

Bais Yaakov of Boro Park Annual Social Studies Fair

The annual secular studies fair at Bais Yaakov of Boro Park was always a reflection of the high educational aspirations of our principal, Mrs. Georgie Schorr. It was a synthesis of aesthetics, scholastics and technology, a goal-oriented project that presented the work of more than one thousand students. Unfortunately, this year, the fair, which was coordinated by Mrs. Schorr, was a tribute to her memory as well — as she was *nifteres* this past Shevat.

In the years that she led the English department, many programs were enhanced and many innovations were established. She expanded the school library, media center, science resources and resource room, for example, and initiated classroom libraries, computer/lab centers, and trade book programs.

Mrs. Schorr was a shopper, as she harnessed much funding and government entitlement programs; naturally, she adhered to the state-mandated curricula, as she felt confident that every *frum* child had the potential and innate desire to succeed and accomplish. After nine years of her leadership, the learning environment is strong and secure. Her principles of administering to the needs of the holistic child have been engrained in the staff. The school has maintained its professional reputation through her efforts, her predecessor's efforts, and the efforts of the administration, all of whom miss her presence and impressive demeanor. *Tehi zichrah baruch.*

Bais Yaakov of Boro Park Sails Through Time:

There was a feeling of excitement



permeating the air,

As Bais Yaakov students prepared for their SS Fair.

Weeks were spent building, painting, doing research too,

It was remarkable to watch their talents shine through.

Mrs. Schorr always advocated the fair,

For she felt it benefited the students each year.

It gave each child an opportunity to excel,

As we've all witnessed so very well.

On February 26, their beautiful projects were displayed,

And viewed by every single grade. Parents and relatives were invited too,

To "*shep nachas*" from all that their children did do.

The auditoriums were decorated beautifully by Mrs. Nissen and Miss Cohen,

Who placed us all into a different time zone.

Through "time" the children really helped us sail,

As they portrayed different eras in

every detail.

The topics ranged from the Indians, the Colonies, and Age of Exploration, To the Intrepid, the Mayflower, and the presidents of our nation.

Both American and European history was included,

There was barely a topic that was excluded.

The fair turned out to be a smashing success,

For every child tried her best. As people have always said far and wide,

Of its teachers and students, Bais Yaakov can take great pride!

(By Mrs. Gantz — 4th grade Teacher)

On Tuesday, February 26, 2008, Bais Yaakov of Boro Park held an amazing event. With the help of many teachers, students, and devoted parents, the 4th- 8th grades proudly presented the school's Social Studies Fair.

As I walked into the auditorium, I could not believe my eyes. Loads of projects dotted the vast auditorium. I did not know where

to start! I walked past the beautiful model of the Empire State Building, the eye-catching Twin Towers and the Ellis Island display. Then I looked into a cellar filled with shining jewels. I enjoyed the England table, with its Queen Elizabeth, Big Ben, Fashion Shop and "Chunnel." The *Gedolim* of England display was really interesting and beautiful.

Our class worked on the Native American time period. One group did longhouses and roundhouses, by covering big baskets with fur. They made holes on top to let out smoke from the "fires" inside. The second, who portrayed hunting, fishing and planting, decorated Indians aiming a cardboard bow and arrow at animals, trees and grass, with an Indian holding a net and fishing, sitting at the edge of a pan filled with blue jello and toy fish. A pitchfork and some other planting tools were stuck through a

realistic-looking arrow sign. Indians stood near flowers. A small sign said, "The Three Sisters," and there stood corn, beans and squash. "Whenever I tell little boys about the three sisters, they get all upset — they wish it were the three brothers!" my principal joked.

The group that showed how native Americans dressed created a lifelike Native American figure, in a complete Indian costume, with moccasins. My group made igloos out of marshmallow fluff, marshmallows and cotton. We built a huge tepee, with smaller rows of tepees and a 'fire' with people sitting around. It felt so good to show my mother all the projects. All the endless hours of effort and hard work, truly paid off. We all felt so proud to be part of such a wonderful school! I write this article filled with pride!

(By C.M. Bergman - 4th Grader)

Dept. of State Envoy to Address UJO Breakfast

By the Friedlander Group

On Sunday, March 16, the United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg's Annual Legislative Breakfast will take place at the Continental Ballroom in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The goal of the breakfast is to bring together a distinguished array of communal, religious, political, governmental and civic leaders to express support for the thriving Williamsburg community and especially the crucial role UJO has played in facilitating its

growth and success.

