

The American Hebrew Academy: A Once in a Lifetime Experience

By Miriam Smallman

As a graduate of the American Hebrew Academy (AHA), I cannot help but smile as I recall the fond memory of my first visit to the Academy. On a cool October day, my family made the trip to Greensboro, North Carolina, and entered the Academy's green gates to look at this unique, Jewish boarding school. Although initially shy, I was captivated by what I saw that day in the buildings nestled on the open, woodsy campus. Modern-day technology complemented a dual Jewish/secular curriculum to create a one-of-a-kind Jewish living and learning com-

munity. I ate in the kosher dining hall, toured a dorm room, and chatted with students from around the world.

That day marked the beginning of what has been an incredible four years at the Academy. I entered as a nervous freshman, and through the opportunities and experiences provided to me, I have become the person I am today. Being away from home has strengthened my independence and self-responsibility, while living in a dorm has allowed me to form connections one does not get by just seeing each other at school every day. Your friends are not just

your classmates—they are the people you pray next to during weekend services and your athletic teammates. AHA, where I entered as that shy fourteen year old, is where I really grew up, having learned much about myself and forever grateful to AHA for guiding me through my adolescence.

I sometimes wonder what would have become of me had I not chosen to attend the Academy. I certainly would not have studied abroad in Israel for three months during my Junior year, nor would I have probably not had the opportunity to play varsity soccer. With each year that I've risen through

the ranks, I've learned more about the institution as well as myself: four years ago, I would not have been able to imagine that I'd be matriculating to George Washington University in the fall with a Merit Scholarship, but the Academy gave me all the tools I needed to get there.

When I returned home from that initial visit to the Academy, I scribbled a note on my dry erase board that read: "AHA was AHA-wesome!" It's still there. ☆

Miriam Smallman is a senior (class of 2012) at the American Hebrew Academy originally from Charlotte, North Carolina. Miriam is a member of AHA's varsity girls soccer team (Go Eagles!), Cheesewagon—AHA's comedy improvisation troupe—and contributes to/participates in



Miriam Smallman

editing *Unbound*, AHA's literary magazine. Miriam has one sister, Abby (class of 2015), also attending the Academy, and Miriam will be matriculating to George Washington University in the fall of 2012.

Where the Wild Things Were

By Dr. Erica Brown

(JointMedia News Service) -- Where will the wild things go now? More than children's literature lost out with the death of Maurice Sendak, a world-famous artist and writer of children's



books who died May 8 at 83—but not before upending a world of fear by exposing it. His book, *Where the Wild Things Are*, has become an American classic mostly because it radically altered our depiction of childhood innocence. Instead of pastel colors and play

toys, Sendak gave children a chance to look at the monsters that live outside of us so that they could look at the monsters that live within.

In 2009, Sendak told the Associated Press that, "There's a cruelty to childhood, there's an anger." He did not view childhood as a place of safety but as a place of untold demons. Sendak had many of his own. His parents immigrated to the United States from Poland, and he was tortured as a child by images of what happened to his remaining family during WWII. He believed that his writings were a way to confront the sadistic nature of human beings and allow the memories of those in his past to live on through his words and illustrations.

In a radio interview, Sendak confessed that he believed that children were never troubled by his work, only adults. Children related to his images; they loved his monsters. The criticisms he received across his career came from adults who were afraid to associate childhood with darkness.

Elie Wiesel, who was not as lucky as Sendak to be on American shores during the

Holocaust, wrote about fear in many of his works. The quote above comes from his play, *Zalman, Or the Madness of God*. Wiesel faced fear, not as an abstract image lying under a bed or in a closet, but as a real, tangible force to be reckoned with

daily. In an interview, he described the fear that would grip him and other children on Christmas and Easter when neighbors often beat up neighborhood kids. That fear only got worse. He understood, too, how fear paralyzes us and torments us, preventing us from actualizing our best selves. As an adult he overcame many of these fears and became a force for religion and humanitarianism. Not afraid to speak out, Wiesel gave license to others to tell their most frightening stories and thereby gain control over them.

But perhaps our deepest fears are not to live in darkness but to



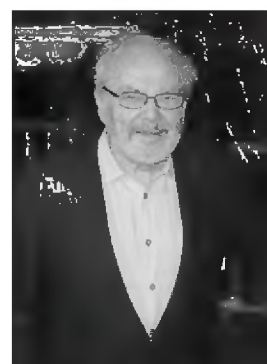
Dr. Erica Brown

live in light. Marianne Williamson tapped into this fear and writes, "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us...You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world."

Ironically, we often fear our success. Through the illustrator's imagination or through the cold facts of Jewish history, we have been handed an opportunity to face our fears, to overcome them and ultimately to shine. ☆

Dr. Erica Brown is a writer and educator who works as the scholar-in-residence for the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and consults for the Jewish Agency and other Jewish nonprofits. She is the author of *In the Narrow Places* (OU Press/Maggid); *Inspired Jewish Leadership*, a *National Jewish Book Award* finalist; *Spiritual Boredom*; and *Confronting Scandal*.

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Maurice Sendak, z"l

Israel, Part 19: Winery and Bonfire; Good-bye to the Galilee

By Amy Krakovitz

On the way back from Zippori, we get a choice: the Arab circus in Carmiel or a winery. It doesn't take much convincing for the busload to choose a winery in the area. We stop at the Meister Winery in Rosh Pina. After retiring from a career in banking, Yakov Meister opened this unique

winery, with its vats, processing equipment, and tasting room in some natural caves adjacent to the vineyards. In addition to the grapes, he grows other fruits and creates fruit liquors and olive oils as well.

While those too young to partake of wine stayed outside and played with the Meister family dogs, the adults enjoyed several kinds of red wines including a Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Shiraz. Mr. Meister also provided snacks in the form of crackers, goat cheese, and hyssop mixed with his own olive oil. The cavern location kept us cool and protected from the 100+-degree heat and we enjoyed both the wines and the company.

Mr. Meister explained the process as we toured the inner caves: growing, pressing, yeasting, fermenting, oaking. Doron said that the working in a winery is much more arduous than it appears: it's sticky work, always fighting bugs, freezing in the morning, steaming in the afternoons.



The bonfire on the last night at Kfar Blum.

That evening, back at Kfar Blum, the resort hosted a bonfire with roasted potatoes and corn on the cob. Though most of us were too full from our afternoon and dinner, we enjoyed the bonfire as a time to relax and socialize and to get to know one another better over a few bottles of the good Israeli wine we purchased that afternoon at Meister's. We knew that the next day we would be on our way from Kfar Blum and the Galilee and headed for our last stop of Tel Aviv.

Next: Caesarea, Haifa, Hadera



Kelly and Doug Wilson and Donna and Rich Gilbert.



Zack Gilbert with the Meisters' family dogs.

