Protest Music and Songs of Social Conscience

Nature Readings and Writing

Painting on Silk Fabric

COMMUNITY SE

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY - students participated and helping construct one of thirty-eight affordable h

KIDS MEALS - students packed and delivered

LIBERIAN REFUGEES - through Interfaith Ministries, Emery apartments, and took refugees on a trip to the Houston for a group birthday party

SENIORS - students spent time with seniors at Acres Home, Inc

SHELDON LAKE STATE PARK - students worked with park r

SOUP KITCHEN - students volunteered at House of Tiny

T.H. ROGERS - Emery students worked with several including motor and



L - WINTERIM 2004

. During the first week, students spent their mornings involved in various service projects in the community. The second week of *Winterim* found students and faculty immersed in exploring the outdoor scenery of Big and more about and see photos from these outdoor education trips on page 8.

OFFERINGS

Play I Some Music: The Cultural, Political, Social, and Religious Roots of Reggae

Reincarnation: Jewish Textual Analysis

Scientific and Religious Cosmology

Strategies for Game Shows and Games

Superhero Pseudoscience

The Super Bowl: What's All the Hype About?

Women with a Message, Women with a Mission

Writing Song Lyrics

Yoga and Meditation

Youth for Sale: A Contemporary and Historical Glimpse of Advertising and Its Impact on Youth Culture

SERVICE PROJECTS

ed in SUPERBUILD XXXVIII, raising over \$15,000 homes built in the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl.

lunches for low-income children, aged 2 to 6.

ry students organized household donations, helped set-up on Zoo. Students also collected materials and goodies held in the refugees' honor.

pendent Heights, and Heritage Sam Houston congregate sites.

rangers to plant trees and clear paths for handicapped access.

y Treasures, SEARCH, Loaves & Fishes, and Star of Hope.

ely- and multiply-impaired children in various areas communication skills.



At Emery/Weiner, we believe in the tremendous value of experiential learning and hence incorporate field trips as a regular, integral part of our educational program. Especially at the high school level, we see part of our role as educators as helping our students become more independent learners, thinkers, and actors. The following eleventh grade *Winterim* trip memoir from high school physics instructor Chris Spenner serves as a metaphor for having in some way succeeded in that endeavor.

RATIONALIZING AN OUTDOOR DISCOVERY



Chris Spenner,
HS Physics
Instructor

Strange, I thought, *I haven't even started paddling yet*. My scientific curiosity piqued; I experimented with dipping the flat of my canoe paddle vertically into the water, normally an effective braking technique. No effect. We sped onwards. The default motion of my canoe had turned from elephant-on-a-tricycle before lunch to rocket-powered luge once we were back on the water after lunch.

Aristotle would be pleased by my discovery that canoes are inherently motile, I mused, but my inner-modern-scientist discarded the archaic notion and cast about for an alternative explanation for my canoe's newfound velocity. *Perhaps quantum uncertainty would allow for a rift in local thermodynamics...*

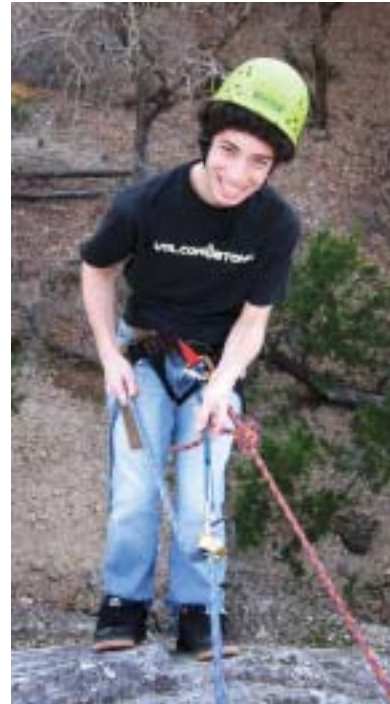
My philosopho-science reverie was interrupted by a knobby and painful looking tree branch approaching in the waters ahead. I again dipped my paddle into the water, this time at an angle, ruddering the canoe safely around the obstacle. Amanda, one of my physics students, had taken the bow seat in my canoe after the lunch break. She paddled with Olympian strength, slowing neither for trees, riverbanks, other canoes, nor laws of physics.

"Amanda, you can stop rowing for a bit if you get tired."

