



ST. LOUIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM & LEARNING CENTER

IN THE NEWS

Winter 2016



**Honoring
Gerald Gordon**



**Remembering
Marge Bilinsky**

In This Issue:

- 2 Remembering Hedy Epstein
- 2 Remembering Marge Bilinsky
- 3 Teenager Inspires Jewish Heroes Exhibit
- 3 Honoring Gerald Gordon
- 3 Celebrate 1930s Vilna
- 4 Speak for Them
- 4 Night of Broken Glass
- 5 "The Christian Church's Complicity in the Holocaust" Lecture
- 5 Sunday Afternoon Film Series
- 5 Wish List
- 6 Jean Cavender Receives Goldstein Award
- 6 Charitable IRA
- 6 Donors and Tributes

Upcoming Events

Sunday Film Series District 9

Introduction by Drew Newman
December 18, 2017 | 1:00 pm
Jewish Federation of St. Louis
Kopolow Building

The Debt

Introduction by Bob Cohn
January 29, 2017 | 1:00 pm
Jewish Federation of St. Louis
Kopolow Building

Farm to Table – Vilna in the 1930s

Sunday, January 22, 2017 | 2:00-4:00 pm
Crown Center for Senior Living

Signal Corps Exhibition

Sunday, April 2, 2017 | 1:00-3:00 pm
Jewish Federation of St. Louis
Kopolow Building

Yom HaShoah

Sunday, April 23, 2017 | 4:00 pm
Congregation B'nai Amoona

Learn more at HMLC.org.



From Our Chair MYRNA MEYER

I am always surprised when a visitor or someone in the community asks "Why do we need to keep talking about the Holocaust?"

People have remarked that it happened so long ago and it is so depressing.

This made me think that many in our community might share this view. The Holocaust was decades ago and the subject can be upsetting. And while the HMLC attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year, many in the community have yet to experience our Museum.

As I begin a new year as chair of the Museum, I am heartened by how much we have accomplished in our 21 years, while being reminded how vital it is to remain vigilant and dedicated to our mission.

So, why is it important to keeping talking about this period of history? Why is it important to support our mission? Because we haven't learned the lessons of the Holocaust well enough.

More than 70 years after the end of World War II, anti-Semitism is on the rise at home and around the globe. Growing persecution of other groups unfortunately gives the Holocaust haunting relevance.

As it recedes further into history, ensuring that the Holocaust is not forgotten is at the core of our mission. And the need to better heed its lessons becomes all the more urgent.

To make certain the subject is relatable, especially to young people, we added the *Change Begins With Me* exhibit to include contemporary examples of bias, discrimination and genocide.

Because while sharing facts about Holocaust history is key to understanding its causes, we have another duty: to emphasize that each of us has a personal responsibility to support positive change.

As the Museum enters its third decade, I invite you to visit, donate, tour, volunteer and support our goal of ensuring that visitors leave asking how they can make the world a better place.

Because hate didn't end with the Holocaust.

Sincerely,

Myrna Meyer
Chair, Holocaust Museum & Learning Center



Remembering Hedy Epstein

I first met Hedy Epstein in the late 1980s, at a protest against the Jewish activist, Meir Kahane. A friend pointed to Hedy and told me, "that is a very special person, someone you will want to meet." Our paths would occasionally cross, but it wasn't until I came to work at the St. Louis Holocaust Museum & Learning Center in 2000 that I really got to know Hedy.

Hedy was very active at the Museum, sharing her survivor testimony with visiting groups, especially students. She would describe her childhood in Kippenheim, Germany, and how life changed when the Nazis came to power. She shared what it was like to be treated as an outsider at school and be intimidated by cruel teachers because of her Jewish faith. Her parents made the heartbreaking decision to send her to England on a kindertransport, hoping the family would later be reunited. Tragically, both of her parents were murdered in Auschwitz. Her mother's last letter was among the precious artifacts Hedy donated to the Holocaust Museum after her last diagnosis.

Hedy and I developed a close friendship and a relationship of mutual respect. As you all know, Hedy's experience as a survivor inspired a lifetime of activism on behalf of numerous causes. In her later years, much of her activism was focused on issues in support of the Palestinians, a political stance that made her a controversial figure in the St. Louis Jewish community and even for some at the HMLC. I would point out that while there was definitely tension between Hedy and the "organized" Jewish community, there have always been individuals within the community who liked and respected her.

