Upcoming Events

- June 28, 2011 - TN Holocaust Commission Meeting
  Vanderbilt University Club

- July 7, 2011 - Educational Outreach Committee Meeting
  Vanderbilt University, Commission Office, Tanpiey Building

- July 20-21, 2011 - Robertson County Holocaust Series
  A series of professional development workshops designed for middle and high school educators detailing the rationale for teaching about the Holocaust and other genocides in connection with TN State & National Standards.

- August 3-4, 2011 - Memphis City Practitioners Summit
  A three hour workshop for middle and high school educators to include practical activities for teaching about the Holocaust accompanied by survivor testimony.

- September 17, 2011 - 5K Walk Fundraising Event
  Hosted at Fred Miller Park in Morristown, TN by the German Society at Morristown-Hamblen High School.

- Fall 2011 - Hamilton County Fall Conference and Belz-Lipman Reunion

- TBA - East, West & Middle TN Conferences

Summer 2011

A Year In Review

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Reflections on the Year...

Much of our work at the Tennessee Holocaust Commission this year has centered around enhancing and expanding our educational outreach and community awareness throughout the state. We ran a series of conferences this year titled, Voices From the Holocaust: Moving from Reflection to Action–The Decision is Yours. Our focus was to encourage the use of diaries from the younger voices of the Shoah ultimately moving Tennessee students to reflect on this period in history and to take action rather than standing by passively in the face of global events of the same nature. We exceeded our expectations reaching over 4,000 students, educators, and community members throughout the state. Our local survivors and liberators helped to tell the story so that students received a more personalized understanding and close-up view of life during this time period that historical references often lose.

A partnership with the Nashville Ballet allowed us to enhance our outreach goal by introducing students to the story of Anne Frank. The performance brought to life the joys, tensions, yearnings, and the passion for life expressed by Anne in her own words. The ballet is a dramatic exploration of the spirit and unvarying wisdom of Anne Frank and has been well received by schools throughout the state. Local survivors Arthur Paes and Frances Cuffe-Hahn helped the dancers to better understand and interpret the spirit of Anne Frank. Art and music serve as a powerful vehicle for telling the story of the Holocaust and we continue to search for ways to integrate art and music into our work.

The Commission has begun to work with several universities and colleges around the state to provide workshops and speakers for classes, seminars, and conferences. The Ni- wonger Fellows program at Tusculum College began their programming this year by using local survivor testimony and literature as a focus for a study of “Ethics in Leadership”. Workshop presentations and seminars at Aquinas and Walter State Colleges are scheduled for the fall of 2011. Another amazing partnership that developed this year was with the St. George’s Episcopal Church Choir. The choir hosted a moving performance of Donald McCubleigh’s Holocaust Cantata and helped the Commission to raise much needed funds. We were honored to have Dr. Mark Ring and the choir perform at the State Capitol for the Annual Day of Remembrance ceremony.

5K memory walk fundraising events are now being organized around the state in an effort to raise funds. Our first event will take place on September 24th in Morristown, TN. Plans for Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville areas are underway.

The use of technology to keep the stories of survivors and liberators alive is critical and the Commission has been working to develop a special website so that educators can view best practice lessons online and share information with one another. Additionally, work on a “Digital Legacy Project” to develop digitized educational videos using the “Living On” tapes housed in the Tennessee State Archives is planned for the upcoming year.

Seven Tennessee educators attended our annual seminar at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. this summer. Teachers representing all regions of the state accompanied Commission staff to the Museum to learn about Holocaust education directly from museum staff and historians.

