



MIDWEST CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER
2009/2010

An Incredible Journey by the Creators of Curious George

DRAWINGS AND ARCHIVAL IMAGES ILLUSTRATE HOW THE LITTLE BROWN MONKEY WAS SAVED

More than three generations of Americans have grown up reading the stories of an irrepressible little brown monkey known in this country as “Curious George.” But few people know about the incredible journey made by his creators, Margret and H.A. Rey, to escape the German invasion of France.

Stashing a few precious belongings in their knapsacks and bicycle baskets, including the manuscript and illustrations for the book that became *The Adventures of Curious George*, the Jewish couple fled Paris in June 1940, beginning a five-month odyssey by bike, train and boat that would eventually bring them to American shores.

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Saving the Little Brown Monkey: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey

October 21-December 1, 2009

Jewish Community Center Gallery • 5801 West 115th Street Overland Park, KS

Gallery Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 8:30 - 7:00; Fri. 8:30 - 5:00; Sun. 11:00 – 2:00

Docent-led tours are available for school groups, grades 4 and up. Please contact Jessica Rockhold at 913-327-8195 or schools@mchekc.org.

Endpaper - *The Atlantic*, 2005, courtesy Allan Drummond and Institute for Holocaust Education, Omaha, Nebraska



Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race

A TRAVELING EXHIBITION FROM THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

**DEADLY
MEDICINE**

CREATING
THE
MASTER
RACE

Presented by the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education
in partnership with the National Archives at Kansas City and
in cooperation with the Center for Practical Bioethics

March 16 – June 10, 2010

National Archives at Kansas City

400 West Pershing Road, Kansas City, MO

No charge for admission. Docent-led tours are available for high school and adult groups. Call Lori Cox-Paul at 816-268-8017 for information.

Volunteer Docent Opportunities

Apply by December 31 to Jennifer Audsley-Moore (816-268-8071 or jennifer.audsley@nara.gov).

Patron Preview March 15, 6:30 p.m. (See page 5 for Patron Opportunities.)

From 1933 to 1945, Nazi Germany's government led by Adolf Hitler promoted a nationalism that combined territorial expansion with claims of biological superiority—an “Aryan master race”—and virulent antisemitism. Driven by a racist ideology legitimized by German scientists, the Nazis attempted to eliminate all of Europe's Jews, ultimately killing six million in the Holocaust. Many others also became victims of persecution and murder in the Nazis' campaign to cleanse German society of individuals viewed as threats to the “health” of the nation.

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MCHE STAFF



Top: Laurel Maslowski and Jessica Rockhold
Bottom: Dana Smith and Fran Sternberg

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our National Treasure

For several days in June, our collective attention was focused on Washington, D.C. This time it was not about politics. This time it was personal.

For on June 10, an 88-year-old white supremacist and Holocaust denier entered the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and within that sacred space fatally shot Stephen Tyrone Johns, a special police officer who, in a final and unsuspecting act of kindness, had literally opened the door for the aged gunman.

The news media devoted most of that day to covering the grief and shock that spread throughout our nation and, in fact, the world. Pundits and reporters spoke reverently about the Holocaust and emphasized the importance of Holocaust education. They understood that the tragic irony of virulent racism manifesting itself on “hallowed ground”—at an institution that, according to its website, “teaches millions of people each year about the dangers of unchecked hatred”—was best presented without sensationalism.

To those of us who have been frequent visitors to USHMM, who have personal connections with their professional staff, who share a common goal, and who look to the museum for resources, pedagogical guidance and historical expertise, this went far beyond heartfelt sympathy and media reports. Though more than 1,000 miles from the events themselves, we understood, and we too felt violated. For Holocaust survivors who lost family, friends and so much more, this was particularly painful.

Closed for one day following the shooting, USHMM re-opened to a record crowd on June 12, the date Anne Frank would have marked her 80th birthday. The museum continued doing what it has always done so well—pursuing its mission to educate about the Holocaust, “preserving the memory of those who suffered, and encouraging visitors to reflect upon moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.”



