



# Legacy



A publication of the Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee, a division of the Alabama Holocaust Foundation

Volume 2, Issue 1

Spring/Summer 2008

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### Yom Hashoah

Brock Hall  
Samford University  
Wednesday  
April 30, 2008  
7:00 pm

**Alabama Holocaust Commission Days of Remembrance**  
State Capitol  
Friday, May 2, 2008  
11:00 am

### Darkness Into Life On Exhibit

State Capitol  
March 1– May 3, 2008

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute  
September – October 2008

## A MESSAGE FROM PHYLLIS WEINSTEIN, Chair

In its annual report, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum posed the question, “Can hatred be stopped?” It is the question that engages us, the Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee, (BHEC) in our mission to bring the history and lessons of the Holocaust to our students and community.

Through our three- pronged program, BHEC is reaching out to the citizens of Birmingham and surrounding areas to demonstrate where hate can lead and to awaken each person to his personal responsibility to eradicate this ill that plagues mankind:

- Holocaust survivors’ speaking engagements in schools, and with civic and social groups
- Education programs: Website classroom, teacher training
- Art/Photography exhibit: DARKNESS INTO LIFE

This year, Holocaust Remembrance Day will be commemorated on Friday, May 2. USHMM has designated “Do Not Stand Silent: Remembering Kristallnacht 1938” as the focus for the 2008 observance. Kristallnacht was a turning point in history. It marked a shift from anti-Semitic rhetoric to violent, aggressive anti-Jewish measures that would culminate in the Holocaust—the systematic, state-sponsored murder of Jews.

As one teacher stated: “ We want our students to learn as much as we can teach them about the Holocaust and about loving people—not hating them. Or as a student wrote after hearing a Holocaust survivor speak at her school, ‘the day you talked to us is a day I will never forget. I will always remember you, and the Holocaust victims in my heart. I can never imagine the pain you went through, but I can help prevent it from happening again’.

## SURVIVORS SPEAK AT AREA SCHOOLS & ORGANIZATIONS Helena Lubel, Survivor Coordinator

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Survivors Martin Aaron, Henry Aizenman, Jack Bass, Aisic Hirsch, Riva Hirsch, Max Herzel, Max Steinmetz, gave a personal, first-hand look into the past and made history come alive.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Berry Middle School</i>                         | <i>McAdory High School</i>                  |
| <i>Birmingham Public Library Brown Bag Series</i>  | <i>Moody High School</i>                    |
| <i>Bragg Middle School</i>                         | <i>Our Lady of the Valley</i>               |
| <i>Briarwood Christian High School Project</i>     | <i>Shades Valley High School</i>            |
| <i>Buckhorn High School</i>                        | <i>Simmons Middle School</i>                |
| <i>Bumpus Middle School</i>                        | <i>Spain Park High School</i>               |
| <i>Calera Middle School</i>                        | <i>Springville High School</i>              |
| <i>Childersburg High School</i>                    | <i>Springwood School</i>                    |
| <i>Corner High School</i>                          | <i>Student Internship Interview</i>         |
| <i>Fultondale High School</i>                      | <i>St. Francis Xavier School</i>            |
| <i>Guntersville Middle School</i>                  | <i>Temple Beth- El</i>                      |
| <i>Highlands School</i>                            | <i>The Kiwanis Club of Childersburg</i>     |
| <i>Highlands Methodist Church</i>                  | <i>The University of Alabama Tuscaloosa</i> |
| <i>Kate Duncan Smith DAR</i>                       | <i>The University of Montevallo</i>         |
| <i>Middle School</i>                               | <i>Tuscaloosa Middle School</i>             |
| <i>Medical Association of the State of Alabama</i> | <i>University of Montevallo</i>             |
|  | <i>Vinemont High School</i>                 |

## TEACHER EDUCATION

Ann Mollengarden, Education Coordinator

Our greatest ambassadors have been our amazing survivors from the Birmingham area who tirelessly give and give and give. No school is too far and no date is inconvenient; they are always available. Their amazing stories and message of hope is by far the most powerful teaching tool we have.

### Darkness into Life

In their wake, we continue to develop a variety of resources for the classroom, among which I must include our "Darkness Into Life" exhibit. This emotional exhibit has proven a universal draw during its recent time at Cullman Middle School. Studied and explored by students and adults from areas all around Cullman, the "Darkness Into Life" exhibit is an invaluable teaching tool.

### "A Basic Guide to Judaism"

In our efforts to continue to provide the basic tools for a classroom study of the Holocaust, the BHEC will soon announce the website launch of our newest PowerPoint resource entitled, "A Basic Guide to Judaism." We would like to thank Rabbis Scott Hausman-Weiss, Brian Glusman and Karmi Ingber for their liturgical input, as well as Cantor Jessica Roskin for her voice-over. I also would like to thank the BHEC Teacher Cadre for their input. This should be a valuable resource for both the Social Studies and Language Arts teacher who needs to be able to provide Judaic background for their students.

### Teacher Cadre

Our Teacher Cadre continues to meet on a regular basis to explore and learn together. In addition, we have attracted new members, some from across the nation, who wish to maintain email contact with us and learn of the resources we are providing.

### Thanks to Frank & Fred Friedman Family Fund

Thanks to the Frank and Fred Friedman Family Fund, the BHEC will be extending scholarships for further study of the Holocaust to Brenda Graffeo, Chalkville Middle School; Lisa Byrd, Mortimer Jordan High School; Ann Mollengarden, BHEC and Peter Sanders, Berry Middle School.

### Social Studies Council Presentations

The BHEC was honored to be asked to present at a state-wide teacher workshop in Montgomery sponsored by the Social Studies Council of Alabama on February 29 and March 1. We addressed techniques for teaching the Holocaust using the BHEC PowerPoint, "The Holocaust." Additional handouts from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum will also be provided for all teachers. Although we are Birmingham-based, the BHEC is a sub-committee of the Alabama Holocaust Commission and as such we continue to work together with our other regional counterparts to encourage Holocaust education throughout the state.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 22 & 23, 2008

Barbara Bonfield, Program Coordinator



The University of Montevallo will honor the bravery of the U.S. military that fought and often gave their lives for the freedoms that we enjoy today and at the same time will recognize the indomitable spirit of the survivors of the Holocaust. Entitled *Remembrance*, the two-day program will be held on October 22 and 23, 2008 at the University and will be open at no charge to the public. The program will include speakers representing World War II veterans of both the European and Pacific Theaters, and a World War II era female factory worker. Presentations relating to the Holocaust will include a Rabbi and two Holocaust survivors.

### Jack and Anita Hess Seminar

Participating on the committee to plan the program is Janie Hubbard, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, Department of

Curriculum & Instruction, University of Montevallo. In January, encouraged by the Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee, Dr. Hubbard participated in the Jack and Anita Hess Seminar for Faculty, entitled *The Holocaust: Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders* at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Dr. Hubbard described her experience at the seminar as follows: "*The Jack and Anita Hess Seminar for Faculty was a powerful learning experience for me. The Museum provided an exemplary professor to facilitate the course, and participants arrived from all over the US and Canada. Historians, educators, psychologists, political scientists, police officers, and others discussed factual information, various perspectives, and came away with a deeper understanding of the people and institutions involved in the Holocaust. I certainly have a raised awareness of the sacrifices that our Holocaust victims made, and I hope to have opportunities to share this with others.*"

### Planning Committee

Other members of the planning committee include: Dr. Elaine Hughes, Director, Academic Program, Center for Excellence; Dr. Ruth Truss, Dr. Clark Hultquist, Associate Professors, Behavioral Sciences Department; Dr. Jim Day, Associate Professor, and Chair, Behavioral Sciences Department; Dr. Randall Scott, Professor, Communication Arts, Dr. Samantha Webb, and Dr. Michael Patton, Associate Professors, English/Foreign Language Department. Students in the Communications Department are developing the brochure for the program.

### BHEC Participates in Alabama Social Studies Council

Dr. Hubbard has also encouraged BHEC's involvement as a member of the Social Studies Council of Alabama, which comprises social studies teachers from across the state. Ann Mollengarden from BHEC made a presentation at the Social Studies Council annual meeting in Montgomery in February.

