

Holocaust Education Committee

The Holocaust Education Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford has been active and productive during the 2007-08 year. Since 2008 marked the 10th anniversary of the dedication of the Holocaust Monument on Rockdale Avenue in New Bedford, the committee decided to plan a tribute to the late Abraham Landau for our annual Yom HaShoah program.

Jim Wilcox and Cynthia Yoken, co-chairs of the committee, worked through the year on a DVD of Abe's life. Excerpts of his interview with the Shoah Foundation were shown along with interviews of different members of the community who spoke about Abe, including talks with Rabbi Kanter, Rabbi Hartman and with Ann Landau Kantor, his daughter. There were also video clips of Abe's shop, the different homes he lived in New Bedford, the synagogues, the Holocaust monument and his portrait painted by Debbie Macy which hangs in the community room of the downtown library,

Students from Keith Middle School, the Notre Dame school in Fall River, the Bernard H. Ziskind School of Judaism and Ahavath Achim Hebrew School, learned about Abe in their classes this past year, wrote essays and did art projects which were displayed the evening of April 13, 2008. This annual program took on a special significance with our 10th annual memorial service at the Holocaust Monument ending with a procession to Tifereth Israel Synagogue led by the local schoolchildren who participated in the art and essay contest. In the large social hall of the synagogue, the community viewed the DVD: "A Tribute to Abraham Landau."

Spinner Publications has steadily been working on Abe's book and hopes to finally have the book ready for publication by April 2009.

From April 28th to May 11, 2008, Mel and Cindy Yoken participated in the 20th March of the Living. They joined teenagers and other adults from Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to spend a week in Poland visiting ghettos, deportation points, and concentration camps. On May 1, 2008, they joined 12,000 people from around the world for the annual march, a 4 kilometer walk from Auschwitz to Birkenau. After their sojourn in Poland, they then flew to Israel where they visited the Afula-Gilboa region, Safed, Kfar Blum, Jerusalem, Masada and the Dead Sea. On May 8, 2008, they celebrated the 60th anniversary of the state of Israel and they walked, danced, sang, and joined their fellow brethren on the traditional march from Safra Square to the Kotel. Later that night was a mega event for all the groups of March of the Living at Latrun. It was truly a memorable, unforgettable trip in which the Yokens embraced the past for a week in Poland and grasped the future as they ended this life-altering experience seeing the beauty of Israel after 60 years of its independence.

The committee continues to provide Holocaust Education to the students in the Greater New Bedford area. Over the past year, Jim and Cindy have visited classes where they have talked to students about the Holocaust.

This Fall, the Holocaust Education Committee is proud to co-sponsor a play by James Still, "And Then They Came for Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank" which will be presented at the Keith Middle School the weekend of October 10, 11, and 12, 2008. Jarrad Nunes will direct the students from his company, New Bedford Youth Rep who will perform the roles of Holocaust survivors from the Netherlands. One of the Holocaust survivors depicted in the play, Eva Geiringer Schloss, will be traveling here from her home in London, England to be with us and to speak to the audiences after each performance. A survivor of Auschwitz with her mother, she introduced her mother to Otto Frank after the war. Eva is, therefore, a "stepsister" of Anne Frank. Eva has written her own story, "Eva's story", but you will be able to view the play and meet her at one of the productions in October. The performances will be open to the public on Saturday evening, October 11th at 7 pm for \$15 (general public) and \$12 (seniors and students) and at a matinee on Sunday, October 12th at 2pm. We encourage the community to be a part of the production and to consider becoming a sponsor. All donations will be acknowledged in our program booklet. Those who give a donation of \$100 or more will be invited to a private reception with Eva on October 12th. You can become a sponsor by sending your check payable to NB YouthRep c/o Jarrad Nunes, 21 James Street, New Bedford, Ma. 02740.

Anyone interested in joining the committee this year is encouraged to contact Jim Wilcox, Cindy Yoken, or Olga Yorish at the Jewish Federation office.