She showed no signs of tiring, and our canoe no signs of slowing. My ego struggled briefly with the notion that I should be doing something besides swishing the blade of my paddle from side to side, correcting our trajectory in response to Amanda's powerful strokes. Eventually I relaxed, enjoying the water, breeze, sun, and trees. Satisfied to see one of my students excel, I even convinced myself that I contributed as we pulled our canoe up the bank at our take-out point.

Before long, she will be able to paddle that canoe to the moon and back without my help.

Thank you, Amanda, for trusting me enough to let me steer for a while.



ILONA THOMSON TO BE HONORED AT UPCOMING GALA JUDY MUCASEY & SHARI RIESENFELD, PTO CO-PRESIDENTS

Organizations, if created and nurtured correctly, should continue to grow after its founders and visionaries leave. If stocks are rising and employees are talented, a CEO or Chairman can retire, and the company will continue to scale new heights.

The same is true with a school. If the right teachers and administrators have been hired, if expansion and success has taken root, and if the proper atmosphere has been created, a school will continue to grow despite a change in leadership.

Due to health reasons, Ilona Thomson took the reluctant steps to retire at the end of the 2002-'03 school year after serving as Principal and Head of I. Weiner for eight years.

During Ilona's tenure, the school saw its enrollment double, its staff expand and improve, and its course and extra-curricular offerings swell. Ilona's creativity and vision transformed I. Weiner into a diverse school that could include students with varying abilities and talents.

On March 24, 2004, at the annual Emery/Weiner Gala and Preview Performance, Ilona will be honored for her work and commitment in enhancing the school.

Hundreds of us will gather in the Becker Theater to enjoy the annual musical production that has come to symbolize the school's philosophy of team work. We will enjoy a light meal followed by the presentation of Ilona Thomson as the Emery/Weiner PTO Gala Honoree for 2004. Then we will sit back and be entertained by the extraordinary accomplishments of our middle school students, their directors, and crew. This year, the students will present *Anything Goes*, and it is sure to delight.

Finally, we want to thank all of those who have already shown tremendous

support for this event with underwriting commitments which, to date, total over \$20,000. Your support of the school and of Ilona has been overwhelming.

Please join us for an extraordinary and meaningful evening of children, theater, and our special thanks to Ilona. We hope to see you there.



L to R: Kickoff Event Chair Wendy Starr; Honoree Ilona Thomson; and Gala Chairs Julie Scheinthal, Sandra Finkelman, and Minette Hiller.

Gala and Preview Performance

Wednesday, March 24, 2004
5:45 pm Dinner & Dessert
7 pm Presentations
7:30 pm *Anything Goes*

Gala Honoree

Ilona Thomson

Gala Chairs

Sandra Finkelman, Minette Hiller,
& Julie Scheinthal

Gala Tickets

Sky Deck Seats: \$200 each
Horizon Deck Seats: \$100 each
Children under 18: \$36 each
(accompanied by an adult)

Seating will be made in the order in which reservation checks are received.



Director

Larry Dachslager

Musical Director

Michael Mertz

Technical Director & Choreographer

Joshua Harbour

Play Performances

Thursday, March 25, 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 28, 2 pm
Monday, March 29, 7:30 pm

Play Tickets

\$10

The Becker Theater
The Emery/Weiner School
9825 Stella Link

For more information regarding:

Gala and Preview Performance
Sandra Finkelman, 713-723-0456
Minette Hiller, 713-729-0665
Julie Scheinthal, 713-218-0942

Play Performances

Judy Feinstein, 713-663-6505
Patti Hanfling, 713-665-4627

CHALK TALK WITH COACH HARRELL

BILL HARRELL, DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS & ACTING DEAN OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS



Bill Harrell,
Director of Athletics
and Acting Dean of
MS Students

This is an exciting time in athletics. Memories of the Super Bowl are fresh in our minds; playoff races are heating up in basketball and hockey; and baseball training camps are creating daily headlines. It is also a time of transition in Emery/Weiner athletics. The winter seasons have wrapped up, and the spring teams are in their first weeks of practice.

Our winter basketball and soccer teams have finished their seasons. In high school basketball, our varsity boys' team just completed its first competitive season in TAPPS (Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools). The team ended the year with a 7-9 record and a fifth place finish in District 13-2A. The 2-8 district record misleads since 5 of the 8 losses were by 6 points or less, including a heartbreaking loss to Texas Christian after a 45 foot three-pointer at the buzzer. Regardless of record, four Emery High School players were selected for all-district honors. **Tenth grader Greg Cohen** was selected to the All-District First Team ranking seventh place in our district. **Eleventh grader Felix Digilov** was selected as the first player on the All-District Second Team ranking eleventh in the district. **Tenth grader Daniel Barvin** and **eleventh grader Josh Lavine** both received Honorable Mention status. The Jaguars appear very competitive for next year as they move up to the 3A Division.