October 11, 2007, 84 year old Jack Bass stood before a crowd of seven hundred people in the gymnasium of the Childersburg High School. On a large screen behind him paintings and photographs from the “Darkness into Life” Holocaust exhibit rotated in six minute intervals. These visuals captured his memories and imposed upon the audience the magnitude of his words. He told of the horrific experiences he had endured at the hands of the Nazis. . “I had such wonderful friends that were killed in the Holocaust,” said Jack Bass. He advised students to stay in school and never feel one race of people is inferior to another. He spoke of a time when reality became so unbearable he had to disassociate from his body. “It was the only way I could survive.” As his thick German accent echoed throughout the room, faces young and old listened intently. This was the first time this community had ever heard a Holocaust survivor speak.

The idea for this program came after Duncan Crowder, President of the Childersburg Kiwanis Club, and Sylcauga resident, John Tomlin, toured the Holocaust exhibit “Darkness into Life” created by Becky Seitel and Mitzi Levin in Birmingham this past summer. The desire to provide a unique educational opportunity for their community inspired them to take action.

The plan was set in motion when Anthony Wilkinson, Principal of Childersburg High School, agreed to host the event. Dr. Cindy Elsberry, Superintendent of the Talladega County School Board, invited and offered to sponsor every high school in Talladega County. Dr. Elsberry encouraged teachers to reschedule nine week exams so students could attend. CHS Key Club Coordinator, Naomi Blair, assisted while the Childersburg Kiwanis club sponsored the event.

Jack Bass stated, “This is a day I will remember the rest of my life, the people were beautiful and nice. The students were polite and seriously listened. They gave me confidence. In Judaism the belief is if you mention a person their spirit comes alive. Six million spirits today, can you imagine?”

The “Darkness into Life” Holocaust exhibit depicts nine Birmingham Holocaust survivors through art and photography. Becky Seitel and Mitzi Levin donated the exhibit to the Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee to be used in schools and other venues. Their vision of this reaching a wide audience as a unique educational tool is being realized. Venues are being booked. PowerPoint presentations are also planned for school systems. For more information on the “Darkness into Life” exhibit go to [www.bhamholocausteducation.org](http://www.bhamholocausteducation.org).



Christine Carl, Site Director, State Capitol, Mitzi Levin and Kelly Kahn in Montgomery at *Darkness Into Life* Exhibit

**YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS NEEDED**

To continue and expand our task of reaching out to our citizens, we ask for your financial support. Please consider a generous donation to the Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee. Your help and participation is vital to us.

Thank you.

# Holocaust Survivors Speak

March Brown Bag Lunch Series Programs

Birmingham Public Library

## March 5 "A Reluctant Journey from Vienna to New York"

Speaker: Dr. Robert Adler, University of North Alabama. Dr. Adler will speak about the development of the Holocaust in Austria, focusing on his father's personal experience before, during and after his capture by the Nazis and his final arrival in the U.S. He will also speak briefly about the role of Spain in the Holocaust and the conflict between Francisco Franco and Adolph Hitler over the fate of Spanish Jews.

## March 12 Mr. Max Herzel, "A Holocaust Survivor Speaks"

At the age of 10, Max Herzel, along with his family, escaped from the German invasion of their home city of Antwerp, Belgium, and sought refuge in France. Soon after their arrival in France, the Herzel's, along with other Jews, were rounded up there, and during the next five years until his rescue, Herzel faced harrowing experiences.

## March 19 Max Steinmetz, "A Holocaust Survivor Speaks"

Mr. Max Steinmetz was born in Romania. From 1941, at the age of 17 until 1945 when he was liberated by allied forces, he was forced into Ghettos, incarcerated at Auschwitz, imprisoned at Birkenau and Dachau and escaped from the German Death March, seeking refuge in a farm house.

## March 26 "The Holocaust Writings of Primo Levi"

Speaker: Matthew Levey, Birmingham Southern College. Mr. Levey will discuss the Holocaust writings of the outstanding author, Primo Levi, who survived the Holocaust. He will examine how the increasing adoption of some of these works (particularly "Survival in Auschwitz") by high school curricula fits in the changing landscape of American memory of the Holocaust.

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**BHEC MISSION STATEMENT:** *The Committee seeks to facilitate education and understanding of the Holocaust by providing information, materials, speakers, teachers' workshops, community events, and programming. The Holocaust, the most significant event in recent world history, revealed both the peaks of heroism and the depths of cruelty and depravity that humans can experience. The Committee hopes that, by learning from the past, students will fortify their knowledge and will be leaders in preventing such evil from recurring.*

## Alabama Holocaust Foundation Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee

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