



Spring Newsletter 2015

A Word from Our Director



In the wake of the terrorist massacres in Paris at the Charlie Hebdo offices and in the Hypermarché Cacher, among the sea of placards in the enormous march and rally to demonstrate solidarity with the victims, I noticed a number that featured the image of Voltaire, the eighteenth century French philosopher and satirist. Like the hundreds of thousand others it read: *Je Suis Charlie* (I am Charlie). Intrigued, I wondered why those demonstrators had chosen to link Voltaire's image with the tag line that had developed from the tragedy. I soon realized what those people were saying. They had drawn an explicit link to Voltaire's unswerving belief in freedom of speech and also to his vigorously argued beliefs espoused in his 1763 *Traité sur la tolérance* (*Treatise on Tolerance*).

Written as a reaction to the cruel execution of Jean Calas in Toulouse in 1762 on

charges of blasphemy and murder, Voltaire took an uncompromising stance against state terror and murder in the name of a religious faith, against religious intolerance, against social intolerance. "*La tolérance n'a jamais excité de guerre civile; l'intolérance a couvert la terre de carnage.*" ("Tolerance has never incited civil war; intolerance has covered the earth with carnage.") Voltaire's thin volume is an exhortation for tolerance in all forms, even when one may not agree with a stance – be it religious, political, or social. He sees profound danger lurking in intolerance. And, surprisingly, Voltaire, who happened to be culturally and perhaps religiously anti-Jewish, speaks out in favor of tolerance toward Jews and Judaism's universal beliefs in the rights of all humans to worship the Divinity as they believe best suits them. (Voltaire references here the seven divine Noahatic commandments that if pursued bring all people toward the Almighty and a place in *Olam Habah*, the World to Come, as well as the Judaic insistence on justice.)

The events that framed the beginning of 2015, made all the more disconcerting by the actions of ISIS in their repeated

beheadings of their captives and the brutal burning to death of Jordanian pilot Moath al-Kasasbeh, have now been exacerbated by murder of three exemplar Islamic students in Chapel Hill and the terrorist shootings in Copenhagen. Intolerance surrounds us, be it in the political rhetoric we hear from our own national political figures, or the entrenched homophobia of judicial and political figures, or the ubiquitous racism that has led to the deaths of so many African-American men, or the xenophobia that presses so many to fear and mythologize the threat of foreigners (whether legal or illegal). The Center's *raison d'être* lies in promoting tolerance, instructing students and the community that intolerance can and does evolve into deadly genocide. The Broadway musical, *Dear World*, which was far ahead of its time when it opened in 1969, deserves a revival not simply because of its powerful environmental message, but because of one song, *One Person*. "One person can beat a drum and make enough noise for ten..." If we at the Center can touch just one person at a time and if that person feels empowered to carry our message of tolerance forward, then one by

one we can change the world. Am I a "cockeyed optimist?" Perhaps one must be. Jerry Herman's lyrics continue:

There may be an army of them, And only a handful of us, And how can a poor little band fight a mighty regime. There may be a legion of them, And only a parcel of us, But it isn't the size of the first, It's the size of a dream!

Our dream is immense, the vision of the prophets, of men and women of good faith. And, we shall strive to keep it alive, even the face of gross, threatening prejudice.

Update on Search for New Director

The Faculty Search Committee for a New Director for the Center has recently invited four candidates to campus. The four finalists are Dr. John Swanson (University of Tennessee Chattanooga), Dr. Thomas Kaplan (Davidson College), Dr. Oren Stier (Florida International University), and Dr. Cornelia Wilhelm (Emory University). We shall inform our membership, friends, and the general public when a decision is made.

Ex-officio:
Molle Grad
Melinè Markarian
Janet Weinstein
Sandi Testani
Nanci Tolbert Nance
Ruth Lubin
Jack Lubin
Linda Lentin
Murray Leipzig
Floris Leipzig
Harold Kaplan
Bruce Kaplan
Suzanne Lasky Gerard
Ellie Aibel

Center Advisory Board

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Save the Dates Spring & Summer 2015

