



New Mexico Holocaust & Intolerance Museum and Study Center

October, 2002 - Volume 1, Number 1

A Short Note from our President:

Hate and intolerance will destroy a family, a culture and a nation. It is our mission to diminish this destructive evil through education, lectures and visual material. We have been very successful in bringing our vision to the public. Letters and comments from students and adults encourage us to continue and expand our educational programs.

9/11 brought people out of their inertia and gave them a better understanding of the result of hate. Everyone's help is needed in standing up against hate and intolerance. While the Museum can act as an inspiration for people to respect each other and work together to overcome hate and intolerance, it is up to each of us to do our part.

We have created very successful educational programs for teachers, students, and the public. All visitors are introduced to the Native American Cultural Genocide, the Armenian and Greek Genocides, the Bataan Death March and the Holocaust.

We would like to incorporate other exhibits featuring the violence perpetrated against Spanish speaking people, Black Americans, and the relocation and incarceration of Japanese Americans, along with additional exhibits focusing on the consequences of hate and intolerance.

We would also like to increase our wall honoring those righteous individuals who placed their own lives in danger to save others.

In this, our first newsletter, you will see scores of visitors from teachers and school children around the state.

There were over 900 visitors the very first year we opened, and as of July 2002, we have almost 2,000. More than double in only 6 months.

At a recent visit to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, the staff there indicated that 60% to 70% of the museum visitors were NOT Jewish.

Hate and intolerance do not exclusively belong to or against any particular group. Our museum and study center is dedicated towards the dissemination of material on behalf of ALL of the ethnic victims, and of course our visitors represent the entire spectrum of humanity—we are truly grateful.

The continuation of our efforts depends on financial support from the public. Any help that you can give us would be greatly appreciated (please see page 8). We are also in need of volunteers. Please call me if you can help in that area.



Thank you,

Werner Gellert,
President, Chairperson, and Holocaust Survivor

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On a Personal Note - Reverend William Dorman

The ringing telephone gently interrupted what was otherwise a lazy Sunday afternoon at home. When I answered the phone, a kindly voice with a marked accent stated it was Werner Gellert calling. Unbeknownst to me, embedded in that call was an opportunity to be involved in an extraordinarily significant effort to make a difference in our community and state.

Werner invited me to become a Board Member of the then newly forming New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum and Study Center. His invitation deeply touched me for

A variety of reasons. Since 1988, I have enjoyed a unique relationship with Temple Albert. The Rabbi during those years was Rabbi Paul Citrin, who became a colleague and friend. Every year he brought the group of confirmands to our worship service at Monte Vista Christian Church, and I was able to interact with them after the service. He and I exchanged pulpits on occasion, and I was honored to give the benediction at his last worship service.

Interestingly enough, as a child growing up in the home of a Christian minister in Pensacola, FL, one of my memories is visiting the Jewish Synagogue. The rabbi educated our class about Jewish beliefs and practices, while explaining the features of the sanctuary (Ark, scrolls, Lamp). My family believed that God's steadfast love (hesed) embraced all people, and consequently, prejudice and hate had no place in our home or lives.

Apart from these experiences, I was moved by Werner's invitation because of my theological and religious commitment to hospitality, respect, community, harmony, and justice.

Hate and violence are the powers of destruction, corrosive to individuals, groups, and societies. Here was an opportunity to speak and work for peace (shalom)!

I gave serious thought to Werner's request. I knew it entailed a commitment of time and energy, and was worthy of my best effort. In a few days, I telephoned him to say "yes" to his phone call, a call I consider

A God-given occasion to serve with those dedicated to shalom.

So it is that I, a Christian minister and hospital chaplain, sit on the Board. I am a Past President of the New Mexico Conference of Churches (an ecumenical body), and serve as a communication link from the Board to the NM Conference of Churches.

The Board's vision and mission of shalom, passion and dedication of the members, and inclusive acknowledgement of those individuals and groups who have endured the lashes of hate and intolerance are the reasons that I am honored—and most humbled—to be part of this endeavor.



Upcoming Events

In the **Fall of 2002**, we will conduct a seminar for teachers, encompassing how to relate the importance of respect for other groups of people and the consequences of hate and intolerance. One session is planned for Ruidoso and possibly repeat sessions in Santa Fe and the Albuquerque area.

On **October 20**, Werner and Frances Gellert will be honored by the Israeli Bond Drive at a dinner at the Marriott Hotel for founding the New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum and Study Center and other volunteerism for the Jewish Community

During **March and April 2003**, we will have an exhibit and sale of excellent art donated to us by the family of the late artist, Alice Charlasch. The exhibit and art sale will take place at the Kimo Theater Art Gallery, with all proceeds going directly to our organization.

From the Interim Editor

This is, as the title indicates, the first newsletter published by the New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum and Study Center.

I recently made a statement that there are 284 people on ALL the non-profit boards in Albuquerque—obviously I made up the number, but all of the current board members at our museum and study center are on OTHER boards. I asked them whether the other board they served on had a newsletter.

The answer from everyone was a resounding “YES.”