Periodically, she and I would meet for lunch or dinner. We recognized early on that we largely agreed on US politics and issues, but held differing views on the Israel-Palestine conflict. We respected each other's views but Hedy often encouraged me to consider a situation from multiple perspectives. Hedy was always willing to discuss her views, even with those who maligned her. She always replied to her detractors with dignity and grace. I'm reminded of Michelle Obama's words at the Democratic convention: "When they go low, we go high."

Hedy shared her testimony at the Holocaust Museum since its inception, and a presentation at the Museum to a group of Washington University students was among her last. As always, she ended her presentation with several requests: remember the past, don't hate, make careful choices and don't be a bystander. These words also guided Hedy's life – her lifetime of activism and commitment to standing up for her beliefs. She also asked all of the students to remember her parents, just as her parents had requested that Hedy remember them. Now, we will also remember Hedy; her commitment to stand with the oppressed and her lifetime of fighting for social justice.

Hedy will be greatly missed. May her memory be a blessing.

-Dan Reich

Remembering Marge Bilinsky

Holocaust survivor Margaret (Marge) Bilinsky passed away on Sunday, October 23, 2016. Marge was married to Herbert for 62 years. She was a hard working wife and mother for the first couple of decades of her marriage. When her two children, Alan and Paula, were grown, she started what Paula fondly recalled as her "second act."

She was devoted to the protection of civil liberties, serving as Regional Director of The American Jewish Congress for 25 years. As a Holocaust survivor, she served as a docent at the HMLC, using her film, *The Locket*, to connect her family to the atrocities that took place during that tragic period in history. This film has been shown on public access TV, is used in schools and institutions here in the US, and has been dubbed in German for use in German schools and libraries. Her greatest wish was that this film would continue to remind people of what can happen and prevent it from happening again.

Marge was a kind and sweet soul who was always helping others. At the HMLC we are reminded of Marge daily, as she appears in a brief vignette on our donor board at the beginning of the permanent exhibition. In her brief remarks, she states that she doesn't like to refer to herself as a Holocaust survivor, she just likes to refer to herself as lucky.

We feel blessed and lucky that Marge was a part of our lives.



Marge and husband Herbert light a candle at Yom HaShoah 2013.



Teenager Inspires Jewish Heroes Exhibit – Now Open at the Jewish Federation of St. Louis

A new exhibit is on display in the main lobby of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis building. The homage to Jewish heroes from different time periods and from around the globe was the vision of St. Louis teen Dylan Fox, son of Nancy and Steve Fox, who built the display in 2015 as his Bar Mitzvah project.

The exhibit focuses on the accomplishments of Jews in a variety of fields, including film, politics, mathematics, science and entrepreneurship. Viewers will see enlarged photos of notable Jewish figures affixed to swinging, multi-panel displays bearing descriptions of their contributions in their respective fields.

Dylan's display reminds us of the many accomplishments of Jewish men and women throughout history, and the journey begins with this quote from *Jewish Heroes, Jewish Values* author, Barry L. Schwartz, who said, "Heroes start out as ordinary men and women. What makes them special is their determination to accept responsibility and live according to high ideals."

The Jewish Heroes exhibit is currently open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm in the main lobby of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis Kopelow Building.

Honoring Gerald Gordon in The Garden of Remembrance

The HMLC recently installed a stone in their Garden of Remembrance in memory of St. Louisan Gerald Gordon. On October 8, 1977, a notorious anti-Semite assassinated Gordon who was leaving the bar mitzvah of Ricky Kalina at Brith Sholom Kneseth Israel (BSKI) Congregation. This act is among the most blatant acts of anti-Semitism ever committed in the St. Louis community.

The memorial stone was originally installed in 2008 on the property of BSKI where it stayed for many years. After BSKI and Shaare Zedek merged to form a new congregation, Kol Rinah, the stone was moved to Rosenbloom Monuments until it could be permanently installed in the Garden of Remembrance. The wording below will be etched on a stone adjacent to Gordon's memorial to bring greater context and meaning to it:

"On October 8, 1977, Gerald Gordon was assassinated upon leaving the bar mitzvah of Richard Kalina at Brith Sholom Kneseth Israel Congregation in Richmond Heights, Missouri. His killer, a notorious anti-Semite and white supremacist, was brought to justice in 1997 and finally executed in 2013. This memorial stone is a reminder of the overwhelming suffering and everlasting pain suffered by his wife Sheila Gordon and their three daughters Hope, Michele and Traci, and all of those who interacted with Gerald Gordon, including the St. Louis Jewish community at large. May his memory be a blessing."