March 20 Hillel Shabbat Service Temple of the High Country 6:00pm	June 14 Member's Picnic, Venue TBA
March 22 Film: <i>Yossi and Jagger</i> followed by discussion Greenbriar Cinema 2:00pm	June 26 Film: <i>Lost Town</i> followed by discussion Greenbriar Cinema 3:00pm
March 23 Captain Avner of Israeli Defence Forces will address LGBT Liberation in Israeli and the Middle East. 114 Belk Library 7:00pm	July 2 Bobka and a Book: <i>The Heavens are Empty: Discovering the Lost Town of Trochenbrod</i> by Avrom Bendavid-Val Plemmons Student Union 3:00pm
March 25 Speaker: Rabbi Andrew Baker 114 Belk Library 7:00pm	July 8 2nd Annual Leon Levine Distinguished Professor's Lecture Location TBA 7:00-9:00pm
April 8 Hillel's Mountaineer Seder Parkway Ball Room in Plemmons Student Union 7:00pm	July 11-17 Martin & Doris Rosen Summer Symposium Belk Library
April 12 Film: <i>Yossi</i> followed by discussion Greenbriar Cinema 2:00pm	July 23 Bobka and a Book: <i>The Slave</i> by I.B. Singer Plemmons Student Union 3:00pm
April 26 Film: <i>Out in the Dark</i> followed by discussion Greenbriar Cinema 2:00pm	

For more information on events, please visit our website at: holocaust.appstate.edu/events



CHANGES IN THE ED GRAD READING ROOM

In a bright east-facing alcove on the second floor of Belk Library stands the Ed Grad Reading Room. Ed Grad, z”l, Molle Grad’s late husband, was one of those creative, moving forces who assisted in bringing the dream of the Center to reality. The Reading Room represents a permanent memorial to his conviction in the significant work the Center could and ought to achieve. His spirit, his drive proved essential in those early years.

Today, the Reading Room houses a number of Jewish artifacts, all gifts to the Center and to the work Ed Grad helped to establish. Among some of the recent additions to that collection is a bust of Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion.



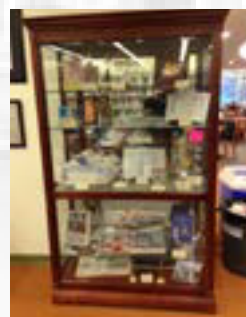
This terracotta bust was created by artist Steve Eingorn, who had previously donated busts of Golda Meir and Benjamin

‘Bibi’ Netanyahu. Affixed to the same wall as these three sculptures, you will find an original front page of the *New York Times* from 1947 announcing the United Nations’ decision to create the State of Israel. This valuable historical document was gifted to the Center and to the Reading Room by Fred and Eva Rawicz, themselves among the Center’s initial supporters. Above that framed document, current Center director, Dr. Simon Sibelman, has given

a copy of Polish-Jewish artist Arthur Syzk’s Hebrew language Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel.



In addition to these recent gifts, take time to admire the artifacts enclosed in the glass exhibit case. Donated by Molle Grad, Ruth Etkin, z”l, Rosemary Horowitz, Janet Weinstein, Rennie Brantz, and Simon Sibelman, the items on permanent display provide viewers a splendid range of Jewish religious and cultural objects that frame aspects of Jewish life. Recently, Dr. Sibelman removed the silver and brass objects in order to clean and polish them. Now replaced, their shine is like a beacon beckoning students, faculty, staff, and visitors to stop, to admire, to contemplate the rich heritage of the Jewish People.



Visit this quiet corner when you are next in Belk Library! You will be amazed by what you find there!

THE ETKIN SYMPOSIUM SCHOLARS’ FUND



Ruth and Stan Etkin, z”l, lived lives dedicated to their Jewishness. They loved the Yiddishkeit (Jewish way of life) that formed the core of their identity, and they wanted the teachers touched by the Rosen Summer Symposium and by the Center’s outreach activities to recognize that the six million murdered Jews came from a rich, vibrant, living religious culture that ranged far beyond attending synagogue services several times a year, kashrut (keeping kosher), and lighting Hanukkah candles. Jewish observance, Jewish culture, Jewish history, even Jewish languages guided every aspect of the martyrs’ lives, as it did for Ruth and Stan.

With their passing, the Center’s Community Advisory Board has decided to create a fund in their memory. The Stan and Ruth Etkin Symposium Scholars’ Fund will provide each scholarship student to the Symposium with a book about Judaism and a special certificate indicating that each of them is an Etkin Scholar, and each bears the responsibility of carrying back to their schools and students the lessons they will

have learned about Judaism and the Jewish People.

In Jewish law and tradition, giving *charit* (צדקה) is a hallmark of being a “just individual.” Tzedakah is more than giving money to the needy. Done properly, tzedakah requires the donor to share his or her compassion and empathy along with the money. In the writings of Maimonides, “whoever gives tzedakah ... with a sour expression and in a surly manner, even if he gives a thousand gold pieces, loses his merit. One should instead give cheerfully and joyfully....” Ruth and Stan Etkin generously and joyously gave to any who wanted to listen and learn. Now is our opportunity to continue their work.