In girls' soccer, our high school ladies finished in eighth place out of eleven teams in TAPPS Division 2 District 3. They faced extremely tough competition in district play with several games decided by a single goal. This year, the quality of play in our district was definitely the best in the state, with the state championship Final Four comprised entirely of District 3 teams. The Emery girls gained experience and confidence that they will carry into next year's season.

Our middle school boys and girls had fantastic winter seasons. The girls' soccer team shined, finishing the year with a record of 9-2-1 and earning the Runner-Up award for 2003-'04. The only losses of the season came at the hands of the Awty International School, who claimed the championship of the Greater Houston Athletic Conference.

In middle school basketball, our teams ran into some tough competition but showed a remarkable sense of team play and sportsmanship. Season highlights included two wins over St. John's by the girls' basketball team and an upset win by the seventh grade boys' over perennial powerhouse Westbury Christian. The eighth grade boys capped their season with a stunning double-digit victory over John Cooper.

While not receiving the media attention of Roger, Andy,

Yao, and Steve, our athletes are now hard at work in spring athletics. In the middle school, 14 young ladies are representing our school in softball while 17 co-eds are training and competing in track and field. The girls' softball team has a busy 15-game schedule, while the track athletes will be competing in eight meets. Check out the sports calendar online to see when our teams are in action.

At the high school level, new traditions are beginning. Emery is fielding in baseball, golf, and tennis with all three teams competing in TAPPS District play for the first time. The baseball team, coached by Oscar Larranaga, Lito Diano, and Barry Glauben (middle school parent), has six members of last year's squad returning to the Jaguars' lineup. In tennis, three players are returning from last year, and the squad has already experienced great success in dual matches with a few of our district teams. The District Tournament for tennis will be held on March 23, and Coach Kirk O'Neal hopes to qualify several members of our squad for the state tournament to be held in Waco April 23-24. Our first-ever golf team is competing at several area tournaments with the regional qualifying tournament being held on April 8. Good luck to all students participating in spring sports!

As mentioned in an earlier *Kotarot*, Emery High School is continuing to explore additional athletic programs. I am pleased to announce that we will be starting a six-man football team this August. Information has been mailed to all high school and eighth grade students, and a mini-camp will be held in May to give students a chance to learn more about six-man football. Watch for future news on the football team and the fall schedules for football and girls' volleyball.

EMERY HIGH SCHOOL SIX-MAN FOOTBALL TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

May 3-7	Spring Training - Mini-Camp
May 10-14	Spring Training - Mini-Camp
Aug. 2-6	Week One of Training Camp/Practice
Aug. 9-13	Week Two of Training Camp/Practice
Aug. 14	Scrimmage against Brazosport
Aug. 19	Scrimmage against Brenham Christian
Aug. 21	Game against Faith Christian - Pasadena
Sept. 4	Game against First Baptist - Pasadena
Sept. 9	Game against Texas Christian
Oct. 15	Game against Bellville Faith

BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

VICKI ATKINS, BUSINESS MANAGER & AMY GRINSTEIN, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

In the Development and Business Offices, we like to think of Emery/Weiner's development program as a bicycle wheel with five main spokes, which, when pumped with financial resources, keep the school in motion. The five main components of fundraising through the development department are the Joy of Education Dinner, the annual giving *Campaign for Educational Excellence*, capital campaign pledges, foundation grants, and endowment.

When the school moved to our new facility for the 2001-'02 academic year, the Board anticipated an operating deficit until after our first class had graduated and gone off to college. We are making good progress each year in reducing operating deficits through increased enrollment and careful management, but tuition alone—which we know is not insignificant—covers only 63% of the cost of educating our students. Therefore, fundraising plays a vital role in maintaining Emery/Weiner's financial health.

The Emery/Weiner School is not unique in this regard. At most independent schools, tuition does not cover the cost of educating each student. The same is true with us. Our tuition shortfall before fundraising is approximately \$4,763 per student, and fundraising efforts subsidize tuition by about \$1,792 per student. This is why the development department must raise more than \$600,000 in this fiscal year alone.

