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HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL CENTER ZEKELMAN FAMILY CAMPUS

NEWSLETTER

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President's Message



Gary Karp

With the onset of a new year, the Holocaust Memorial Center has renewed vision and compelling aspirations. Through the tumultuous

upheaval in the financial markets and community fabric over the last sixteen months, we are truly fortunate to have in our midst a bedrock institution that has remained focused on its core values and essential purpose of illuminating the past and enlightening the future.

Our Executive Director, Stephen Goldman, has brought incredible energy and wisdom. The exemplary work of Dr. Guy Stern is world-renowned. The passion and dedication of each and every staff member, docent, volunteer, and Board member is contagious. I'm excited by the Holocaust Center's continued growth as a source of knowledge, with the artifacts and exhibits coming our way, and by the bridges we're building with surrounding communities.

Like all institutions, we face challenges, but there is an energy that serves as a catalyst for us to serve our very important mission.

In a world where the number of Holocaust survivors is diminishing, we must embrace the unique opportunity to hear their stories of courage, valor and perseverance. We must encourage as many people as possible to hear these firsthand accounts ... as that is true power: power to deliver the lessons of the Holocaust. They are people who were young, but unlike Anne Frank, survived to tell their stories. They are the people saved by righteous gentiles and they are the people who fought every which way to live. They are our friends, relatives and pillars of strength.

Anne Frank Sapling to Bloom in Michigan

"For there is hope for the tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease." Job 14:7

These words will soon become reality as our Holocaust Center becomes home to a sapling from Anne Frank's tree! Anne gazed upon this tree during her time in hiding and often included it in her diary: "thickly covered with leaves... on whose branches little raindrops shine, appearing like silver." While the life of the 150-year-old ailing horse chestnut tree is coming to an end, its symbolism will live on as the result of a competition sponsored by the Anne Frank Center, USA. The journey of 11 saplings from Amsterdam to sites in the U.S., including the

9/11 Memorial and the White House, began last April.

The tree itself will be quarantined for three years per the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but we are moving forward at full speed with plans for fundraising, exhibit design, and educational programs. The tree will be placed in a garden at the south side of the campus, allowing visitors to walk up the Ramp of the Righteous, and encounter a permanent Anne Frank Exhibit, including an attic stairwell, where visitors can view the tree through an attic pane.

The HMC is deeply indebted to Joel Smith of Neumann Smith Architecture; Randall K. Metz of Grissim, Metz, Andriese Associates Landscape

Architecture; and Gary Roberts of Great Oaks Landscape. Their professional documentation and sterling reputations went a long way toward the acceptance of our proposal.



An artist's rendering of the proposed Anne Frank tree exhibit.

IMAGE: COURTESY OF NEUMANN SMITH & ASSOCIATES

The Auschwitz Album: The Story of a Transport

On the day U.S. forces liberated Dora-Mittlebau concentration camp, a prisoner named Lili Jacob, ill with typhus and searching for warm clothes,

came upon a photo album hidden in an SS barracks cupboard. When she opened it, she discovered pictures depicting the arrival of a transport of Hungarian Jews at the infamous Auschwitz

concentration camp. To her horror and amazement, images of her family, friends, and herself were included in the album. She had been a prisoner at Auschwitz before being transferred to Dora-Mittlebau 1945. In 1980, Jacob donated the album detailing "The Death Factory" to Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel.

The Auschwitz Album: The Story of a Transport includes 40 black-and-

white photographic reproductions that document the arrival and imprisonment of 3,500 Hungarian Jews in Auschwitz-Birkenau. These

powerful images, taken by Nazi SS officers in May 1944, are the only visual evidence of what took place inside this notorious death camp. The exhibition, created for the United Nations to

commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, is at the Holocaust Memorial Center where it opened on the 65th anniversary of the liberation. It documents the unloading of the overcrowded trains, the selection process, the confiscation of property, and the preparations for execution.

The album likely was not intended for propaganda purposes, nor does it have any obvious personal use. One



Guests at the members' preview.

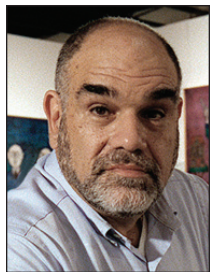
assumes that it was prepared as an official reference for a higher authority, as were photo albums from other concentration camps.

Lili never hid the album and news of its existence was published many times. She presented it as evidence at the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt during the 1960s. She kept it until the famous Nazi-hunter, Serge Klarsfeld, visited her in 1980 and convinced her to donate the album to Yad Vashem.

In 1994 the album was restored in Yad Vashem's conservation laboratory and information on each one of the photos entered into an archive database. Archive staff was able to compare and match the pictures with aerial photos taken by the U.S. Army Air Force on several occasions in 1944-45. In 1999 the entire album was scanned with the highest quality digital equipment.

