



# DE MALYENE

NEWSLETTER OF THE VIRGINIA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

NUMBER 2, JULY 2010

## *A Word About Our Title*

*In the slang of Eastern European Jews, "de malyene" meant "a hiding place." De malyene is where you would protect your most precious valuables — gold, jewels or even a small child. Or yourself.*

*Make a resolution not to hide, but to come experience the Virginia Holocaust Museum and all it has to share.*

*With many programs and events happening in the upcoming months, we invite you to come share your time with us.*

*We welcome your comments about De Malyene and about the Virginia Holocaust Museum. See the back page for our contact information. And thank you for supporting us.*

Your gift to the Virginia Holocaust Museum could double in value if your employer has a matching gift program. Please ask your human resources office to match your contribution to the Museum.

## AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR HONORS MUSEUM DIRECTOR

by Jörg Reitmaier & Adrian Kainz



*Austrian Ambassador, Christian Prosl, Elly Ipson, Jay Ipson and Adrian Kainz. Ambassador Prosl was in town to present Mr. Ipson with the Holocaust Memorial Service Award. He was the first American to receive this prestigious award.*

The Austrian Holocaust Memorial Award was founded by the Austrian Service Abroad Association in 2006. It is a recognition that is annually given to a person who has shown special endeavors for the memory of the Shoah. Previous honorees were the Chinese historian Pan Guang, the Brazilian journalist, Alberto Dines and Robert Hébras, a French survivor of the massacre of Oradour.

On May 11, 2010, the Austrian Ambassador to the United States of America, Dr. Christian Prosl visited the Virginia Holocaust Museum. Jay M. Ipson himself gave a tour through the museum and told about his experience in Lithuania. The ambassador, dressed in a pinstriped suit, crawled through the replica of the tunnel where Ipson and his family lived for six months. He was particularly interested in the design of the museum.

The tour was followed by a reception, where Prosl presented the award to Jay M. Ipson.

*To read more, please see page 11*

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT



After escaping from the Russians in 1945, we made our way to Munich, Germany where my Father, Israel Ipson “OBM,” worked for the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) and the United Nations Restitution and Rehabilitation Association (UNRRA). There was a lot of talk there about the Mufti of Jerusalem, the Nazi collaborator. There were certainly a lot of collaborators; one more or less did not matter. But for some unknown reason, the Mufti stuck with me just like Lionginas Jankauskas, a Roman Catholic priest. He had been known as the Black Commander who led the execution of 1200 Lithuanian Jews in the town of Skuodas on June 22, 1941. After the war he moved to the United States and changed his name to Jankus. He was tried by the Soviets in absentia and died in New York in 1968.

To the best of my knowledge, in the beginning Hitler just wanted to have Germany *Judenfrei*, free of Jews. There was talk of perhaps sending the Jews to Madagascar near the southeastern coast of Africa, or even to Palestine. That is when the Mufti came into play.

I recently received the March-April issue of *Martyrdom & Resistance*, published by the International Society for Yad Vashem. In an article written by Pamela Geller, she writes about a recently renovated apartment in Berlin where blueprints for Auschwitz-Birkenau were discovered. Though the German Government will not release what else was found nor the identity of the owner of the dwelling, there happen to be some clues pointing to the possibility that this was the apartment where Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, had lived during World War II. By the way, for these who are not aware of the fact, Yasser Arafat was his nephew. And let me let you into the fact that while Yasser attended the University of Cairo, he changed his name to distance himself ever so slightly from his infamous uncle.

Husseini traveled in the highest circles of Nazi Germany. Some suggest he advised Eichmann on the best ways to dispose of the Jews. Hitler gave him a radio station so he could spew Jew-hatred in Arabic to the Muslims in the Middle East and North Africa. Though he had only met Hitler once in November 1941, the Mufti is said to have spent time in Hitler’s vast bunker during the last days of the war. During his post-war trial in July 1946, in Czechoslovakia, Dieter Wisliceny, Eichmann’s assistant in the execution of the Final Solution, testified that the Mufti was deeply impressed with the plans for the destruction of Europe’s Jews, and the Mufti wanted Heinrich Himmler to send one of Eichmann’s assistants to Jerusalem after the war to assist with his plan to solve “the Jewish Question in the Middle East.” The Mufti wrote to von Ribbentrop and argued against Jews from Romania and Bulgaria being allowed to leave for the Holy Land.