The good news is that there are so many ways that we can all contribute—

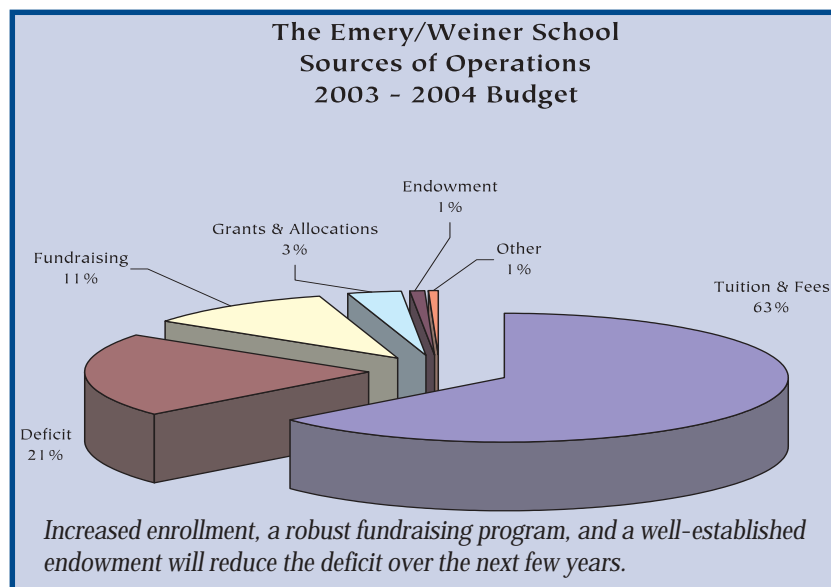
- **Participate in the *Campaign for Educational Excellence*.** We have raised over \$80,000 of our \$105,000 goal, but we still have a way to go. Gift cards can be found on our website at www.emeryweiner.org or in the school lobbies.
- **Honor or memorialize a friend or loved one with a tribute gift.** We send a personalized card to your designee with news of your generosity. Tribute forms can be found at www.emeryweiner.org.

- **Designate that your pledge increase to the Houston Jewish Federation's United Jewish Campaign be sent to The Emery/Weiner School.** Simply check the appropriate box on your pledge form.

In the next several months, you will hear more about a streamlined and increasingly efficient fundraising program. This school year, under the leadership of the development

committee and its chair, Wendy Starr, we have identified ways to relieve parents of constant requests for money while increasing our effectiveness to raise what we need. We cannot wait to share the details! Stay posted...

In the meantime, thank you for all that you do to ensure the success of The Emery/Weiner School.



DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

- Thanks to **Best Buy** for choosing us as recipients of a 2004 Te@ch Award! This \$2,500 grant will be used to fund technology enhancement. Todd Guthrie and Mark Fuller were instrumental in securing these funds.
- The **Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE)** has chosen our capital campaign as a best practice model to share with other schools as part of their Knowledge Exchange program.
- **Leave a Legacy...** By creating a charitable trust, gift annuity or bequest, you provide for the future. Your charitable gift can also offer you and your family substantial financial benefits and tax savings while making a lasting impact. The Emery/Weiner School also participates in the Houston Jewish Community Foundation's *Dor L'Dor Society* for legacy giving. Please contact Amy Grinstein, Director of Development, at 832-204-5900, extension 123 for more information.



The Emery/Weiner School

Connecting with the Past, Preparing for the Future

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Important Dates to Remember

Middle School

March
18-19 No school; mini-break
24 *Anything Goes* Gala/
Preview, 5:45 PM
25, 29 *Anything Goes*, 7:30 PM
28 *Anything Goes*, 2 PM
31 Earth Day; 2:50 PM dism.
April
3-13 No school; Passover break
18-22 8th Grade Washington Trip
29 4th Grade Recruitment
Event, 7 PM
May
13 Middle School Dance, 7 PM
26-27 No school; *Shavuot*
28 6th/7th grade Field Day -
2:50 PM dism.; 8th grade
no school - study day
31 No school; Memorial Day

High School

March
12 Emery Dedication
Ceremony, 11:30 AM
14-19 Spring Trips
30 ISEE Exam - 9th grade
April
3-13 No school; Passover break
21 College Coffeehouse,
7:30-9 AM
May
5-7, 10 AP Testing
21 Field Day
26-27 No school; *Shavuot*
31 No school; Memorial Day

Visit us on the Web at www.emeryweiner.org