This year's breakfast will be dedicated to the theme of combating anti-Semitism and the importance of protecting the sanctity of cemeteries. The UJO, under the leadership of its dynamic president Rabbi David Niederman, works vigilantly to represent the interests of the community concerning these issues, working closely with government to ensure that these fundamental liberties are protected in every facet of daily

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Rabbi Mordechai Becher Discusses Reaching Out To the Non-Observant

By Daniel Keren

Rabbi Mordechai Becher, senior lecturer for Gateways and author of Shaar Press's *Gateway to Judaism: The What, How and Why of Jewish Life*, spoke at Congregation Nachlas Yitzchok (Rav Oelbaum's shul) in Kew Garden Hills, Queens, on Motzoei Shabbos, February 23, about the obligation of all *frum* Jews to become more involved in the *kiruv* effort to bring non-religious Jews back to Torah. The lecture was sponsored by Project Inspire and was dedicated to the *refuah sheleimah* of Aish HaTorah's founder and dean, Rabbi Noah Weinberg (Rav Yisroel Noah ben Hinda).

Rabbi Becher began his talk by referring to the *Sifre's* comment on the *passuk* (*Devarim* 32:4) that says, "*Kel emunah v'ein avel.*" *Kel emunah* means that Hashem is a G-d of faith. The *Sifre* explains that Hashem believed in His world, and then He created it.

Without belief in something, Rabbi Becher noted, we are not going to create or invest in some-

thing. Every morning we say *Modeh Ani*, thanking Hashem for returning our souls to us, and we say "*rabbah emunasecha.*" This is usually translated as "Your faithfulness is great," but according to the *Sifre*, it might be translated as "Your faith in us is great."

The knowledge that Hashem has faith in us should infuse us with the capacity to have faith in ourselves. Harav Eliyahu Dessler, *zt"l*, points out that many of the greatest *aveiros* in the Jewish people's history were the result of incomplete belief in ourselves. The sin of the *Meraglim*, for example, came about because the spies did not believe that the Jewish people had the merit to conquer and enjoy the Promised Land.

Rabbi Becher said that Rav Yosef Ber Soloveitchik asked why believing in the chosenness of the Jewish People is not among the Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith. His answer is that this belief is embedded in the 12th principle — to believe in Moshiach. A belief in the coming of Moshiach means that we believe all Jews will do *teshuvah*

at the end of time, so that a belief in Moshiach also means a belief in *Klal Yisrael*. Rabbi Becher stated that Hashem believes in us, which makes us worthy of tremendous *siyatta diShamaya*.

Rabbi Becher recalled that when he was on the faculty of Ohr Somayach Yeshivah in Yerushalayim, he once traveled to South Africa to lecture. During his stay when he went on a picnic outing with a Johannesburg Rav, they encountered three backpackers. The rabbi waved to them and invited them over.

One of the backpackers said, "Kosher food! Haven't had that since my bar mitzvah." Rabbi Becher referred to this as *bageling* — an attempt by a Jewish person who does not have a very Jewish appearance to identify himself to one who does, and to form a connection with him.

Rabbi Becher's South African host invited the three backpackers to join their barbecue. One of the young men mentioned that his sole connection to Judaism

was an "Ask the Rabbi" electronic site to which he had been emailing questions for the past two years. It turned out that Rabbi Becher was the rabbi who had been answering his questions! The South African rabbi gave the young man his card and invited him to his synagogue in Johannesburg, the Sunnyroad Shul.

Two years later, Rabbi Becher was back in South Africa for another lecture series. While in shul, he was approached by a man with a beard and a yarmulke who asked, "Do you remember me?" It was that same backpacker.

Rabbi Becher explained that there is more to this story than the obvious *hashgachah pratis* that brought the two backpackers together with the rabbis. There is also the element of free will, which the South African rabbi used when he invited the young man to his shul.

Rabbi Becher continued that our obligation not to stand by when a fellow Jew is in trouble extends to spiritual trouble. The Torah demands that we step in

when spiritual dangers confront our brothers.

One need not be a *kiruv* professional to help non-religious Jews discover their precious Torah heritage. One of the problems of reaching out is non-*frum* Jews' stereotypical image of the Orthodox. "When we are friendly, when we smile, when we are open, when we explain something," Rabbi Becher said, "there is nothing better to eliminate [these] negative stereotypes."

He called on all those in the audience to sign up for a series of three workshops specifically designed to help members of the *frum* community reach out more effectively to their non-*frum* relatives, neighbors and colleagues at work. Project Inspire will conduct this three-part *kiruv* seminar in Queens at the Young Israel of Kew Garden Hills on Tuesday evenings — March 12, 19 and 26.

For information on the seminar or to inquire about similar Project Inspire training programs in your community, please call (212) 391-6710, extension 23, or email jhedaya@aish.com.