Anti-Semitism is again raising its ugly head, as we saw here in Richmond in the first week of March with the visit of Westboro Baptist Church. The same is true in Europe. Only through education can we hope to reverse that miserable trend.

JAY M. IPSOON  
jipson@va-holocaust.com

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THE VHM IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT RHONA & RIC ARENSTEIN  
WILL BE THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2010 NEILSON J. NOVEMBER AWARD  
ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17TH AT 6 P.M.



Rhona Arenstein grew up in Miami, the fourth of five children whose parents imparted to her a deep sense of caring for others and a generous spirit. As a teenager, Rhona volunteered at halfway houses for the mentally challenged and tutored the underprivileged. Following her graduation from the University of Florida, Rhona returned to Miami and worked as Special Ed teacher specializing in Deaf Education and Learning Disabilities. She continued her volunteerism as a “pink lady” at South Miami Hospital and created their first “craft cart” for patients.

After moving to Richmond in 1980, Rhona continued her teaching, working in special education in Hanover County. In anticipation of raising a family, Rhona shifted her career and became of travel agent, a profession at which she has excelled for more than 25 years.

Rhona continued her commitment to others in Richmond, first with B’nai B’rith Women, but soon thereafter with the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond. She participated in its Young Leadership Program and soon became its co-chair attracting others to service. In the years that followed Rhona took an active role in the Annual Campaign and was recognized for her commitment with both the Schwartzchild Award for campaign excellence and the Binswanger Award for outstanding young leadership. Rhona was elected to the Board of Directors of Jewish Family Services where she also served as its Secretary.

*To read more, please see page 7*

Ric Arenstein is the president of Arenstein and Associates, a real estate development and investment company. Formerly, he served as senior advisor to Virginia Governor Gerald L. Baliles and senior counselor to Virginia Lieutenant Governor Donald S. Beyer, Jr.

A graduate of Douglas Freeman High School, Ric went on to major in Broadcast Journalism in the School of Mass Communications at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, where he created, produced and hosted the nationally syndicated radio talk show Focus: America. He was inducted into Alpha Epsilon Rho and Sigma Delta Chi, two national honorary broadcasting societies and recognized in Who’s Who in American Colleges and Universities for his innovative journalism enterprise.

After graduation, he remained in South Florida as a news and sportscaster for the NBC News and Information Service and Miami’s all-news-radio station WINZ-AM. He later worked as an account executive for Hank Meyer Associates, then one of the nation’s largest public relations firms. His clients included Jackie Gleason, the Miami Dolphins, the Fort Lauderdale Strikers, Criteria Recording Studios, Star Brite Polishes, General Development Corporation, the Miami Seaquarium, WTVJ-TV (CBS), and Turnberry Isle.

In 1979, Ric returned to Richmond and entered his family’s real estate business, which developed approximately 2,000 rental apartments, 2,000 single-family

*To read more, please see page 7*

# FORT EUSTIS CLASS VISITS MUSEUM

by Kevin Hillman



*From left to right: Kevin Hillman (Instructor), LT Kristen Potter, BM2 Amanda Christensen, ENS Chelsey Stroud, LTJG Raphael Sadowitz, ME1 Thomas Duffy, MEC Erik Gibson, and Marianne Votaw.*

While many members of the military preparing for overseas deployment might focus on a mass of personal matters, six Coast Guard officers studying at Fort Eustis, Virginia engaged in a special training course. Knowing they were to be deployed to some areas in the Francophone world, specifically French-speaking regions in Africa, the officers opted to take an intensive immersion program in French. Their instructor, Mr. Kevin Hillman, conceived of a cultural outing that brought the officers to the Virginia Holocaust Museum to view the special international photographic exhibit *Congo/Women Portraits of War*. The visit provided the Coast Guard officers with a unique educational opportunity to view some of the realities of the lengthy civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially the sexual violence faced by women. The exhibit's explanatory panels were written in English and French, thus providing another learning tool for the Fort Eustis visitors as they expanded their horizons before setting off on deployment.