Jean Zeldin, Executive Director,
and Mark Adams, Board President

MCHE is following their lead. The coming year will be one of unprecedented educational activity as we offer

- two exhibitions (including one from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum);
- a series of public talks related to the exhibits;
- face-to-face and on-line courses for teachers;
- completion of MCHE's *Witnesses to the Holocaust Archive*, including topically-organized DVDs based on local survivor testimony;
- curricula to teach about contemporary genocides;
- a writing workshop for children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors;
- expansion of our second generation speakers bureau; and
- the 15th year of our White Rose Student Essay Contest.

Though deeply saddened, we cannot afford to despair over the actions of an unrepentant racist and others like him. What we can do—what we are inspired to do—is to teach those whose minds are still formative, who need and want to learn the historical facts, who wish to become more informed and more vigilant. We echo the words of a message posted on USHMM's website in memory of Officer Johns: “The tragedy is not what this country is about, and the response indicates how many hold this thought.”

Curious George Continued from Page 1

MCHE, in cooperation with the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City, is bringing an exhibit depicting the Reys' story—*Saving the Little Brown Monkey: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey*—to Overland Park, Kansas, October 21 - December 1, 2009.

The exhibition features 27 framed prints by artist Allan Drummond and supplemental archival images from the holdings of the DeGrummond Collection of Children's Literature at the University of Southern Mississippi. It is based in part on the book, *The Journey that Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey*, written by Louise Borden and illustrated by Allan Drummond (Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 2005).

The exhibition was organized and curated by Beth Seldin Dotan, director of the Institute for Holocaust Education in Omaha, Nebraska.

This venue marks the first stop of the traveling exhibition, which is being toured for five years by ExhibitsUSA, a national division of Mid-America Arts Alliance with the Kansas Arts Commission and The National Endowment for the Arts.

Major funding for this project has been provided by a grant to MCHE from J-LEAD of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City, with additional support from the following patrons: Pati Chasnoff; Steve Chick; Paul and Katherine DeBruce; Maria Devinki; Eddie and Gloria Baker Feinstein; Jim, Joyce, Kate and Alex Hess; Ron and Barbra Porter Hill; Paul Lerner and Rosie Lerner; Lowell and Evy Tilzer; and Bob and Jean Zeldin.

More information is available at www.mchekc.org/Savingthelittlebrownmonkey.htm or at www.maaa.org and www.eusa.org.



Tiergartenstrasse 4, the address of the secret program's headquarters. Photo: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives

MODEL FOR GENOCIDE T-4 Targeted Disabled Children and Adults

"T-4," the code name for the mass murder of institutionalized mentally and physically disabled German and Austrian adults and children, labeled "life unworthy of life" by Hitler and the Nazis, was established in spring of 1939. Originally intended as a secret killing operation targeting disabled children, the program was quickly widened to include adolescents and adults. Six killing facilities—five in Germany and one in Austria—were established to accomplish the task. There, victims were killed in carbon-monoxide gas chambers disguised as shower baths and their bodies were burned in crematoria.

However, the program could not be kept secret. In August 1941, in response to public and private protests, Hitler stopped it. That is, he stopped T-4, but the murders continued into the last months of the war—more clandestine, more decentralized and with less emphasis on gassing. They were also extended to the occupied eastern areas—Bohemia and Moravia, Poland, the Baltic states and the Soviet Union. Altogether, by 1945, the program claimed some 200,000 lives. Moreover, it also provided the operational model for Hitler's other genocidal policies—namely, the murder of the Jews, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies).

For additional information on the T-4 project, go to <http://www.mchekc.org/T4.htm>.



Louise Borden

Saving the Little Brown Monkey: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey Special Events

7:00 p.m. at the Jewish Community Campus
5801 West 115th Street, Overland Park, KS

- November 4 - Talk by children's author Louise Borden, "Writing About Curious George"
- November 17 - Celebrity reading panel, with noted Kansas Citians sharing stories of Curious George (all generations welcome)

Reservations are required for these programs by calling 913-327-8196 or emailing program@mchekc.org. Should space become limited, seating will be offered first to those on the reservation list.

Deadly Medicine Continued from Page 1

Dr. Susan Bachrach, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum curator and historian, describes the *Deadly Medicine* exhibit and its implications.

"Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race shows how the Nazis under Adolf Hitler aimed to change the genetic makeup of the population through measures known as 'racial hygiene' or 'eugenics,' and the role that scientists in the biomedical fields—especially anthropologists, psychiatrists, and geneticists, who were all medically trained experts—the role they played in legitimizing these policies and helping to implement them.

"This exhibition should provoke us to think about questions today: the relationship between the needs and rights of individuals as weighed against the larger concerns of the society... It certainly also speaks to the importance of always respecting the value of the individual and the human dignity of the individual."

"This exhibition...
should be a part of every
citizen's experience."

—*The New York Times*

SECOND NIGHT TO REMEMBER – Ministries of New Life Tribute Includes Generous Gift to MCHE

Kansas City's Holocaust survivors were honored at Kehilath Israel Synagogue on May 19 in a heartfelt and moving program organized by Ministries of New Life. Acknowledging 2,000 of Christian antisemitism, the "Night to Remember" included an inter-faith service, a call to repair the breach, presentation of the Twelve Stones of Repentance and readings and music to honor the Jewish people and Israel.

In tribute to Holocaust survivors and in recognition of the work of MCHE, Ministries of New Life director Marilyn Lake Griffin presented MCHE with a generous check for \$10,000 to further the work of the organization.

Reflecting on the unexpected gift, MCHE executive director Jean Zeldin said, "It means a great deal to know that the Holocaust is not only a Jewish issue, but a human issue. We are grateful to Ministries of New Life for helping MCHE carry forth the legacy of Holocaust survivors."



LEAVE A LEGACY Help Sustain the Mission of MCHE

If your estate plans include a gift to MCHE or if you wish to discuss future gift opportunities, please complete the Leave a Legacy portion of the attached envelope. With your permission, we will recognize your act of kindness and remembrance in our spring newsletter, along with others who have made these generous commitments.

A David & Alice Achtenberg ~ George Ackerman & Stanlee Stahl ~ Mark Adams ~ Frank Adler ~ Federico Adler ~ Mickey & Marge Adler ~ Janice Albright ~ Mary Agnes Alderman ~ Ed & Cheryl Alexander ~ Eva Allen ~ Joshua Altman ~ Avrom & Rachel Altman ~ Anonymous ~ Ethyl Ardow ~ Jim & Pamela Ash ~ Evert & Susan Asjes ~ Martha Atlas ~ Avila University ~ Steve & Diane Azorsky **B** Jim & Fern Badzin ~ Sam & Janice Balot ~ Andrew & Sharon Barber ~ Kay Waldo Barnes ~ Tom & Carol Barnett ~ J. 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*of blessed memory

**DEADLY MEDICINE:
CREATING THE
MASTER RACE**

Exhibit Preview

March 15, 2010, 6:30 p.m.

PATRON OPPORTUNITIES

Please use the attached envelope to make your patron gift.

In addition to the following benefits, all preview reservations at the patron level and above received by December 31, 2009, will be recognized on the premier invitation.

\$10,000 • Premier Preview Underwriter

- Ten patron reservations for the Kansas City Premier of *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race*
- Recognition Signage at the National Archives and on MCHE's web site during the run of the exhibit
- Copy of coffee-table style exhibit catalog
- Five Valet Parking Passes

\$5,000 • Preview Underwriter

- Eight patron reservations for the Kansas City Premier of *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race*
- Recognition Signage at the National Archives during the run of the exhibit
- Copy of coffee-table style exhibit catalog
- Four Valet Parking Passes

\$2,500 • Preview Sponsor

- Six patron reservations for the Kansas City Premier of *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race*
- Recognition at the exhibit opening
- Copy of coffee-table style exhibit catalog
- Three Valet Parking Passes

\$1,800 • Preview Benefactor

- Four patron reservations for the Kansas City Premier of *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race*
- Recognition at the exhibit opening
- Copy of coffee-table style exhibit catalog
- Two Valet Parking Passes

\$1,000 • Preview Patron

- Two patron reservations for the Kansas City Premier of *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race*
- Recognition at the exhibit opening
- One Valet Parking Pass

\$150 • Individual Preview Reservation

- One reservation for the Kansas City Premier of *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race*

All amounts in excess of \$75 per person are tax-deductible as allowed by law.



MCHE RESOURCE CENTER PROJECT TO INCREASE ACCESS

MCHE's Resource Center is a free lending library of over 1,500 books, videos and teaching resources, open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and until 7:00 p.m. on Wednesdays when school is in session. In a multi-step project, MCHE is moving toward making the collection more easily accessible to the public.

Phase I of the project included cataloging each resource into new library software.

Phase II will make the collection searchable by subject, both on site and eventually through MCHE's website. Initial



Rachel Franklin

work on this project was completed this summer by Rachel Franklin, now a ninth grader at Shawnee Mission East.

After viewing MCHE's *Portrait 2000* exhibit of local Holocaust survivors last summer, Rachel was moved by MCHE's mission and wanted to be involved in our work. During her time with MCHE, Rachel entered complete subject listings for each book in our resource center.

Moving forward, we will complete the indexing to allow effective topic searches and integration of our library database into our website. Volunteers, particularly those with library experience, who are interested in helping with this project should contact MCHE at info@mchekc.org.

For more information about MCHE's Resource Center, go to <http://mchekc.org/ResourceCenter.htm>.

Collective Voices

NEW WRITING WORKSHOP FOR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

"Second" and "third" generation voices now have the opportunity to tell their own stories and record their own memories from their special perspective, with the goal of crafting a published collection of pieces in a unique program developed by MCHE. The program, *Collective Voices*, is designed for children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors as a series of writing workshops facilitated by a professional instructor.

"We believe this program is something completely new, nationally," says Fran Sternberg, MCHE director of university programs and adult education and coordinator of *Collective Voices*.

"Other Holocaust centers have children of survivors writing their parents' stories. But as far as we know, MCHE is the only center offering children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors an expressive outlet unique to *their* perceptions and experiences, empowering them to 'speak' on their terms and helping them to share their memories, while at the same time providing a critical additional dimension to Holocaust remembrance."

"This is an important project that, hopefully, will be replicated at other Holocaust centers and museums," said Dr. William L. Shulman, president of the Association of Holocaust Organizations.

Collective Voices is supported by a grant from the Jewish Heritage Foundation of Greater Kansas City. MCHE inaugurated the program at a reception on July 9, where participants were introduced to Dr. Benjamin Furnish, the workshop's instructor, who spoke on "Voices of the Generations."

Furnish, the author of *Nostalgia in Jewish-American Theatre and Film, 1979-2004*, and managing editor of the prestigious BkMk Press at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), completed graduate degrees at Harvard University, UMKC and the University of Kansas (KU), where he received a Ph.D. in theater and film studies. In addition to UMKC, where he is a lecturer in the Department of English, he has taught at KU, Avila University and the University of Missouri-Columbia. He has also published extensively on American, English and Yiddish theater and film and on the Holocaust.

Envisioned as a year-long project, the workshops have met twice and will continue to meet monthly at the Jewish Community Campus. For greatest effectiveness, the program is limited to 25 participants, college age and older. For more information, please contact Fran Sternberg (program@mchekc.org or 913-327-8194).

2009-2010 White Rose Student Essay Contest

ELIGIBILITY EXTENDED TO 18 COUNTIES

Now in its 15th year, MCHE's White Rose Student Essay Contest has been expanded by popular demand from 11 to 18 counties in the Greater Kansas City region.

Students in grades 8 through 12 who attend school or who are home-schooled in eligible counties may now participate. The postmark deadline is March 26, 2010.

Complete contest information, including theme, criteria, eligible counties and resources on Jewish resistance, can be found at <http://mchekc.org/WhiteRoseStudentEssayContest.htm>.

Finalists and winning essays from the 2008-2009 contest can be found at <http://mchekc.org/WR2009Winners.htm>.

2009-2010 Essay Contest Theme: Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust

Students are asked to describe one form of Jewish resistance to Nazi policy and to reflect on how that act of resistance affected a particular individual.

Five Films Complete MCHE Witness Archive Project

This fall, MCHE will complete the third and final phase of its *Witnesses to the Holocaust Archive* project with the production of five films organized around specific Holocaust-related themes

- *Kristallnacht*
- *Ghettos*
- *Auschwitz*
- *In Hiding*
- *Liberation*

Supervised by Fran Sternberg, MCHE director of university programs and adult education, and Jessica Rockhold, MCHE director of school programs and teacher education, who also provided voice-over narration, the films feature excerpts from MCHE's collection of 48 videotaped interviews of local survivors, refugees and witnesses that were part of MCHE's first oral history project begun soon after its founding in 1993. The films will also include archival and personal photos.