Celebrate 1930s Vilna with the HMLC

Foodies, mark your calendars for January 22, 2017, for a community event not to be missed. The HMLC and Saul Brodsky Jewish Community Library will hold the "Farm to Table Vilna Experience" at the Crown Center Café hosted by local Jewish food writer Margi Lenga Kahn.

The event centers on The Vilna Vegetarian Cookbook by Fania Lewando, proprietor of a popular vegetarian restaurant in Vilna, Lithuania. The book contains 400 recipes of traditional Jewish dishes and vegetarian versions of Jewish holiday staples.

Originally published in Yiddish in 1938, Lewando's cookbook was rediscovered more than half a century later after the author and her husband died in World War II and most copies were lost. A vegetarian cookbook of this size was groundbreaking at the time it was published, and it has been translated and published in English for a whole new generation to enjoy.

The event will feature cooking demonstrations of the cookbook's mouthwatering recipes. Attendees will also experience discussion of 1930's Vilna culture and music that will recreate the feeling of Jewish life in the 1930s. In addition, Ethan Schuman, a local dentist and cantor, will hold a discussion about the Jewish community and culture of Vilna pre-WWII.

The event will be held at 2:00 pm on January 22, 2017, at the Crown Center Café. Seating is limited, so please RSVP to Andrew Goldfeder at AGoldfeder@JFedSTL.org or 314-442-3711.

Speak for Them

Dedicated to all the docents in every Holocaust Museum.

Written by Dr. Richard Kalfus

Speak for them
As docents
The only way you can
To tell the young and old alike
Of man's inhumanity to man

Of synagogues destroyed
While neighbors silently looked on.

Of an entire kindergarten class
where only one survived.

Of ballet shoes
Without the child

Of eyeglasses piled high
Without faces

Of an only child
saved on a train
to families across the sea.
While her parents
On a "special train"
to Auschwitz

O' Speak to those visitors
with only one thought in mind
that what they now
have witnessed
Must be passed on to mankind.



Dr. Richard Kalfus, Professor of German, French, Holocaust & Genocide Studies at St. Louis Community College and St. Louis University.

An Excerpt from After the Night of Broken Glass - Fleeing Nazi Germany for St. Louis



TOM SINGER

By Thomas Singer

On November 7, 1938, Ernst van Rath, third secretary in the German Embassy in Paris, was shot and mortally wounded by Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old Jewish boy, in retaliation for the treatment of his parents, who were among the 17,000 Polish Jews forced by the Nazis to leave Germany. The shooting in Paris provided the Nazis with an opportunity to incite the Germans to "rise in bloody vengeance against the Jews."

On November 9 and November 10, 1938, Nazi storm troopers carried out a large pogrom against the German Jews. Nearly 200 synagogues were burned down while local fire departments stood by. Jewish cemeteries were desecrated, thousands of Jews physically abused, about 100 Jews murdered, and 30,000 Jewish men between 18 and 65 years of age arrested and placed in concentration camps. More than 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses were destroyed, and thousands of Jewish homes were damaged and ransacked. The shattered glass from the windows of Jewish homes and businesses gave the pogrom the name of Kristallnacht (Crystal Night or Night of Broken Glass).

[Material in the above paragraphs was taken from the website of Aish Hatorah (aish.com [4]) by the author]

"The Nazis came for my father on the night of November 9, 1938, in Stuttgart. Fortunately, he received a warning and was able to hide in the house of a cousin who was married to a Christian man who was an important executive with the Reichbahn (railroad).

My mother met up with my father and they got tickets to fly Lufthansa to Marseille, France, and then went to the bank and withdrew all their money. They could only take ten marks out of the country..."

Go to HMLC.org/Memory-Project to read the entire story.