## LOTS OF ACTIVITY WITH THE PENNY CAMPAIGN



*Above: Jay Ipson accepts pennies from the students of Wilbur S. Pence Middle School.*



*Top Right: The Academic Success Program at Meadowbrook High School collected 111,945 pennies.*

*Bottom Right: SGM Brian Jaenickel, SFC Micaela Reyes, Murray Carton (VHM Volunteer) SFC Angela Segar, SFC Hunter Tiblier and Simon Sibelman.*



# 2010 YOM HASHOAH

by Laura Hood



# HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY



On April 11th, 2010, the Virginia Holocaust Museum held its annual observance and remembrance program, Yom HaShoah. This year's program marked the 65th anniversary of the Allies' liberation of Buchenwald.

One of this year's special guests was the Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, congressman of Virginia's 3rd district. Congressman Scott spoke about how important it is that children are taught about the Holocaust in order to keep the memory alive of those who perished so no one will ever forget. "It is imperative to remember so that history does not repeat itself and have another dark stain similar to that which the Nazi's have left on humanity," Scott said.

Congressman Scott also made note that many other groups suffered at the hands of the Nazis, including the gypsies, the Slavs, Jehovah's Witnesses, the disabled, homosexuals and those with differing ideologies like the communists and socialists. "Prejudice is still found throughout the world and the U.S. government will pursue any perpetrators of serious human rights abuses as well as those who commit genocide and bring them to justice," said Scott. "This is why the work of the Virginia Holocaust Museum is so critical with your mission, 'Teaching Tolerance Through Education,' and your efforts to help to move us towards the goal of equal justice for all people."

Reading a resolution on behalf of Alexander Lebenstein, Dr. John M. O'Bannon, from the Virginia House of Delegates, celebrated his life and his work: "Alexander Lebenstein passed away on January 28th, 2010, leaving behind a legacy unlike any other person. He was the only member of nineteen families to survive the

Holocaust from his hometown Haltern Am See, Germany. For a long time, Mr. Lebenstein harbored a great anger directed at his hometown for what he had endured. This resentment led him to America where he wanted to start a new life. In 1994, Alexander received a letter from two children in his hometown who asked if he would come back and speak about his experience. Through these children and their request, Mr. Lebenstein was finally able to begin the healing process with his hometown and bravely agreed to make the journey back to Germany. While in Haltern Am See, he was made an honorary citizen and the school he spoke at, was renamed after him. After many years of animosity towards his hometown, Alexander began to forgive and overcome his anger for what had happened in the past. Because of the children's effort, Alexander decided to become an educator on tolerance and the importance of it. Mr. Lebenstein will be greatly missed from this community."

Following Dr. O'Bannon's remarks, the official candle lighting ceremony began with the first candle lit in honor of Alexander Lebenstein and Klare Bruckner, another Holocaust Survivor. Survivors and their children were then invited to light one of the Menorah's candles, in remembrance. Special guests, Jay Squire, from the Gay Community Center of Richmond, Board Chair, Cathy Carmondy, and C. Douglas Smith, the Executive Director of the Virginia Interfaith Center, also lit candles in honor of those who perished. The remaining candles were then each lit by members of the audience.

# 2010 ART COMPETITION WINNERS



*John M. O'Bannon (VHM Trustee), from the Virginia House of Delegates and Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, congressman of Virginia's 3rd district with the winners.*

The museum's Yom HaShoah ceremony is also when several young students from our local schools are recognized for their artistic abilities in the Tolerance and Holocaust Visual Arts Competition. A judge for the competition, Rhona Arenstein, handed out the awards to each of the 2010 winners from the middle school and high school divisions.

The winner of the middle school division was Benjamin Wong, a seventh grader from Moody Middle School, whose work was titled "Prey." Second place went to Melissa Taylor, also a seventh grader from Moody Middle School, for her work titled "Racism is Wrong." The third place winner was Eric Woods, a seventh grader from Page County Middle School, for his work titled "Pollution Must End."