**On exhibit at the HMC
January 27 – April 18**

From the Director's Chair



Stephen M. Goldman

I hope that you enjoy this first of our new quarterly newsletters. Placing it in the *Jewish News* provides us with a venue and circulation befitting our new look – reaching out, communicating openly about the programs, exhibits, educational products and special events that will define a new era in the life of the Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus.

As we enter our second quarter-century, the Center has undertaken a

massive effort to reach new heights, always keeping our Mission in sight, but striving toward a new future. There is a renewed excitement throughout the Center. We are providing higher levels of visitor service, bringing new constituencies to the Core Exhibit, and renewing the interest of our previous visitors, members, survivors, and past supporters through temporary exhibits like *The Auschwitz Album*, which opened with a special members' event on the sixty-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Each new exhibit will provide a perspective on the Holocaust and

Jewish history. Survivor artists, Israeli artists, historical exhibitions and photography, sculpture, music and the performing arts will illuminate the themes ever-present in Jewish life.

There will always be a reason to return to the Holocaust Memorial Center: let us take you from a transport coming to Auschwitz in *The Auschwitz Album*, to the almost surreal art of Samuel Bak, whose first exhibition was in the Lodz Ghetto when he was a child and all of whose work is colored by his life in the ghetto and survival, and to who-knows-where. Exhibits will come to us from the Smithsonian Institution, the

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Jewish Museum of Vienna, Yad Vashem, and from around the world.

Join with us as we reinvent the idea of a Holocaust Center. Become a member or renew your membership, sponsor an exhibit or program, use the library, volunteer, or just come and visit. Let us know how you like our newsletter. Come and learn, come and see the hundreds of school children who come to the Center each day, rejoice in the message of hope that YOUR Holocaust Memorial Center sends to its visitors.

Come on in and catch the excitement.

School Collects Pennies, Raises Awareness

Cristy Berger still remembers coming to the Holocaust Center with her school 20 years ago. When she began teaching at her alma mater, she was happy to see that the trip had become an annual tradition for 8th grade Language Arts students at this Madison Heights middle school.

Now coordinator of the trip, Cristy sees the HMC not only as a place for

students to gain valuable knowledge of a historical event, but also a venue for truly understanding the terror inflicted on the Jewish people.

Last year, Cristy realized that her students learned something else: During a post-tour discussion, the students kept talking about the “paper clip” display. The number 6,000,000

is a difficult one to grasp. But their Survivor's story and this display led the students to conceive of a “6 Million Penny Drive,” in which they would share their knowledge and ask neighbors to donate their pennies as a way of helping to understand just how many men, women, and children actually perished during this horrific period.

Cristy feels that the Holocaust Center helps stu-

dents see beyond their own surroundings and begin to learn and care about others. “No matter how many times you visit, you always leave with a new experience. This is why I will continue to bring my students every year.” As of their most recent visit in January, Wilkinson School students had collected 125,000 pennies.



Wilkinson students (far left and right) Vosta Zaia and Larsa Murad initiated the Penny Project in 2009. They are joined by teacher, Cristy Berger and Executive Director Stephen M. Goldman.

Why give to the Holocaust Memorial Center?



David M. Moss

The answer is within these walls, and all around you.

Before deciding to work here, I asked myself whether I'd give to the

Holocaust Center. One of the first rules in fundraising is that you make your own gift before asking others to do so.

Why do I give?

I give in memory of those who perished in this most horrible of atrocities.

I give in recognition of those lucky enough to escape via the Kindertransport or through the altruistic acts of a righteous person who risked his or her own life to save the life of a Jewish stranger.

I give as a tribute to those who endured subhuman conditions and unimaginable acts in the Nazi concentration camps, but somehow survived to taste freedom once again.

Why should you give?

Give because it feels good. Or give until it feels good!

Give because by doing so, you are standing up against antisemitism, bigotry and intolerance.

Give because each donation, no

matter how big or how small, is used by our Holocaust Center for the purpose of engaging and educating a new generation of youth. These are the people we must count on to tell the story once there are no more living witnesses.

We need your support!

The Holocaust Center does not charge for admission. We feel that nobody should be turned away from the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust. We don't receive allocations from the State of Michigan, or from the Jewish Federation. To keep our doors open, we rely on the kindness and commitment of the community --people like you who believe that

we should all support this shining monument to the memory of Holocaust victims.

We do seek out grant dollars from corporations and foundations. When applying, it makes our case that much stronger when we can say that our community, Jews and non-Jews alike, support our Holocaust Center.

What I will leave you with is *Tikkun Olam*. By giving to the Holocaust Center -- and that gift could be in the form of money, time, or professional expertise, you create hope for future generations. You ensure that the world will not forget. You see to it that this kind of tragedy never happens again. You help repair the world.

Recognizing Unnamed Heroes of the Holocaust

By Dr. Guy Stern

At the end of a tour, our visitors frequently linger before the panels displaying the pictures and deeds of the righteous during the Holocaust. But one heroic group of rescuers has never been recognized: anonymous rescuers who performed spontaneous - literally within minutes - acts of altruism. I have nicknamed them "minute-men and -women."

We hear of them from unimpeachable witnesses, the survivors, who can recall the moments that changed their lives, but they cannot tell the slightest detail about the identity of their saviors. Such a miracle happened to our accomplished

"painter-in-residence," Samuel Pruchno. On a foggy morning in 1945, the ailing, utterly exhausted 13-year-old Samuel was on a death march near Dachau. He ran into a nearby house, where the woman of the house fed him, clothed him, and hid him, even after her husband returned, threatening to turn Pruchno over to the police. She saved his life, his faith, his talent.

Our oral history project coordinator, Hans Weinmann, found many other examples in his files. 16-year-old Dr. Alan Brown (Braun) and his father, who was ill with typhus, were in a labor camp near the village of Neuhaus in southeast Austria. Going to the camp hospital would have

meant immediate death for his father, so he snuck out of the camp to find a pharmacy. There, the store owner immediately recognized him as a camp inmate and hid him while an SS guard was in the store. She then gave him some medication and bread.

A colleague of mine, Lillian Furst, and her father escaped during Reichskristallnacht and had secretly moved into her uncle's apartment. When the police came, the housemaster told them a dangerous lie: "Our building is free of Jews." The police left; father and daughter escaped.

One final example: one of our survivors recounts that as a teenager, she and her mother were escaping Germany on their way to Italy. At a

Gestapo checkpoint near the border, all passengers had to leave the train. She knew that her papers were not in order and started to cry. A stranger tried to console her. When she told him her story, he took her arm, led her back on the train, hid her behind a curtain and told her to stay hidden until the train was moving again. She then tiptoed back to her mother - and reached safety.

These stories must be told; they help to demonstrate that some goodness shone forth even during mankind's darkest hour. Though we do not know the names or nationalities of those unseen heroes, we salute these minute-men and -women as harbingers of hope for a better world.

Dinner Honors Gail Kaplan

The HMC's 25th Anniversary Dinner showcased honoree Gail Rosenbloom Kaplan, and the announcement that our Center has been chosen to receive a sapling of the Anne Frank Tree (page 1).

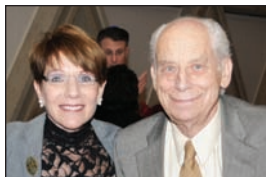
In her remarks, Gail described her inspiration for working on the Kindertransport Memory Quilt exhibit, while thanking colleagues Hans Weinmann and Merry Silber.

The Kindertransport Quilts tell the story of some 10,000 Jewish children, ages 7 months to 17 years, who were rescued from Eastern Europe and taken in sealed trains and boats to Great Britain, which opened its doors to them. The completed quilts are beautiful works of art, and document the largest rescue effort of World War II and one of the few bright lessons of the Holocaust.

In closing, Gail said "Like the Passover Haggadah where we retell the story of the Exodus as if it were happening to us, the quilts are a living reminder of righteousness and responsibility, as if it were happening today. As we continue to struggle with problems all over the world, we must continue to remind ourselves of our individual responsibility of *tikkun olam*, to repair the world."

The Hon. Irwin Cotler, a member of Canadian Parliament, provided the evening's keynote address, focusing on the "new manifestation of antisemitism." He referred to this new antisemitism as "sophisticated, virulent, and even lethal...reminiscent of the 1930s."

Plans are already underway for this year's dinner, set for October 10, 2010. Save the date!



Gail Kaplan & Hans Weinmann

Portrait of a Volunteer

In each newsletter, we pay tribute to one of our diverse volunteers, without whom we could not fulfill our mission.

Ben (Benno) Kawer was born in 1925 in Hajnowka, Poland, the son of a hardworking logger. In 1941, when he was 16 years old, the Germans arrived in his hometown. Ben and the other members of the small Jewish community thought that they would all be murdered. Instead, the Germans gathered the Jews in the market square while the soldiers pillaged their property and departed.

But 22 months later, the Germans returned and deportations began. His parents, his beloved sister, and

his nephews and nieces perished at Auschwitz. Ben and his brother were saved by a miracle: they were transferred to Buba-

Monowitz (Auschwitz 3) to work on the construction of a factory for IG Farben. There, they met a Polish Catholic who lived in a nearby village and worked for IG Farben as a civilian. This person took enormous risk in smuggling food and hiding it on the worksite. To this day, Ben and his brother attribute their



Ben Kawer

survival to this food. After the war, Ben tried to locate his benefactor, but was unable to find him.

