

YOUTH SCENE

By Alex Gottshall



IS "CULTURE" A DIRTY WORD?

OPINION

"If we organise a cultural function only a handful of kids attend, but if we have a dance it's an instant success even before getting off the ground."
That's the typical attitude of our youth leaders.

Week in week out there are dances, parties, cabarets, theatre evenings, folk nights, harbour cruises, ... you name it they have it.

Why oh why isn't there anything but the plain "social"?

The seven weeks between

The seven weeks between Pesach and Shavuoth is now on and that unfortunately means little youth activity.

The clubs are forced into hibernation because their social basis has been taken away from them.

Why don't the young people feel motivated to participate in something more than an ear-shattering and eye-straining dance?

...Wouldn't an interesting discussion or symposium on some controversial subject be different and stimulating?

Last week YOUTH SCENE attended a debate which proved our point.

Organised by JASA Forum Club, it was a send-up of the current Bi-centenary Celebrations, with the topic being "That the 'Endeavour' Sailed on a Sea of Chicken Soup".

Forum field a team of young students, **Ben Apfelbaum, Martin Einfeld & George Farkas**, taking the opposition, and the government were legal

and the government were legal eagles, Messrs **Jeffrey Caine, Phillip Segal & Marcus Einfeld.**

It was both entertaining and amusing and had the audience in fits of laughter.

They rollicked in the aisles at the satirical gems quoted by the speakers who left no stone in the community unturned (even this column was "dissected").

Captain Cook might have turned in his grave if he heard some of the things attributed to him and said of his discoveries.

But what about the attendance?

Only 50 friends bothered to go along.

The debate was well-advertised, yet the audience mainly comprised fellow Forum Club members with a sprinkling of parents.

Where were YOU?

You may say it's not your cup of tea, but just look at some of the programmes of the club, which was formed to encourage and develop debating public

and develop debating, public speaking and discussion amongst Jewish youth ... topics discussed at "talk-ins" recently have included the songs and style of Bob Dylan, unidentified flying objects, What is a Jew, are the mass media abusing their privileges, and anarchy.

The Forum debates and a handful of small-discussions are our youth clubs' contribution to the cultural life of the community.

The leaders seem too pre-occupied with organising pop turns.

We're not criticising the fact that dances are being held ... we realise that they are an integral part of the programme and help keep Jewish youth together.

But a balance is needed for a bit of learning would not hurt.

Or is culture a dirty word?

Hold it! ... we've just had a call from North Shore AZA who are planning the formation of a study group, similar to fellow-



Frank Wolf

ship Bible nights.

President, **Frank Wolf**, says the purpose of the weekly or fortnightly series of discussions will be to strengthen young ideas about our religion and make the youth aware of the many issues of Jewish concern.

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Commencing on Sunday, May 17 at 7.30 pm in the Gordon home of **Janet Devoss**, the discussion will be led by **Dr. Fred Ehrlich** and over a six-week period will cover what makes a Jew, rituals in Jewish life, Judaism and ethics.

Frank says he hopes they will stimulate thought on vital Jewish problems and provide a forum where these problems can be answered.

"Most youth have only a vague Sunday-school idea of their religion and have no place to go to learn during their teenage years," he said.

Using B'nai B'rith pamphlets sent from America, a committee comprising Frank and Janet, **Lynette Dessin & Peter Braude**, as well as BB Youth advisor **Mr Walter Frankel**, have spent days preparing for the series.

If the first set of meetings are a success, there'll be another coming up to discuss love and marriage within a Jewish context

Jewish context.

Our other youth clubs should follow the lead of North Shore AZA.

Judaism is a faith that is relevant in today's world, if only youth would be encouraged to learn.

The youth organisations are entrusted with the responsibility and must meet the challenge.

Our community cannot survive on dances alone, since our youth will be unable to accept leadership in the decades to come if ignorant of their faith.

As the Talmud (Nedarim 41a) says "None is poor but he who lacks knowledge".