Please consider joining those of our friends who have given to this new fund:

Sheila & Richard Abramowitz
Eleanor & Harold Aibel
Ellen Berlin
Barbara & Lewis Berman
Zohara Boyd
Helen & Ed Decker
Susan Frank
Roslyn Goldberg
Molle Grad
Floris & Murray Leipzig
Linda & Neil Lentin
Anny Lerman
Arlene & Harold Lieberman
Melin  & Berge Markarian
Nanci Tolbert Nance
Claire & Howard Peck
Ira Segal
Sandi Finci Solomon



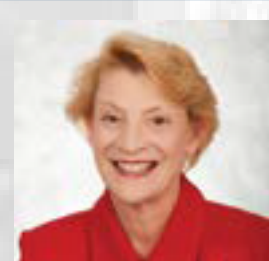
A REWARDING READ



Reading about the Holocaust can frequently prove depressing. For many, reading a text about the Holocaust, whether history, memoir, or creative fiction, leaves the reader with statistics or images of mounds of bodies. Richmond based writer, Nancy Wright Beasley, has just completed editing a marvelous text that explores the tragedy of hatred that lead to the deaths of six million Jews and five million others. But, she also provides a story of hope, caring, and transcendence. *Izzy’s Fire: Finding Humanity in the Holocaust*, relates the story of Eta Ipp and the manner in which her family would escape from the Kovno Ghetto and, with the active assistance of a Catholic family, would survive the Holocaust by living in an underground bunker. This is a story of passion, intensity, and an acknowledgment of the moral decency of a non-Jewish family to save thirteen threatened Jews.

To obtain a copy of the new edition of *Izzy’s Fire*, please contact Nancy Wright Beasley directly at: nancy@nancywrightbeasley.com to order your copy. This is a read you will never forget!

CHANCELLOR AT TEMPLE OF THE HIGH COUNTRY



Hillel will lead Shabbat services at the Temple of the High Country on March 20. ASU Chancellor Sheri Everts will be attending this service. Please come out in large numbers to welcome the Chancellor to the Temple of the High Country. This will be the first time a sitting chancellor will have attended services at the synagogue, and this will mark a perfect opportunity to welcome her into the local Jewish community. The services will be held on Friday, March 20, at 6:00pm.



MOUNTAINEER SEDER 5775

Hillel is already planning its annual Mountaineer Seder to mark Passover in Boone. The students use the seder as a means to teach the broader University community about this significant festival on the Jewish calendar. This year, Hillel plans to expand the number of students and adult community members who can attend by moving the event into the Parkway Ball Room in Plemmons Student Union. More information will be forthcoming in late-March. If you are in Boone, join us for this joyous evening of spirit, friendship, and food!

SPRING FORUM SPEAKER



MARCH 25, 7:00pm, 114 Belk Library - In the wake of the Second World War and the Nuremberg Trials that followed, the world believed anti-Semitism had been relegated to the ash can of history. And yet, the events in Paris in early January of this year have drawn attention to the fact that anti-Semitism of a new and frightening sort was alive and well in Europe.

Rabbi Andrew Baker, Director of International Jewish Affairs for the American Jewish Committee, will address this disquieting resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe. Rabbi Baker has been a prominent figure in addressing Holocaust-era issues in Europe and in international efforts to combat anti-Semitism. In January 2009 he was appointed the Personal Representative of the (OSCE) Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s Chair-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism and the threat it poses for Jews and non-Jews alike. Vice President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, the Jewish umbrella organization that has worked on restitution issues for over half a century, Rabbi Baker has been honored by numerous governments: awarded the Officer’s Cross of the Order of Merit, First Class (2003) by the President of Germany; presented with the Officer’s Cross of Merit (2006) by the President of Lithuania; honored with the Order of the Three Stars (2007) by the President of Latvia; and

awarded the National Order of Merit, Commander (2009) by the President of Romania.

14th ANNUAL MARTIN & DORIS ROSEN SUMMER SYMPOSIUM

In *How Could this Happen: Explaining the Holocaust*, scholar Dan McMillan writes: “The Holocaust terrifies everyone who chooses to think about it, in large part because, until now, no one has really tried to explain why it happened.” When we face the issues surrounding the teaching of the Holocaust - what, how, why, - many educators shy away from the daunting prospect. And yet, as educators, we bear a particular responsibility to address what has been referred to as a “civilizational tragedy.” That is why the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies at Appalachian State University created the **Martin and Doris Rosen Summer Symposium, ‘Remembering the Holocaust.’** The Symposium endeavors to provide teachers with the most current Holocaust research in tandem with the basic historical and sociological facts about the event that any educator would need to facilitate teaching this urgent topic.

The 2015 Summer Symposium will be held from July 11-17 on the Appalachian State University campus. Details coming soon.