Some were monthly, quarterly, even annual publications. (I am the immediate past Chair of the New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities, and we have a quarterly newsletter.). The purpose of those newsletters and ours is to inform our neighbors who we are, what activities we have been involved in, and obviously our future programs.

In this first issue, for example, is an article by Victor Raigoza, one of our board members, on how he obtained a \$1,000 contribution from the graduation class of Los Lunas High School. That’s Los Lunas High, Los Lunas, New Mexico, not Yeshiva High, Brooklyn, New York.

Of course, there is an article by our president (and founder) Werner Gellert—describing some of our current and future activities. Also an article by another board member, Reverend William Dorman, on how and why he got interested in this organization (we’re glad he did). Bill was formerly president of the New Mexico Council of Churches.

Another reason for our publication is not only to inform and announce our future programs, but to serve as a “take home” piece to our many, many local and out of state visitors.

How did we start?

Werner gave me a book of 100 plus Holocaust-type organizations. I wrote to several of them asking for copies of their newsletters to note layout, contents, etc. They were extremely helpful. We noticed articles on teachers bringing their school children, children writing about their personal experiences, etc. We’ll obviously include those types of comments on a periodic basis.

That’s it. If you have comments or observations, or would like to get involved, great. Just call or write Werner.

Most importantly, Thanks to Carol A. Leithead, my Executive Secretary, for designing this newsletter. Also, thank you to the computer “guru” Shelly Liebman for setting up the final copy ready for our “mass” publication.

Thanks,



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ned".

Ned A. Miller
Interim Editor

Letters From Teachers and Students

Dear Mr. Gellert:

I would like to thank you for letting my class and me come and visit your museum. I think it was very interesting, but really sad. The pictures were the saddest to look at. Also, I would like to thank you for sharing your experiences and your advice you gave to us and sharing with us the meaning of the word "hate" and what it can lead to. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Michelle Naranjo, Cochiti School

Dear Mr. Gellert:

I had the privilege of attending the seminar you helped make possible on November 28. The seminar was phenomenal and truly meaningful to me. I am still trying to process all the information I heard and the resulting feelings.

I have enclosed a check to be used for your museum and study center in whatever manner you feel suitable.

The work that you are doing to make the world better is commendable. Thank you for speaking out.

Sincerely,

Ann O'Rourke

Dear Mr. Gellert:

As you can see from their attached letters, our visit to your museum made quite an impression on some of the students. I thank you so much for taking the time to talk with them, and also for your work building these exhibits to keep reminding all of us of a time we must never forget and must never let happen again.

Sincerely,

Emily Graeser, Cochiti School

Dear Mr. Gellert:

I thank you for going out of your way to teach us about your experience in the Holocaust. I learned about the different camps. I hope you didn't have nightmares. I hope we could go back next year. I hope you finish the other exhibits.

Sincerely,

Jack Sheehan, Cochiti School

Dear Mr. Gellert:

I attended your museum with Mrs. Keyser's class, and really enjoyed the time and dedication you put into this project. I learned about the Holocaust first hand and that presentation started some new questions in my mind. I found out many facts about the Holocaust and the other atrocities occurring during World War II. I am glad you can face your past, and please keep doing this for a long time, I am truly honored to have been part of this great experience.

Sincerely,

Brian Driscoll, Student, Cochiti School

Dear Mr. Gellert:

My class and I thank you for the time and information that you shared. I was very impressed with the Holocaust Museum and appreciate the attention and effort you have devoted to the exhibits and the museum.

The displays were very informative. The quotations and artifacts helped my students to recognize the human costs of the Holocaust. It is essential that they realize the personal side of these tragedies and do not dismiss it as a dark time in history.

Your discussion and personal accounts confirmed the reality and gave relevance to this horror. We had engaged class discussions about the trip.

The most repeated comment from both the students and the parents that accompanied us was how remarkable a speaker you were. You have a gift for sharing this information without making it threatening or distant. I admire your ability to recall these events with honesty, emotion and tact.

The presentation encouraged reflection and concern because you did not speak down to, or overwhelm the students.

Thank you again for a valuable, educational experience. Thank you for the time and devotion you give to this significant cause. Your efforts help to safeguard our freedoms and will help deter any repeat of such brutality.

Yours truly,

Sybil Keyser, Teacher, 9th gifted seminar

How to Get a Senior Class to Donate to a Holocaust Museum

By Victor Raigoza, Board Member

My story starts in 1982, when I had the pleasure of meeting Thomas Farley in Pueblo Colorado. At that time I had just been elected a senior class officer in my high school, when I was approached to lead a state wide lobbying effort to ask for more funding from the state legislature for all secondary schools. To my surprise I worked very hard and ended up with a seven percent increase for funding for secondary education in the state.



In 2001, I met the newly elected senior class president of Los Lunas High School, known to everybody as Danny. I learned very quickly, that Danny's new position was not really for his resume but truly to give back to his school and his community.