"The Christian Church's Complicity in the Holocaust" Lecture

On September 15, 2016, the HMLC hosted the third annual Gale Family Lecture, in memory of Marilyn Gale, of blessed memory. Dr. Robert Ericksen, Kurt Mayer Chair, Emeritus, in the department of History at Pacific Lutheran University, presented "The Christian Church's Complicity in the Holocaust." A capacity audience seemed completely engaged in the discussion of how different churches and denominations held radically different views regarding the acceptance or rejection of the Nazi state and ideology. A lively question and answer period followed the presentation. HMLC Director Jean Cavender noted that "we thank Dr. Arthur Gale and the Gale family for enabling us to bring three internationally recognized scholars to the HMLC. We look forward to excellent programming in the future, thanks to the Gale family's generosity."



Join us for the last screening in our 2016 Sandra and Mendel Rosenberg Sunday Afternoon Film Series



District 9
Sunday, December 18 at 1:00 pm
Jewish Federation of St. Louis
12 Millstone Campus Drive
Directed by Neill Blomkamp
USA, 2009, 112 minutes
Rated R for violence

This Academy Award nominated action film portrays an extraterrestrial race that comes to earth. Initially welcomed, they are later confined to a militarized refugee camp/ghetto and ultimately targeted for destruction. This thought-provoking film focuses on how we as a society deal with the "other" and resonates on many levels with current events and issues in our world today.

Introduction and post-screening discussion facilitated by Drew Newman, who received a bachelor's degree in film from Syracuse University. His film, *The Man Who Loved Flowers*, appeared in the Stephen King Dollar Baby Festival in Los Angeles and Belgium.

Films in this Sunday series are free and open to the public, although reservations are requested. For further information, call 314-442-3711 or email AGoldfeder@JFedSTL.org, or visit HMLC.org/FilmSeries.

Wish List for the Holocaust Museum & Learning Center

The HMLC could use some help funding the following items:

- New chairs for the HMLC Auditorium - \$10,000
- New wall covering for the HMLC Auditorium - \$7,200
- Underwriting of the HMLC Newsletter 2017 Spring Edition - \$2,500

For more information on how to donate, visit HMLC.org/Give/Donate or call 314-442-3711.

Your gift is very much appreciated.





Jean Cavender Receives Goldstein Award

Director Jean Cavender, pictured here with the Jewish Federation of St. Louis' CEO Andrew Rehfeld, at the Annual Meeting on September 1, 2016. Jean is the recipient of the 2016 Fred A. Goldstein Award for Outstanding Professional Leadership and Service to the Jewish community of St. Louis.

Make a Charitable Donation from Your IRA

The history and lessons of the Holocaust are still relevant as we see stories of hatred, prejudice and inhumanity still make the headlines every day. Our *Change Begins With Me* exhibit addresses those issues to make the connection between the historical events and contemporary issues that challenge us today. St. Louis is home to one of approximately 20 Holocaust museums in the United States and we provide programs, lectures and tours, free of charge, giving everyone access to learn about these timeless lessons.

The generosity of our donors allows us to keep our doors open and our programs free. At the end of each fiscal year we want to remind our supporters of a special opportunity on how they can give to the HMLC through a Traditional IRA or Roth IRA.

If you are 70 ½ or older, donating IRA assets to charity has a number of tax advantages. Charities, unlike individual beneficiaries, do not need to pay income tax on withdrawals from these accounts. And while there is no income tax deduction for a donor's contributions, the sum going to charity is not included in your adjusted gross income (AGI) for the year.

Donors must donate directly from the IRA trustee to the charitable organization with no intervening possession or ownership by the IRA owner. There is a \$100,000 annual limit. Therefore, a donor could do this every year. Contact Tim Henry at 314-442-3774 or THenry@JFedSTL.org to make arrangements.

We ask you to consider making a gift to the Museum to continue to allow our visitors to interact with history and contemporary issues like race, religious intolerance and ethics in exhibitions and programs for all ages.



Thanks to all our Donors

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- Inscribe the name of a loved one
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Vera Emmons: Thanks for leading the tour for my in-laws

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Gloria Feldman's Birthday

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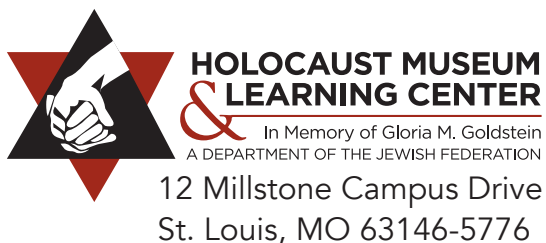
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