As the philosopher George Santayana famously said “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”. The Tennessee Holocaust Commission is dedicated to remembering. We remember, and share memories, in the cause of promoting understanding so that we and our children are not condemned to repeat the experiences yet so vivid in the memories of Holocaust Survivors and Concentration Camp Liberators more than sixty years after the end of World War II. Our best hope that the right transfer of memory has been made lies with the students and youth in the State of TN. When we educate about the Holocaust we remember the victims. They live again in us and through us and sustain us in working for a world where similar horrific actions will cease to exist.
The Tennessee State Day of Remembrance Ceremony was celebrated through a variety of performances and presentations. The ceremony included a performance by the Anne Frank Ballet, which utilized classical dance to present the story of Anne Frank. This performance, along with other events, aimed to educate older students about the Holocaust and its impact on the Tennessee community. The ceremony was held at the State Capitol Building, and attendees included representatives from various organizations and communities across Tennessee. The event concluded with a reception hosted by Governor Bill Haslam, Andy Berke, and Jack Johnson. This year's ceremony was particularly significant as it marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The ceremony was attended by survivors, families, friends, and supporters who came together to remember the six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust and to honor their memory.

One of the essay contest winners, Jack Belz, was honored during the ceremony. Belz's essay focused on the importance of remembering the Holocaust and the need to ensure that future generations never forget the atrocities that took place. Jack's essay was praised for its powerful language and compelling story. The ceremony itself was dedicated to Jack Belz in recognition of his contribution to the cause of Holocaust remembrance.

In addition to the Anne Frank Ballet performance, the ceremony also featured a presentation by the Tennessee Holocaust Commission, which highlighted the continued work of the commission to ensure that we "never forget." It is in this spirit that the state of Tennessee celebrates the Day of Remembrance each year. The ceremony concluded with the lighting of the six symbolic candles that represent the six million Jews who lost their lives in the Holocaust.

The observance of the Day of Remembrance is an important event that brings together survivors, families, friends, and supporters to commemorate the lives lost during the Holocaust. The event serves as a reminder of the importance of remembering the past so that we may prevent such tragedies from occurring in the future.
Spring Speaking Engagements

The Commission fills requests to present educational instruction and provide speakers for engagements in a variety of school, community, and program settings.

Collinwood Middle School
Collinwood, TN
Jimmy Gentry - 2/7/11
The entire student body at Collinwood Middle School hosted a community-wide student hosted event featuring Jimmy Gentry, a witness from the Holocaust. Following the presentation a reception was available for those wishing to attend.

Nashville Ballet
Art Pats & Frances Cutler-Hahn - 1/6/71
Dancers from the ballet spent time with Frances Cutler-Hahn and Art Pats learning their stories so that they could better interpret Anne Frank's story using movement.

Tigrett Middle School
Jackson, TN
Allen Exelbird - 1/14/11
Allen Exelbird shared the story of his father, Joseph Exelbird, a refugee of the Holocaust, to a classroom of 8th grade students.

Nashville School of the Arts
Nashville, TN
Jimmy Gentry - 1/20/11
An auditorium of high school students 9th - 12th grade listened as Jimmy Gentry shared his memories as a young U.S. soldier during the liberation of Dauchau Concentration Camp. The student body had participated in a variety of Holocaust studies. All the students were moved by Mr. Gentry's captivating account of his experiences.

Cain Ridge High School
Antioch, TN
Esther Loeb - 1/21/11
In an informal classroom setting Esther Loeb took the opportunity to address each individual student when she spoke to the class.

Dekalb Middle School
Smithville, TN
Jimmy Gentry & Esther Loeb - 3/17/11
Jimmy and Esther shared their experiences with the entire 8th grade class in Dekalb County as an introduction to the Anne Frank Festival. After the performance a reception was hosted for the survivors and performers.

Harris Middle School
Bedford County, TN
Frances Cutter-Hahn - 3/17/11
Frances, a hidden child during the Holocaust, spoke to all the 8th grade students. Approximately 250 students had just completed a two month unit study of the Holocaust.

Seven Pillars Academy
Knoxville, TN
Sonja Dubois - 3/4/11
Sonja Dubois shared her experience with middle school students from the Trinity Christian Academy Home School Cooperative.

TCN Council for the Social Studies (TCSS) Annual Conference for Educators
Franklin, TN
Danielle Kahane-Kaminsky - 3/15/11
Danielle Kahane-Kaminsky presented at the annual conference held in Franklin, TN at the Marriott. The presentation detailed the rationale for teaching about the Holocaust and other genocides in connection with TN State and National Standards. Discussion regarding best practice in Holocaust instruction and appropriate methodological considerations were the focal points of this workshop.

Washington D.C. Seminar

Seven teachers from around the state accompanied Danielle Kahane-Kaminsky and Dr. Paul Fleeming on a three day trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum from June 7th to the 9th. The generous support of Ms. Lilian Kittower and the Niswonger Foundation allowed us to take teachers from all regions of the state for this summer experience. The itinerary included a full day of professional development for teachers provided by museum educators and a half day workshop to familiarize teachers with primary sources related to Holocaust Education. Teachers were able to enjoy a bit of sightseeing in the D.C. area and a good time was had by all. Participating teachers will be required to develop and share written mini-lessons and activities for future professional development to be utilized by the Commission.

Commission Chair, Felicia Anchor, Steps Down

After 15 years of dedicated service, Felicia Anchor steps down from the position of Commission Chair.

After long consideration, Felicia Anchor has requested that the Governor appoint another person to serve as the Chair of Commission. In a letter to fellow Commissioners Felicia stated, "It has been a personal honor for me to serve but every institution needs new leadership and I have held this position for a long time." Felicia Anchor has been the driving force behind many projects throughout the history of the Tennessee Holocaust Commission. Having been a member on the Panel of Commissioners since the Commission’s inception, Felicia had already served as the Education Chair for 12 years prior to assuming the responsibility of Chair Person in 1998. As the third Commission Chair, Felicia Anchor has brought international recognition to the Commission by representing the US at the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust conference and previewing the Commission’s acclaimed, “Living On” exhibit at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Poland and the Auschwitz Concentration Camp Visitor Center. The Commission has participated in the publication of two books during her tenure; “The Holocaust and Other Genocides: History, Representation, Ethics” and “Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Survivors and Liberators”. Felicia will continue to serve on one of the Commissioners on the panel and is determined to maintain the legacy of Tennessee Survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust through spearheading a proposed digital legacy project intended to digitize all remaining raw footage collected and held in the TN state archives. The project goal is to publish survivor testimony and lesson materials that educators can easily integrate into their classroom instruction.

Publication of THC History Announced

The Commission is proud to announce that we have contracted with Mr. Thomas Wood, a local historian and author here in Nashville, to write a history of the Commission. The generous support of Commissioner Jack Belz has allowed the THC to preserve our history as one of the oldest and most innovative Commissions in the United States.

The Commissioners are very excited about this project and believe it will be a valuable tool for explaining the mission and vision of the THC.

Teacher Tube

In addition to our presence on the Internet, Facebook, and Twitter, the Tennessee Holocaust Commission will launch a Teacher Tube page this summer designed to give teachers a safe place to ask questions and get help with Holocaust Education. The TeacherTube portal is designed so that teachers can view best practice lessons live online from TN Master Teachers in the field of Holocaust education. Additionally, educators will have the opportunity to become part of an online learning community where they can post and share lesson activities, blog, and learn together. The Teacher Tube portal will enable the Commission to extend its outreach and programming throughout the State using state of the art technology to communicate our mission.
Educational Programming

Along with our many other programs, the THC brought an interactive conference to three locations across the state...

Voices from the Holocaust
Moving from Reflection to Action—The Decision is Yours

The Commission was excited to host three conferences around the state of Tennessee this year. These conferences were held in Nashville at the Nashville Public Library, in Knoxville at the Knox County School District, Sarah Simpson Professional Development Center, and in the Memphis City School District at the Teaching and Learning Academy. The conference series entitled, Voices From the Holocaust Moving from Reflection to Action-The Decision is Yours, focused on the use of diaries from the younger voices of the Shoah challenging Tennessee students to reflect on this period in history and take action rather than standing by passively in the face of global events of the same nature. One of the goals of the conference series was to expand our outreach beyond middle Tennessee and into the east and west Tennessee areas. We exceeded our expectations by reaching approximately 4,000 students, educators, and community members being reached throughout this school year. Alexandra Zapruder served as our keynote speaker for all three events.

Niswonger Foundation Hosts Seminar on Ethics in Leadership, Featuring the THC.

The Tennessee Holocaust Commission is excited to participate in a partnership with the Niswonger Foundation and Scholars program at Tusculum College this year. The goal of this scholarship and leadership training program is to identify and equip a talented network of young people for future service in Northeast TN. Niswonger Scholars are chosen primarily for their leadership potential, commitment to personal excellence and service in their home communities. The scholarship provides the opportunity to attend the college or university of the recipient’s choice. The Niswonger Scholarship is designed to benefit both the recipient and the community in which he or she lives. Scholars are not limited to a particular college or area of study. In exchange for each year of financial support, recipients pledge to return to their home communities for at least one year of service in the career of their choice. The hope is that by enabling these students to study their passions and by cultivating their leadership abilities, they will return to their homes to be leaders in their professions and an inspiration and catalyst for future changes. All Scholars are required to participate in community building activities and leadership training. This year’s focus on the theme “Ethics in Leadership.” The THC implemented a workshop with this theme that began with local survivor Art Pais, providing testimony about his experiences in the Dachau Concentration Camp and the Korno Ghetto. The Scholars worked on activities involving assessing and defining responsibility of perpetrators from the Holocaust and a study of the Nuremberg Trials. The Scholars concluded the workshop with the development of an action plan to increase genocide awareness on their college campuses around the country.

Proposed Digital Legacy Project

With the recent passing of two prominent Tennessee Holocaust Survivors, Felicia Anchor, THC Chair, feels an urgency to maintain their legacy through a proposed digital legacy project intended to digitize all remaining raw footage collected and held in the TN state archives. The project goal is to publish survivor testimony and lesson materials that educators can integrate into their classroom instruction. It is intended to provide for an electronic curriculum that can be delivered online and accompanied by a written curriculum manual for classroom use. The content will be derived from the remaining historical footage and research currently stored in the TN State Archives. Our ultimate goal will be to provide this information electronically and through the Internet providing for multiple uses to include musem application, audio-visual curriculum, and all types of resources sharing. The THC is currently looking for community members and foundations to fund or underwrite portions of this worthwhile and innovative project.
Art Pais told his story of survival to students at Upperman High School and throughout Baxter, TN through a virtual classroom that is set up at Upperman.

Fred Jarvis, a survivor of the Holocaust who was just a young boy during World War II, shared his memories regarding the Holocaust with students at Hampton High School.

Frances Cutler-Hahn shared her story of survival with Congregation Micah members as part of their Yom Hashoah Commemoration.

As part of Holocaust Remembrance Week, Art Pais spoke to a group of military personnel and members of the community.

Art Pais spoke to the 50 plus active seniors at the Strang Senior Center in May.

The 11th grade honors U.S. History class had a great opportunity to hear Art Pais share his story.

Fort Campbell, KY
Eric Rosenfeld - 5/11

Eric Rosenfeld met with the “Eagle Medics” in Fort Campbell, Kentucky to mark Fort Campbell’s Annual Day of Remembrance Ceremony.

Ravenwood High School
Brentwood, TN
Jimmy Gentry - 5/11

Jimmy Gentry addressed the entire 10th grade class. The students were studying World War II.

Heritage High School
Maryville, TN
Art Pais - 5/12

The 11th grade honors U.S. History class had a great opportunity to hear Art Pais share his story.

East Hickman Middle School
Lyles, TN
Eric Rosenfeld - 5/13

Eric Rosenfeld served as the first guest speaker ever to address the eighth grade students in rural Lyles, TN, telling his story of survival and hope.

Soddy Daisy High School
Soddy Daisy, TN
Art Pais - 5/16

Art Pais spoke to Soddy Daisy High School’s gifted students about his experiences in Dachau Concentration Camp and the Kovno Ghetto. The television show “This and That” interviewed Art following his presentation.

Cheatham Middle School
Ashland City, TN
Jimmy Gentry - 5/17

Jimmy spoke to seventh grade students about growing up in Franklin, TN, the horrors of war, and the Holocaust.

Blackman Middle School
Murfreesboro, TN
Jimmy Gentry - 5/18

Jimmy spoke to the 7th grade class as part of an extensive unit studying genocide, with a focus on the events of the Holocaust.