Ben and his brother later escaped a death march from the city of Gleiwitz in December of 1944, aided by a civilian German woman. Ben, a retired businessman, was married 25 years to his late wife Esther, the love of his life.

They have three children, five grandchildren, and recently, their first great-grandchild.

Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak

Samuel Bak was born in 1933 in Vilna, Poland, and was recognized from an early age as possessing extraordinary artistic talent. As Vilna came under German occupation in 1940, Bak and his family moved into the Vilna ghetto, and later to a labor camp, from which he was smuggled and given refuge in a monastery. At the end of the war, his mother and he were the only members of his extensive family still alive.

Bak, now 77, has spent his life dealing with the artistic expression of the destruction and dehumanization which make up his childhood memories. He speaks about what are deemed to be the unspeakable atrocities of the Holocaust. He has

created a visual language to remind the world of its most desperate moments.

Icons of Loss combines work from two of Samuel Bak's newest series: *Remembering Angels* and the *Warsaw Boy*. In the *Remembering Angels* series

Bak deconstructs Albrecht Durer's angel in order to raise questions about a civilized and orderly world which allowed the Shoah to occur. In the *Warsaw Boy* series, he uses the now-famous documentary photograph of a young boy in the Warsaw ghetto being held at gunpoint by a Nazi soldier as his subject. In these paintings he explores themes of identity, crucifixion and his own survival.



IMAGE: COURTESY OF SAMUEL BAK

**On exhibit at the HMC
May 15 – August 15**

Holocaust Center Receives Dachau Trial Collection

The Library Archive recently received an archival collection of great historical significance. Andy Woodiwiss, a grandson of Major Warren Lambert, a Dachau Trial judge in the U.S. Army War Crimes Tribunal, donated his grandfather's footlocker containing World War II memorabilia to our Center. Major Lambert accumulated many important artifacts during his stay in Germany, many of which shed light on post-war life in Germany and the behind-the-scenes proceedings of the international military trials.

Major Lambert, a native of Lewiston, Michigan, was a career soldier and not a lawyer by profession. He was appointed to this difficult position because of his reputation as a compassionate human being and steadfast seeker of justice. Among the materials he brought home were hundreds of photographs, albums, currency, and a tapestry taken from Hitler's home.

To understand the staggering responsibility of doling out justice in the face of horrific and unprecedented crimes, one must have a little background. First, there were a series of Dachau Trials. From November 15 through December 13, 1945, the U.S. Army conducted proceedings against 40 individuals associated with the administration and operation of the Dachau Concentration Camp and its subcamps. On December 14, 1945, the court sentenced 36 of the men to death by hanging.

In the aftermath of WWII, Dachau was used as a prison for tens of thousands of captured German prisoners who were under investigation for war crimes. Included in this population were hundreds of high-ranking SS and SD officers who had to be positively identified and their individual crimes

clearly stated. Some of these were camp commandants of such infamous camps as Dora, Nordhausen, Mauthausen, Gusen and Buchenwald. Word was passed from defendant to defendant that under American law, the burden of proof lay on

the prosecution and that the defendants could save themselves by denying everything and claiming ignorance. When confronted with eyewitness testimony and evidence of the atrocities, the defendants blamed their already dead co-workers.

Among the many items Major Lambert brought home is a small loose-leaf where he took notes during the court proceedings, sometimes adding sharp comments, including 'shooting festivals,' 'hangings for pleasure,' 'can't remember how many times I beat or kicked (prisoners).' The word 'LIAR' appears in capital letters a number of times as a personal comment.

Among the defendants were five Nazi scientists who escaped justice by 'disappearing' mid-trial. They were given special permission to come to the

U.S. because of their scientific knowledge. Major Lambert vehemently opposed the special treatment given them, to no avail.

The collection includes hundreds of photographs depicting life in post-war Germany. Two of the album covers in the collection were beautifully painted by a Buchenwald survivor, Heribert Froboes. Inside the albums are photographs of the trials and some of the evidence presented by the prosecution. Mr. Froboes gave a graphic account of his own experiences in a 43 page translated document. He had been digging trenches at Buchenwald and was saved when the SS found out he could paint. His companions were executed.

During their stay in Bavaria, Major Lambert and his wife Hazel did everything in their power to provide humanitarian aid to the German citizens and displaced persons of this war-torn area. The general population was not allowed to own guns, so the Lamberts went hunting and fishing to bring back food for orphaned children and others who eagerly awaited their food supply.

The Lambert Holocaust Preservation Fund has been established with Samuel Gun, a son of Holocaust survivors, as executive director and driving force to publicize Judge Lambert's good deeds. Judge Lambert's legacy as a humanitarian and righteous person is being memorialized in a book, film and traveling exhibit. The HMC is honored to be the repository for such historically important materials.



Andy Woodiwiss & Executive Director Stephen M. Goldman



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