Save the Dates Spring & Summer 2015

March 20
Hilal Shabat Sence
Temple of the High Country 6:00pm

March 25
Film: Faux and Jagger followed by discussion
Greenbrier Cinema 2:00pm

March 25
Captain Amer of Israel Defense Force panel addressing LGBT Liberation in Israeli and the Middle East.

April 8
Student Union 7:00pm

April 26
Parkway Ballroom in Plemmons
Hillel’s Mountaineer Seder

May 26
Lost Town of Trochenbrod
Bobka and a Book:
The Heavens are Empty: Discovering the
by I.B. Singer
Plemmons Student Union 3:00pm

July 2
2nd Annual Leon Levine Distinguished Professor’s Lecture
Location TBA

July 13
Martin & Olive Rosen Summer Symposium
Belk Library

July 23
Bobka and a Book:
The Sower
by I.B. Singer
Plemmons Student Union 3:00pm

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

Spring Newsletter 2015

A Word from Our Director

I
n 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 thousands 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 Treatise on Tolerance (Tolérance à l’intolérance au sujet de la terre de carnage). (“Tolerance has never invited 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 an 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, Our Hold, 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 hand 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 (Davidsion College), Dr. Oren Sier (Florida International University), and Dr. Cornelila Wilhelm (Emory University). We shall inform our members, friends, and the general public when a decision is made.
In addition to these recent gifts, take time to admire the artifacts enclosed in the glass exhibition case. Donated by Molle Grad, Ruth Edkin, z”l, Rosemary Horwitz, Janet Weintraub, Rennie Beant, 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 faculty, staff, and visitors to stop, to admire, to contemplate the rich heritage of the Jewish People.

Ruth and Stan Edkin, 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 synagogic services several times a year (ba’aliy t’fillah, keeping kitchen), and lighting Hanukkah candles. Jewish observance, Jewish culture, Jewish history, even Jewish languages guided every aspect of the martyrs’ lives, as did it for Ruth and Stan.

The Center’s Community Advisory Board has decided to create a fund in their memory. The Stan and Ruth Edkin 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 caring back to their schools and students the lessons they will have learned about Judaism and the Jewish People.

In Jewish law and (tradition, giving charity (Tzedakah) 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 sure expression and in a sure manner; even if he gives a thousand gold pieces, loses his merit.” One should instead give cheerfully and joyfully… Ruth and Stan Edkin generously and joyfully gave to anyone who wanted to listen and learn. Now is our opportunity to continue their work.

Please consider joining three of our friends who have given to this new fund.

Sheila & Richard Abrahamowitz
Eleanor & Harold Aibel
Ellen Berlin
Barbara & Lewis Berman
Sharon & Art Bloch
Harly & Ed Becker
Susan Frank
Roths Goldberg
Molle Grad
Floris & Murray Leipzig
Linda & Neil Levine
Ann Lerman
Adger & Harold Lieberman
Meljie & Beger Markstein
Nanci Toler Nance
Claire & Howard Peck
Ira Sedor
Sandi Finci Solomon

A REWARDING READ

Hillen 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.

Hillen is already planning its annual Mountainaire 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, Hillen 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!

CHANCELLOR AT TEMPLE OF THE HIGH COUNTRY

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

THE ETKIN SYMPOSIUM SCHOLARS’ FUND

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

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Visit this quiet corner when you find time to share his or her compassion and to achieve. His spirit, his drive proved essential to 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 terra cotta bust was created by artists 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 from the Algemeiner Journal of July 31, 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 Syzik’s Hebrew language Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel.