

“Living On” Impresses Museumgoers, TV Viewers

Working on the *Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Survivors and Liberators* photography exhibition, said art historians Susan Knowles and Mark Scala, stands apart from previous exhibits they’d curated because of its starkly human subject matter: the contemporary faces of local people connected to the Holocaust.

The exhibition was created by the Tennessee Holocaust Commission. It shows black-and-white images of 64 people, along with biographical data and their brief remembrances of both the ordeal and their lives since. It ran at Nashville’s Frist Center for the Visual Arts from February 25 to April 24 and is booked through December 2006 in museums across the state. (See below.)

The photographs will “open the eyes of Tennessee residents to the fact that their neighbors experienced the Holocaust,” said Knowles, the guest curator of the exhibition. “It will bring

history alive — especially in the 60th year since the liberation of the camps — and make it far more personal.”

Before *Living On* reached the Frist Center, Scala, its exhibitions curator, was worried about its impact.

Observing visitors’ interest while looking at each subject, and reading their comments in the guest book, told Scala that “people were absolutely mesmerized by this exhibit,” he said.

“Anytime what we do can touch people and provide them with a powerful, emotional response,” said Scala, “it’s hugely gratifying.”

In April, Nashville Public Television aired a documentary, *Living On: Tennesseans Remembering the Holocaust*, which traced the exhibition’s development. Will Pedigo, a WNPT film editor, made the documentary in 2003, following photographer Rob Heller and writer Dawn Weiss Smith as they interviewed Holocaust survivors and liberators throughout the state.

From November through April, Pedigo spent 85 hours weekly working at his WNPT job and editing *Living On*. He shot 55 hours of film for the one-hour program. Pedigo also wrote two pieces of music, and Heller’s klezmer band, Tennessee Schmaltz, recorded the opening theme and two other numbers.

“Developing the exhibition, the companion television documentary film and soon a dedicated Web site has been a huge endeavor for the Tennessee



Holocaust Commission over two years,” said Ruth Tanner, THC’s executive director. “Every step of the way brought energetic, talented professionals into the project who invested their hearts and souls. We’ve been rewarded by a passionately enthusiastic and moving public response.”

A March 13 panel discussion was held at the Frist in conjunction with the exhibition. It consisted of two survivors and one American liberator, all Tennesseans, who were included in *Living On*. THC



Chair Felicia Anchor moderated.

Jimmy Gentry (photo, right) related his unwillingness for 40 years to discuss an event in his World War II service that had

“made such an impression that it wouldn’t go away,” he said.

Gentry, then a 19-year-old staff sergeant with the Army’s 42nd Infantry Division, 232nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, did not wear a watch or even know the date in 1945 that his unit stumbled upon what they presumed to be a

Living On Travels

2005

August 1-September 22: Cress Gallery, University of Tennessee-Chattanooga

October-December: Customs House Museum, Clarksville

2006

August 15-October 15: East Tennessee Historical Society and Museum, Knoxville

November-December: Lambuth University, Jackson

Pending
Memphis
Upper East Tennessee

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We Need Your Help

The Tennessee Holocaust Commission has always drawn its energy from the support of caring individuals and communities across the state. Right now, two of our most highly acclaimed programs face particular funding challenges:

* The *Living On* exhibit, following on its triumphant opening at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts (see page 1), can touch lives in other communities across Tennessee. But several of the venues that want to present *Living On* lack funding to transport and display the exhibition.

* The Adult Literacy Training Program, in which educators learn to use a curriculum developed with Commission support as a tool to reach adult readers, will be unable to build on its proven track record in coming years unless we can find a new source for its annual operating cost of \$50,000. These funds bring teachers from across the state to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and to Nashville for intensive training sessions with the curriculum. Educators tell us moving stories of the personal transformations they have witnessed among learners who engage this curriculum and embrace its message of tolerance. (See article about adult education in Tennessee on page 5.)

Your contributions to the Commission will make a real difference in the lives of fellow Tennesseans and will augment THC's appropriation from the state legislature. We welcome anything you can give, and we will also listen eagerly to any suggestions you may have regarding institutional support. Please contact Ruth Tanner, THC's executive director, at (615) 343-2563 or at ruth.k.tanner@vanderbilt.edu, or send your tax-deductible contributions in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,
E. Thomas Wood, Member, THC Board of Directors

Tears of Remembrance

By Charlie H. Warfield

Sitting beside this man, I watched.
His eyes were fixed upon their eyes.
He sat erect, silent, jaw tense,
Not moving, suffering as they did.
Remembering,

His soul reached out to touch their being,
Victims of inhumanity.
Of hate, of centuries, of lies,
Of indifference-the rudest slap.
Remembering,

Victims of the silent world,
Victims of those who did not care,
Victims of those who did not speak,
Victims of those who did not act.
Remembering,

Kilstein, Berger and Kimmelman.
Wolkoff, Cutler, Carden, too.
For some, the tears still would come.
Others, though, had cried to dryness.
Remembering,

And as he watched, perhaps he thought:

To what depths will man now descend?
And if man so degraded be
The victims will be all of us.
Remembering,

Can man survive his fellow man?
The cantor's chant then caught his ear
"We never will forget Your name.
We beg that you forget us not."
Remembering,

What say we to this faith, this hope?
Shall man again be mute, be still?
Or shall remembering lift us
To join our hands against the hate?
Remembering,

He hurt with all his people's woes,
But they were all my people, too.
A single tear came down his cheek,
A tear I will forever see.

I will always remember.

Charlie Warfield is a Nashville attorney. He wrote this poem after attending the annual Days of Remembrance ceremony on April 20, 2004, at the State Capitol.

[*Living On* - continued from page 1]

German army base on a cold morning. He learned later that it had been about 11:00 a.m. on April 29.

His unit had entered a railroad gate, not the main gate, of the Dachau concentration camp in southern Germany. Gentry saw faces of living and dead prisoners through the barbed-wire fence. The images haunted him.

Gentry has given nearly 100 talks in the 20 years since he began speaking publicly. Still, the audiences' faces "make me flash back" to those at Dachau, Gentry related in an interview. "Now, when I give a talk, I look up, or don't look at the faces," he said.

The turning point, he related, was when a Dachau survivor, Irvin Limor, came to see Gentry while the latter was coaching the football team at Brentwood Academy in 1985. "I embraced him. That made me cry. He cried, too. We held each other. We sat down and talked. He convinced me that I should talk about it," Gentry said.



"*Living On* brought home the meaning of the Holocaust," mused Scala. "As time has passed, it has been so critical to do this exhibition, and to do it now

[because] this is a generation that has been slipping away. ... This gives us a chance to keep those voices alive a little bit longer."

Viewers Share Reactions to Exhibition

In its two-month run at Nashville's Frist Center for the Visual Arts, *Living On: Portraits of Tennessee Survivors and Liberators* attracted emotional, positive reactions from visitors.

A selection:

- "A wonderful, moving, tragic account...done in a tasteful, low-key, yet striking exhibit."
- "Stunning."
- "Very powerful and moving."
- "I have a deep gratitude for everyone sharing their experience, strength and hope."
- "Thank you for highlighting the importance of our shared histories."
- "Moving and informative."
- "Nothing is more powerful than hearing personal accounts."
- "An extremely emotional exhibit."
- "A wonderful tribute."
- "Bravo to the Frist for this exhibit."

David Patterson, Bornblum Chair of Judaic Studies, The University of Memphis, wrote a tribute to *Living On* after seeing the exhibition at the Frist. He said that photographer Rob Heller "has done the impossible: he has seized a lifetime in an instant and a world in a face. If there have been people who



shied away from the camera for fear that it would capture their soul, Heller has proven them more than correct."

Patterson added: "Gazing into these eyes that gaze into us, we step before the countenance, where we are transformed into witnesses. ... Yes, the eyes. You peer into those eyes, and you wonder, with fear and trembling: What have those eyes seen? That is where the memory is preserved: not in archives or museums, nor even in affidavits or testimonies, but in these eyes that have seen what we cannot fathom. ... The faces in these portraits show us: we can live on, as witnesses to the fragile sanctity of every human life. That, it seems to me, is what *Living On* is about."

THC Seminar in Europe to Include 9 Teachers

While in Europe for a seminar last year, Joy McCaleb joined other teachers for a side trip to the Dachau concentration camp in Germany. Afterwards, McCaleb, who teaches English, drama, speech and media at Upperman High School in Baxter, told Tennessee Holocaust Commission Executive Director Ruth Tanner that she wished a program could be arranged for teachers to visit Holocaust-related sites and receive in-depth lectures on the history while there.