The high school, or senior division, winner was Lindsey Dabbs, an eleventh grader from Mills E. Godwin High School, for her work titled "What's Wrong With This Picture?" Chandler Thomas, an eleventh grader from Caroline County High School, won second place for her work entitled "Hope Of The Wrong." The third place winner was Kaleigh May Baresford, a tenth grader from Henrico High School.

## SEE WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING THIS SPRING AT THE MUSEUM



*Pette Pettus from the 42nd Rainbow Division gives Nazi artifacts from the estate of Col. Gilbert Koehler to the VHM archives.*



*Shirley Melber & Michael Cilufio at the unveiling of Robert E. Horn's mannequin following the 4th Annual Rule of Law Award Ceremony.*



*Elaine Grandis & Holocaust Survivor, Simone Schwarz at the April opening of Portraits of Zinkov.*



*Helen Zimm, Holocaust Survivor and the Honorable Ilana Rovner, award recipient and Holocaust Survivor, Henri Maizels at the Rule of Law Award Ceremony.*

*Continued from page 3*

After dedicating herself to raising her children, Rhona returned to service, reenergized, taking a leadership role in the Federation's Annual Campaign. She served as Women's Chair and Lion of Judah Chair – at which time she created a service program aimed at teaching Jewish high school and college students about the issues at stake in Israel and the Middle East. Her work was rewarded with election to a two-year term on United Jewish Community's National Women's Philanthropy Board. She has also participated in numerous missions to Israel, Cuba and Ethiopia.

Rhona also returned to the public schools as a volunteer and participated in the Communities In Schools initiative, reading to students at Swansboro Elementary School. Her work earned her the distinction of the 2003 CIS Volunteer of the Year.

In 2006, Rhona blended her love of community and the arts, creating a popular weekly pottery class for assisted-living residents at the Beth Sholom Gardens. The Gardens honored her as Volunteer of the Year. She has also designed and sculpted numerous awards presented to outstanding women by the Federation. She also donates her work for various charity causes and was recently shown in the Beth Ahabah Archives exhibit of "Jewish Women in the Arts."

In service to the Carole and Marcus Weinstein Jewish Community Center, Rhona created the "Weinstein Knitzvah Knitters" in collaboration with VCU's Virginia Treatment Center for Children and the JFS Home Care Program. To date, more than 75 knitters have crafted more than 50 blankets to benefit these populations.

Rhona's love of ceramics eventually led her to take an active role in the Visual Arts Center of Virginia, where she is a dedicated student, and has served on several committees including the Education Committee, the Ceramics Guild, and the Collectors' Night Committee. She has also taught a clay class for seniors in partnership with the United Way.

The Virginia Holocaust Museum has also been a recipient of Rhona's endless energy in recent years. She co-chaired the first Neil November Award Dinner, participates as a judge in the public school art competition and has helped organize and secure funding for the recent "Women in the Congo (Portraits of War)" exhibit, part of "Minds Wide Open: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts."

Rhona's lifelong interest in and commitment to mental health has led her to her most recent initiative as an advocate for VCU's Department of Psychiatry. Through a number of recent and successful events, Rhona is seeking to help raise public awareness, create discussions and generate financial support for mental health issues through VCU.

## THANK YOU TO THE NATIONAL GUARD



On the 15th of April, the Museum had a program sponsored by the Virginia National Guard, a play production by the Touring Theatre of North Carolina called "Let Your Children Tell" - a 45 minute play written and directed by Brenda P. Schleunes and Commissioned by the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust.

The play follows the lives of young people from Austria, Hungary, and The Netherlands. The diary entries as they write describe the edicts, laws, and horrific deeds of the Nazis.

*Continued from page 3 (VHM Award Dinner)*

homes and the Innsbrook Corporate Center. He also began taking an active role in the community in which he grew up.

Ric is the immediate past Chairman of the Board of Directors of Commonwealth Public Broadcasting, and is a past president of the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, on whose Executive Committee and Board he presently serves. He is also a Trustee of the Virginia Holocaust Museum and serves on the Global Operations Coordinating Council of the Jewish Federations of North America.

Ric has also led and participated in more than a dozen missions to Israel, Cuba, Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union.