Since 2006, generous grants from the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany, the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City and the Jewish Heritage Foundation of Greater Kansas City have enabled MCHE to digitize its collection of original full-length videotapes, edit them into lengths suitable for classroom instruction, and craft teaching tools to enhance their use. MCHE is also grateful to Outpost Worldwide

for providing special consideration, technical expertise and guidance in the editing and production of the films.

In addition to the full-length interviews, edited interviews and the topical films that form its core, the archive also includes

- 50 audiotaped interviews of local survivors and refugees conducted in 2000, as part of MCHE's *Portrait 2000* exhibit;
- 66 written and audiotaped reminiscences collected for the keepsake journal commemorating MCHE's tenth anniversary;
- papers and memorabilia relating to the organization and activities of the New Americans Club, donated by the late Jack Igielnik, one of the club's founders; and
- a 2006 survey of local survivors and refugees about their post-immigration experiences.

Several interns from the University of Kansas, University of Missouri-Kansas City and CAJE assisted in the transcribing, indexing, and cataloging of these materials.

"The *Witnesses to the Holocaust Archive*," says Sternberg "is a comprehensive and invaluable collection of information about the refugees and survivors in our community."

To provide students, educators, scholars and the general public access to the testimonies and documents, the archive is housed in a dedicated space in MCHE's Resource Center.

KRISTALLNACHT 2009 Commemoration Will Feature Newly Produced MCHE Film

Seventy-one years ago on November 9 and 10, *Kristallnacht* (the "Night of Broken Glass"), an anti-Jewish pogrom devised by Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's minister for propaganda and public enlightenment, was carried out by the SS and other national police agencies. Jewish businesses were vandalized and homes ransacked and burned. At least 100 Jews were murdered and 30,000 Jewish men were imprisoned in concentration camps. *Kristallnacht* ended the illusion that normal Jewish life in Germany and Austria was still possible.

This year's community-wide commemoration of *Kristallnacht* will take place at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, November 9 in the Lewis and Shirley White Theatre on the Jewish Community Campus, 5801 West 115th Street, Overland Park, Kansas.

It will showcase the documentary film *Kristallnacht*, newly produced for MCHE's *Witnesses to the Holocaust* series. The film describes the rise of Hitler and the Nazis and the emergence of increasingly brutal policies toward Germany's Jews that culminated in the violence of November 9-10, 1938. It features excerpts from MCHE's videotaped survivor testimonies along with archival and personal photos.

Complimentary reservations are available by calling 913-327-8194 or emailing program@mcheck.org. A reception will follow the film.

Save the Date!

MCHE ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2010

*Featuring a special film premier
from MCHE's Witness Archive
commemorating 65 years since
the Liberation of Auschwitz*

*Auschwitz Birkenau, May 1944: Women and children
in front of Crematorium III. Photo: United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives*



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Go to www.mchekc.org
for an on-line version of this
newsletter plus additional
history and resources.

MCHE and Johnson County Libraries Partner on Holocaust-Related Programs

MCHE is pleased to partner with the Johnson County Libraries to offer a series of Holocaust-related programs this fall. These programs highlight the work of the Isak Federman Holocaust Teaching Cadre, MCHE's locally-produced documentary, and our Second Generation Speakers Bureau.

All programs are scheduled from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

CORINTH BRANCH • 8100 Mission Road, Prairie Village, KS, 913-967-8650

October 13 – View the Academy Award-winning documentary *One Survivor Remembers*

October 27 – *Saving the Little Brown Monkey* – the true story of the escape of Margret and H.A. Rey from the German occupation of France (an activity and discussion session)

November 10 – Presentation by Second Generation speaker (child of Holocaust survivors)

LEAWOOD BRANCH • 4700 Town Center Drive, Leawood, KS, 913-826-4620

October 14 – View MCHE's award-winning documentary *Through Our Own Eyes*, featuring local survivors and other eyewitnesses to the Holocaust (DVD available for sale at <http://mchekc.org/VideoEyes.htm>)