McCaleb's wish was heeded, because in July THC will sponsor its first such trip. Nine Tennessee teachers who incorporate the Holocaust in their curricula will participate in a 13-day seminar in Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. The THC contingent will join a study tour organized by Richard Stockton College of New Jersey that will include Berlin, Warsaw, Krakow, Kielce, Lodz, Prague and various towns and villages; and the concentration camps, labor camps and death camps of Ravensbruck, Sachsenhausen, Treblinka, Plaszow, Auschwitz, Birkenau, Theresienstadt and Lidice.

The program "will bring first-hand knowledge to the teachers, so that the history of the Holocaust stands up from the pages of a book or computer screen and becomes real," said THC Chair Felicia Anchor. It represents "the next step" for THC, which already brings teachers to Washington to attend seminars at the United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum, by "asking our teachers to walk on the ground, feel the air and see for themselves the places where history and humanity were changed forever," added Anchor, who will accompany the teachers.

Lynda Newman, who teaches world geography at Smyrna Middle School 20 miles from Nashville, echoed that sentiment. Newman has studied the Holocaust for 20 years and has visited several concentration camps. "Now, I'd like to augment what I learned."

In a visit to Auschwitz, "I leaned down and touched the railroad tracks. It felt like they almost vibrated. I was transported back 50 years."

THC will provide scholarships of \$1,000 toward the Tennessee teachers' participation in this summer's seminar. A corporate gift will match that with \$1,000 scholarships, too. Teachers are expected to fund the balance.

The seminar also holds great appeal for Lisa Sikes. The director of Germantown's Morgan Woods Children's Theater, Sikes has presented *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*— dealing with the children held at the Theresienstadt camp — on three occasions. When she first directed it, a member of the audience approached her to say that he had been imprisoned at Theresienstadt when he was very young. "The kids were thrilled to meet someone who had done things that they talked about in the play. It brought history to their faces."

Sikes most wants to go to Theresienstadt.

"I want to walk the streets, see how people lived, how they survived in that place," she said. "I'm looking forward to the discussions with the professors on this trip. Traveling with a group of people who know the subject and can discuss it will add so much to the experience."

save the date

Hidden Children & Their Rescuers

The Irvin and Elizabeth Limor Educational Outreach Program (EOP)
Sponsored by THC and hosted by
Vanderbilt University

Tuesday, October 25, 2005
8:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.
at the new Student Life Center
310 25th Avenue South

A conference for secondary school
teachers and mature students
grades 9-12

When she returns from the summer seminar, McCaleb believes, her students will absorb all the experiences she will relate. "I want to be able to tell kids, because kids will listen if I've been there. It is not hard to captivate them. Kids face peer pressure, bullying, differences among each other every day. Maybe they'll see that everyone's different, and that it's okay."

Newman plans also to share her experiences with teachers in Rutherford county, in an effort to strengthen their connection to her experience.

Sikes intends to write a play based on her experiences in July."

"Part of what I want to teach my kids through this trip is that there's so much family history that they don't know. I want them to ask their families questions about what they did during World War II," said Sikes, who regrets not having probed her late mother for information.

"I'd like to do an intergenerational show, for [the children] to put their stories together and to have grandparents perform with their grandchildren. Hopefully, it will bring those families closer together."



Lynda Newman, Lisa Sikes and Judy Stanley won 2005 Belz-Lipman awards for excellence in teaching about the Holocaust. All three will take part in the European seminar. Newman appears above with Joshua Lipman and Sen. Jim Tracy.

Teacher, Student Speak at Capitol Event

When Shirley Callis began arranging a Holocaust-related display last year, Howard Allen was there to help.

Callis, a teacher at Weakley County Adult Learning Center in Dresden, planned to exhibit the history of the Holocaust in the center's large lobby display case. She designed stars and badges to resemble what the Nazis forced Jewish, Jehovah's Witness and homosexual prisoners to wear. She brought in old family trunks and suitcases to represent the ones in which the belongings of inmates were held when they were evicted from home. An old milk can stood in for those in which Warsaw Ghetto inmates stashed records of daily life. She displayed books on the period.

Allen, who works on the center's maintenance staff, saw what she was doing, and offered to help with the artwork. Before Callis knew it, Allen began drawing a map of Europe. He drew barbed wire to match the real item on display. Working from a picture in a book, he drew part of a concentration camp.