He resides in western Henrico County with his wife, Rhona and their Golden Retriever, Gracie. He is also the proud father of twin daughters, Sarah (Washington, DC) and Rachel (Richmond, VA).

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# ALEX GIVES BIG TO THE MUSEUM

by David Lebenstein

*Below Alex's family lit a Yahrzeit candle in his memory. From left to right: Celeste Kocen, Meir Binshtok, Debbie Binshtok, Ronnie Binshtok, Danya Binshtok and Esther Binshtok.*



When I was growing up my father worked in a physically demanding job as a Kosher butcher, putting in long days and nights for 40 years to support his family. During those years of hard work and struggle, he would have never believed that he would be in a position to make a significant and meaningful financial contribution to any important charity or cause. It was, in fact, his work with the Museum that helped him to find the means to give in other ways – giving of his time and himself. Like virtually all survivors, the journey that led to his bequest was a long and difficult one. And like virtually all survivors, his story is unique.

When my father first arrived from Europe after the Holocaust, he went to live with his family in Richmond where he tried to start his life over; he had no money or financial resources. In 1947, my father came to Richmond and stayed with his sister Rose Spanier and her husband Edward, however it was short-lived. On a visit to his sister Alice Smith in Florida, he met my mother, stayed in Florida for a few years and then settled in New York for almost 50 years, raising my brother and myself.

During those years he spent in New York, we heard little of the Holocaust, and little of his life in Haltern Am See, Germany where he lived with his family until he was 11 years old, and was routed from his home by the Nazis. It was only after his return to Richmond in 1994, that he began to face his past head on. Many people by now know the story: after being contacted by – and rebuffing – political figures in Haltern who wanted to reach out to the Town's only surviving Jew, my father was moved by the students of the town who wrote to him needing to learn more of his experiences. He developed a relationship with these students and with the classes to follow in a school in Haltern that now bears his name, the Alexander Realschule dedicated to fighting racism and intolerance.

Through this experience my father launched the final phase of his life, his period of coming to grips with his experiences, and trying to derive some kind of meaning from them. This quest was embodied for him in the teaching of tolerance and telling and retelling of his personal journey, particularly to teachers and their students not only in Haltern, but throughout the eastern seaboard of the United States where he had made his home.

As part of this calling he also began his work as a docent at the Virginia Holocaust Museum. This was an essential part of his last years. He was committed to the Museum as a venue for teaching, for learning and for bringing people gathered to say goodbye to him on the day he was buried on January 31, 2010.

## HERE'S WHAT DONATIONS AND SUPPORT CAN DO FOR THE MUSEUM



*During the month of April, the Museum welcomed some 2,501 young people through its doors.*

*Above: a typical spring day at the VHM.*

### 2010 TOURS

TOTALS INCLUDE MAY/JUNE 2010 BASED ON CURRENT RESERVATIONS

HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS	133
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS	224
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS	8,097
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS	1,883
COLLEGE ATTENDEES	221
ADULTS ACCOMPANYING STUDENTS	1,274
TOTAL STUDENTS	10,486

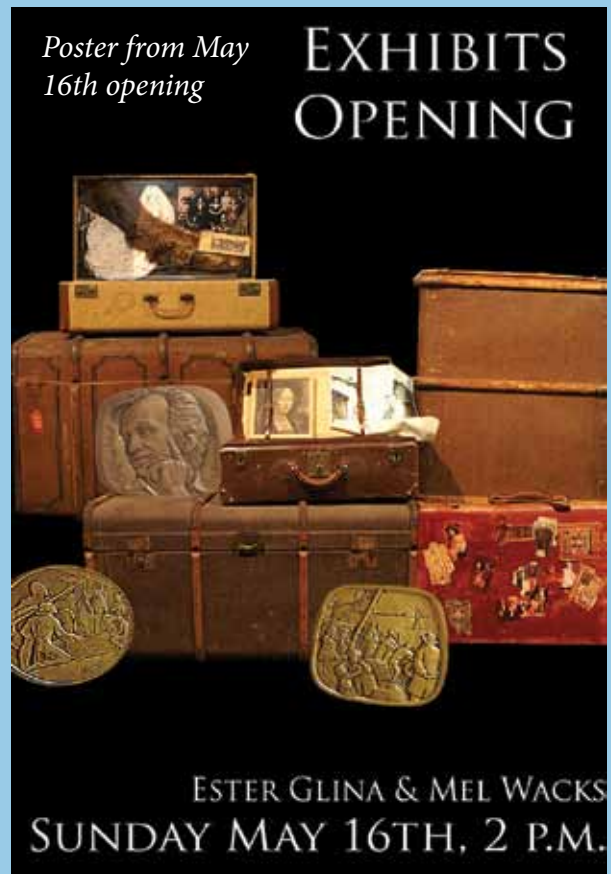
# NEW PERMANENT EXHIBITS ON SECOND FLOOR

