



# THE AJAI!

## THE ASSOCIATION OF JAGUARS AGAINST ILLITERACY



# Tu Bishvat, the Day of Trees



## A Day to Count By Zalman Slonim

On February 2nd Hillel academy went on a trip for Tu Bishvat, but, what is Tu Bishvat? More than 3000 years ago, the Torah commanded that when people plant a fruit tree you were not allowed to touch the trees for the first 3 years of its life. This is called *orlah*. To keep track of time our Sages established Tu Bishvat about 2000 years ago. From this date they started to count from Tu Bishvat every year. The years of a tree are counted for mitzvot like *orlah* and *tithes*. Today, people celebrate Tu Bishvat as a holiday where people have a seder, and in our case, a field trip.



## The Field Trip

By Avromy Chein

On Tu Bishvat this year Hillel Academy went to Schaefer's Gardens greenhouse. When we got there Rabbi Shmaryahu was giving out flower crowns. After everyone got one the people who owned the greenhouse introduced themselves, and showed us around. Next, we went through a bunch of cold rooms to the workroom where we saw plants on a wagon. They told us this plant was a Jade tree and its scientific name is *Crassula Ovata*. We each picked a plant, repotted it with new soil and put it back on the wagon. Then it was time for the seder.



Everybody washed their hands and started the seder. We read, sang and ate the traditional Tu Bishvat foods. On the table and seder plate we had a pastry, pretzels, olives, raisins, cherries, blueberries, pomegranates, barley cookies, baby spinach, grape juice and apple juice. After the seder the owners told us a little about bugs before we went back to school.



# GREAT GROUNDHOGS DAY

By Jonah Kaminsky

Hello everybody, today we are going to talk about groundhogs day. Groundhogs day is celebrated on February 2nd, every year. But, what is groundhog's day? When and where did it originate?

Groundhog's day is when a groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil looks for his shadow. If he sees his shadow there are 6 more weeks of winter. Groundhog's day was a Germanic tradition used to decide whether winter would continue longer. When the hedgehog, an animal that hibernates, would get out and stay out of its den for a little while then it would be declared spring. When the Europeans came to America they could not find hedgehogs but they did find groundhogs. They thought that a groundhog looked close enough, so we ended up with groundhogs day. This year the groundhog saw its shadow so there will be 6 more weeks of winter.



# Animal Spotlight: Tiger Shark

Tiger sharks are a type of shark that are greenish grey on top and yellowish white on the bottom. Their color helps them blend in with the ocean. They have 8 fins and sharp teeth. They are called tiger sharks because they have stripes when they are young sharks. As they get older, the stripes fade away. Tiger sharks are one of the largest sharks in the world. Adult sharks are 10-14 feet (3-4 m) long but some grow up to 25 feet!

Tiger sharks are found in the open ocean and near the coast. They migrate when seasons change. Female tiger sharks are pregnant for 16 months. The eggs hatch inside of the mother and then she gives birth to 10-80 pups at a time. Pups are very fast when they are born. Baby tiger sharks are born with stripes that help them blend in with shadows on the ocean floor. Pups are full grown after 6-8 years!

Tiger sharks are carnivores. Their diets include sea turtles, fish and squid. They also eat seals, seabirds and other sharks. Some people call tiger sharks the trash cans of the sea because they will eat almost anything, even tires. Tiger sharks hunt mostly at night.

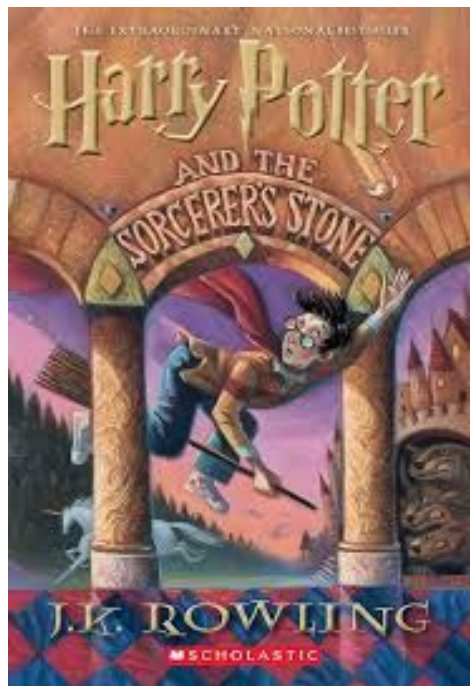


# BOOK REVIEW: HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

By Jonah Kaminsky

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone is the first of 7 books written by J.K. Rowling. Harry Potter takes place in a magical world, at a magical school called Hogwarts. Children spend 7 years learning about magic so they could be great wizards and witches. Harry Potter is about a boy that is famous for facing the “dark lord” as a baby and leaving with nothing but a lightning shaped scar. In the magical world non magical people are called muggles.

There are good and bad wizards and witches, pictures can move and talk, broomsticks can fly and they play a sport with the broomsticks called Quidditch. People use wands to do spells, there are many magical creatures, and some chocolates can jump. My favorite part of the book is when Harry encounters a troll in the bathroom. If you like magical and adventureful stories, then this is the book for you!



# The Tree Argument

By Jonah Kaminsky