"We didn't know that he had any artistic ability, but he does," Callis said of Allen. "He knew how to make it look like barbed wire. He had some excellent

ideas. He became a part of it. ... Someone else might not have volunteered to do it; he was eager. It was with great delight that he took an interest."

As they spoke, Callis realized that Allen, a man she calls "a very intelligent person," had never earned a high school diploma or a GED. She persuaded him to enroll in the center's program to earn his GED, and he began classes in March 2004. Three months later, Allen earned the center's Learner of the Year award for his strides in math. He already has passed three of the course's five units, and continues to attend math classes every morning for 75 minutes.

On May 11, Callis and Allen were among the speakers at the annual Days of Remembrance ceremony at the state Capitol. They are examples of the success of the four-year-old program, involving the Tennessee Holocaust Commission and the University of Tennessee's Center of Literacy Studies, which integrates Holocaust education in the curricula of adult-education literacy programs throughout the state.

The other partners in this endeavor are the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (which funds the UT literacy program) and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The venture has become a national model.

Other speakers at the Capitol ceremony included Gov. Phil Bredesen, Marva Doremus of the Education Division of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Rabbi Kenneth Kanter of Congregation Micah in Nashville.

In her remarks at the Capitol ceremony, Callis spoke of her participation at THC's 2003 adult literacy seminar for teachers, held at USHMM. It was there that she got the idea for

the year long display she would prepare. Then, as word got out, Callis arranged visits for local high school classes. A group of 60 fifth-graders came to see it and to hear Callis read from a Holocaust memoir she received from THC.

When she spoke at the Days of Remembrance ceremony, Callis held aloft an album containing photographs of visits to her lobby display. She told attendees that their own parents were alive when the Holocaust was perpetrated — that "it wasn't so long ago," she said. "We need to get the word out so that people don't forget."

Interviewed a week after his Capitol appearance, Allen said that he helped Callis because he has read about the Holocaust since age 15, when his father Lerbern, a soldier in the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, told him of the battles he had fought in Germany and of helping to liberate a concentration camp. Callis recalled that no sooner would she add a Holocaust book to her display than she would find Allen reading it.

"I think that it ought to be taught in high school and at the adult level," Allen said of the Holocaust. "It might keep it from happening again. [The Holocaust] was such a tremendous loss of life: six million Jews. That's [as much as] everyone in Tennessee... It's [like] wiping out a whole state in four years."



Howard Allen (left) and Shirly Callis flank Rep. Mark Maddox at the May 11 Days of Remembrance observance. Allen holds a photograph of the lobby display he helped create.

THC'S RESOURCE catalog is online at tennesseeholocaustcommission.org.

The materials in the catalog are available for teachers and faculty in Tennessee. The service to borrowers is free, except for return mail and possible late fees.

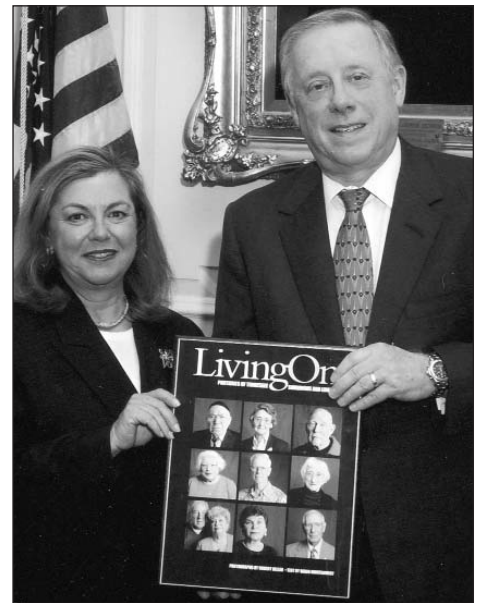
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Henry Wolkoff and Sen. Tim Burchett light one of six memorial candles at the May 11 Days of Remembrance observance at the state Capitol while other members of the legislature look on.



Charlie H. Warfield appears (left) at the Living On opening reception in Nashville with Frances Cutler and Herman Loewenstein, survivors.



Felicia Anchor, THC chair, presents Gov. Phil Bredesen with a photo album of ten Living On portraits and biographies.

THE F A M E