What might our world have been if so many millions – Jewish and non-Jewish – had not perished during the Nazi regime of terror? Might a murdered child have become a new Jonas Salk and discovered a cure for cancer or HIV? Might one of countless millions have developed a synthetic fuel thus weaning us from polluting petroleum products? These questions and others are evoked by two different, yet complementary exhibits that were dedicated on 16 May 2010. Esther Glina Montagner’s poignant exhibit, *Those People*, evokes members of her immediate family exterminated by the Nazis. Their names, printed on austere suitcases containing simple, personal possessions, recall not merely the artist’s own tragic loss, but the assemblage simultaneously evokes the mountains of analogous suitcases left unclaimed by the millions of innocent, murdered Jews at Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec and other extermination centers.

The second exhibit, *The Impact of Jewish Intellect on America and the World* was conceived by Mel Wacks and the Jewish-American Hall of Fame. This collection of unique plaques begins by asking a rhetorical question: What If? What if the United States had opted to open the gates to the new “promised land” that Congress had chosen to close in 1924? What if only thousands of Jews marked for death had found a safe haven in this land of immigrants?

This commanding exhibit subsequently goes on to explore numerous contributions Jews have made to America and world civilizations. Each plaque constructs a different aspect of a broad mosaic of the productive relationship between Jews and America. And in turn, each plaque suggests yet another suitcase with a name, a life history, a contribution not made.

“Remember the past,” writes the artist of *Those People*, Esther Glina-Montagner “as it illuminates the path to the future.” Visitors to the Museum are urged to view these two new exceptional permanent exhibits that officially mark the opening of our Second Floor.



*Esther Glina*



*Esther & Mel Wacks*

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“What binds us together, is we have the same idea to show people what happened. This is the most important thing we can have empathy for those who suffered,” Prosl said in a speech to the press, visitors, the museum’s staff and the Trustees.

Ipson accepted the award and talked about the first intern from Austria, who worked 12 hours a day with him to help to build the Museum, including demolishing the concrete blocks that once blocked the building’s entrance with a sledgehammer. Adrian C.S. Kainz is the fifth young Austrian and has worked at the Museum since February 2010.

The Austrian Service Abroad is an association that sends young Austrians to Holocaust museums and memorials worldwide to work there for a yearlong service in exchange for their national military service commitment. The intention is to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and be a signal that it will not happen again.

Jay M. Ipson was chosen for the award because of his exemplary commitment to teach tolerance through education and for founding the Virginia Holocaust Museum. “The awarding of Jay M. Ipson is a vow for the victims of the Kovno ghetto in Lithuania and expresses our respect of the survivors. As founder of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service and chairman of the Austrian Service Abroad I want to thank Jay M. Ipson for his ongoing efforts.” said Dr. Andreas Maislinger, co-founder of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service program.

## The Windsor Foundation Trust

The Board and staff are delighted to announce a grant for \$15,000 for next year’s season *Righteous Among Nations*.

If you, your company or your organization are interested in sponsorship opportunities for this year’s season, please contact the Museum.



TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE THE RENTAL SPACE, PLEASE CALL MATT SIMPSON.

Continued from page 8 (Alex Gives Big...)

together. It was here, over 300 people gathered for his 80th birthday party; and more than 500 people attended the release of the documentary “Kristallnacht and Beyond”; and it was here people gathered to say goodbye to him on the day he was buried on January 31, 2010.

The Lebenstein family is very proud of the legacy our father, grandfather and great grandfather has left for future generations so that they may continue the fight against racism, injustice and intolerance. It was my father’s fondest wish that his bequest – the product of his many hours of blood, of sweat, of tears – be used to support the Museum, so that those who survive him can continue to tell their own personal stories – and his.

*David Lebenstein lives in New York City with his wife Ellen Baer. He is the proud father of Lisa Lebenstein Lipman and Adam Lebenstein, and the grand-father of Alex Lebenstein’s great grand children, Bryce Lewis Lipman and Braden Alexander Lipman.*

# CONGO/WOMEN OPENING

## DEMOCRATIC PORTRAITS OF WAR



*Maddie Jecklin, Delegate Bestsy Carr and Allison Weinstein at the opening of Congo/ Women Democratic Portraits of War.*

*Part of the statewide Minds Wide Open: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts Initiative.*



*Former First Lady Jeanie Baliles Member of the Minds Wide Open project helped us officially open the exhibit. She is also pictured with Rhona Arenstein, Congo Committee Chair and Jane M. Saks Co-Creator of the Congo Exhibit.*



*Museum guests look on during the opening remarks.*



*Above Left: Delegate Betsy Carr and Awer G. Bul (Lost Boy and Sudanese Survivor); Above Right: Maria Touy of the International Foundation for PsychoSocial Wellness (an official sponsor of Genocide Prevention Month).*



*Connie Lacey, her daughter and Louise Martin.*

## DISTANCE LEARNING WITH SIMONE LIEBSTER, FRENCH HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR



On April 2nd a group of middle school students, teachers and chaperons from Manchester Middle School came together in the second floor Teacher Education Institute classroom and interviewed a Jehovah's Witness survivor living in France. Using Skype, a web cam program and small computer-top camera students interviewed Simone Liebster and heard about her Holocaust experiences. This was the museum's first student-survivor long distance Skype interview; the interview was arranged by the Arnold-Liebster Foundation.



## IN THE SHADOWS...

by Miriam Davidow

*The next few editions of the column By the Ghetto Gate will focus on the Second Generation (the children of a Survivor or Survivors. Through their words, we will begin to explore the experiences of the Holocaust Survivor(s) and their legacy.*

Growing up in the shadows of the Holocaust there always was an ever present tension emanating from the past to the present. Our second generation since the Shoah lived with parents whose demons were a constant. This bore heavily on the psyches of those of the privileged generation to be born into freedom of parents destined to survive – even after the Holocaust.

We were named for the martyrs who perished - an eternal reminder of those who were lost. We were named for grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles of whom we never knew, never got to hug, never ate at their table for Shabbat. We also never had the opportunity to memorialize these people who had such an invisible presence in our lives.

Herbert and Ruth Rubel were refugees from Nazi oppression. Herb, “OBM,” (DOB 1925) from Hochspeyer,



*Miriam Davidow and her family touring Salzburg.*

Germany, came to New York City with his mother, older sister and brother in law in May 1938, to follow 5 other siblings already dispersed to the United States and Palestine. Years of contact with the Nazis and forced removal from school and work, the family sought out a better and safer life. As the winds of war were blowing, they painfully left other family members behind including a great aunt (for whom my younger sister was named) who was ultimately killed in TheresinStadt.

Ruth (nee Bonyhadi) Rubel, “OBM,” (DOB 1928) was born in Vienna, Austria to a loving family of doting parents, grandparents and uncles. The affects of Nazism came during the Anschluss in March, 1938 with hordes of Austrians welcoming and celebrating the arrival of Adolph Hitler and the National Socialist Democratic Party.



*Stolpersteine.*

With destruction to all things Jewish and deportations on the horizon the Bonyhadi family’s life began to change. My grandfather, Ludwig, “OBM,” (my younger sister also named for Ludwig) was deported to the East, in 1939, never to be seen from again with the only remnant left from him a postcard from Lvov, Poland.

My mother Ruth and grandmother, Gertrude Lowitt Bonyhadi (my oldest sister named for Gertrude), with other family members, were left behind in Vienna. Their fate would send them via boxcar in 1941 from Vienna to the Lodz Ghetto (Poland) and then in August 1944, again on boxcar, to Auschwitz (Poland) and finally to Bergen Belsen (Germany). On April 15, 1945, liberation came by way of the British soldiers who, like all the Allied soldiers, were shocked to see the remnants of life they saved from destruction. With typhus rampant, the dreaded illness took the life of my grandmother Gertrude on May 1, 1945, just 2 weeks after liberation, and brought my mother to the brink of death hospitalized for 6 weeks only to wake up on her birthday in mid-June. Finally located in Bergen Belsen by cousin Ernie Bonyhadi, an intelligence officer for the US Army, my mother moved to Stuttgart, Germany and then,

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



*Above: Jay M. Ipson gives the Commencement address for the University of Richmond's School of Continuing Studies on May 8, 2010.*



*Above: Holocaust Survivors, Sonia & Bud Brodecki lay a wreath at the Virginia War Memorial Day Ceremony co-hosted with the 11th District American Legion.*



*Continued from page 14*

on the first transport in 1946 to bring survivors to the US, to New York City, a tattered child in a new land.

Beginning life again with the help of relatives on the West Coast, my mother met my father in San Francisco when he was on his way to serve in the Army in Hawaii. They married in 1948 and over the next 12 years had 3 daughters, all named for deceased relatives. An atypical family in the lap of America during the boomer years moved from Hartford, Connecticut to North Palm Beach, Florida and then to Atlanta, Georgia. Herb and Ruth ultimately relocated to Richmond, Virginia for their retirement.

So, as the benefactors of the past, what do we, the second and third generation, have the responsibility to do? We use every opportunity to memorialize those who came before us. We visit those places for whom we were named to lay a stone any where they may have walked. We remember them on holy days and try to live up to those who came before us.

My family and I, with my mother, visited Bergen Belsen in 1996, my son Jonathan and I walked in my mother and grandmother's footsteps in Auschwitz/ Birkeneau in 2006 and then, in 2008, my entire family visited Salzburg, Austria, a place that held special memories for my mother, to place Stolpersteine's, <http://www.stolpersteine-salzburg.at/?p=68&lang=en> brass plaques on cobblestones marking the last known residence of my grandparents, great grandfather and great uncle in Salzburg. We were there at the invitation of residents of the city who also felt responsible to their history. At the initiation of these good people in Salzburg, yes, the site of the filming of The Sound of Music, we joined with citizens, press and elected officials to mark this place – to lay a stone – giving us another location to visit and memorialize our loved ones.

So, intertwined with the past, we, the second and now the third generation take serious the responsibility that we have for the future – to remember, to teach and to memorialize. Foundations with the Virginia Holocaust Museum and the Richmond Jewish Foundation will mark their lives in perpetuity giving us a vehicle to insure that the lessons of the past and our link to them will be taught forever.

*Left: Manchester Middle School's band director Peggy Moncure (a VHM Teacher Education Institute graduate), and VHM Education Specialist Anne Regan share their insight to the school's Second Annual Holocaust Night of Remembrance.*



# VIRGINIA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

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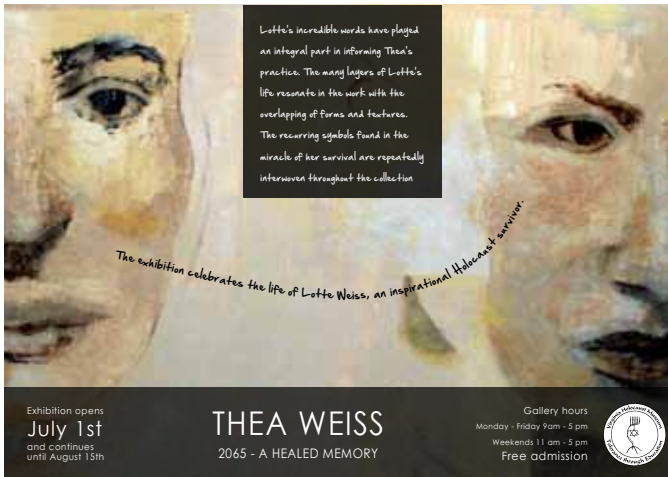
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