It was during our third meeting at my office when I made the suggestion to Danny to take his fellow officers and go visit the museum. I encouraged Danny to also invite along the class sponsor, Mrs. Bonnie LaCourt, because I knew that a sponsor would be needed somewhere along the way. Danny did as I had suggested and came back to visit me. He was truly impressed and touched by the subject and also by Werner. It was at this meeting that he informed me that he would raise money for the museum.

Time passed and finally in the Spring of 2002, Danny called my office and said he needed to come see me. He came by to inform me that he had convinced over 50 of his classmates to help clean the Pit after a Lobo basketball game and that they would get paid and donate the money to the museum. I thought that was a one time deal but to my surprise, he informed me that he convinced the class to do it twice and then he asked, "Is one thousand dollars enough as a donation to the museum?" I was shocked and extremely pleased. Even now, it gives me a lump in my throat, to think of the hard work these kids did and how generous they were.

It gives my hope to know that our holocaust museum touched a generation that was more than a half century away from our subject matter. It gives me hope to know that we have such future great leaders and it gives me hope to think that today's teenagers can be so generous with their time.

In response to their gift, the museum presented the Senior Class of 2002 with a plaque of appreciation. But I am sure that our gratitude can never truly be expressed because more than money, this class gave us hope.

Danny is away on the east coast now about to start college. I can only hope that when he finishes that he will return to New Mexico, because he is truly one of our future shining stars. I know wherever he goes that the community that gets him will have truly gained an asset and will probably get more than they ever know.

Editor's note – If other school students want more information on how their class can **ALSO** contribute, please, please call or write to us – address and phone number are on back page.



The Logo Design—How and Why (Part I)

By Michael Gray, G&G Advertising

When asked by the New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum and Study Center to help them come up with a new look and feel for the museum, we first had to understand *who* they were looking to target as an audience base along with *what* the museum and study center was as an establishment. Being not only a museum for Holocaust information but also a complete Study Center, we had to take into consideration the full potential to educate individuals about all kinds of intolerance in the world stretching many decades. The target was then determined to also stretch many decades and social barriers from schools to visiting tourists to in-state residence and victims of hatred and intolerance themselves.

With this information in mind, we started with the logo itself. This logo had to carry the information about the museum without conveying the fact that it was just a Holocaust information center but rather a full intolerance study center. Many preliminary logo drafts were created including updates to an original logo design. The process was both informational and creative for client and agency alike. The final logo that was chosen was a wonderful combination of new ideas mixed with simplistic visuals of the original logo. This proved to be beneficial for the museum and its existing clientele. The look was not a far reaching step visually from there old logo so the changes could still be linked to who the museum was and what they were about in the community. The elements used, (flame and barb-wire) would remain recognizable as symbols yet the power of the image as a whole could then be carried to greater levels.

The museum has been using the new logo for about a year now and the response from the community has been positive. Greater attendance has been reported and greater recognition of how important the museum/study center is in the community has also been seen. Joani Gray and Jason Walker (right), art directors, were instrumental in this design.



Editors Note: Part II of Mr. Gray's report will next cover the various components of HOW the logs and posters were created. Mr. Gray and his entire staff have been most gracious in providing their time and talents. The museum and Board are truly grateful.

Letter From Senator Pete Domenici – Honorary Board Member

Dear Mr. Gellert:

As an Honorary Board Member of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Study Center, I would like to commend you for the work that you have done to establish this center that provides an important service to Albuquerque and New Mexico.

The Museum and Study Center provides a valuable service by advancing and disseminating knowledge about the tragedy of the Holocaust as well as other incidents of hate and intolerance; preserves the memory of those who suffered; and encourages visitors to reflect upon the questions raised about their own responsibilities as citizens.

I am especially pleased with the education outreach that the museum and center offer to our young people. The museum has welcomed many students through its

doors for organized tours, as well as providing a speakers' bureau for classrooms.

Learning about the history of the Holocaust, as well as other examples of intolerance, students can help to understand the effects of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any community.

Additionally, you help to advise teachers as to how they can educate and deal with issues of such complexity and controversy.

I know that much of the progress in founding the Holocaust and Intolerance Museum and Study Center has come thanks to your passion and persistence. Again, I commend you for all your hard work and I wish the museum and center a successful future.

Sincerely,

Pete V. Domenici, United States Senator

SILENCE = DEATH

By Jim Lipsett

Several weeks ago, I was asked to critique a letter sent to a local governmental agency enlisting support for an organization fighting intolerance. The letter listed groups subject to intolerance. My critique of the document was limited to one item—a group had been omitted from those cited, lesbians and gays. I was given several reasons for the omission, all of which were political. But all sounded more like homophobia to me. I am probably more sensitive to homophobia than the average person since I am gay. But then, a black person is more sensitive to evidence of racism and a Jew more sensitive to anti-Semitism than I.

In response to my criticism, the organization asked if I would be interested in writing an article for its newsletter on the importance of the lesbian and gay issue. I pondered the question, “Shouldn’t this be self-evident?” Why should I be writing an article on the importance of intolerance toward gays and lesbians for an organization combating intolerance? After considering the request for some time, I decided that it would be better to address intolerance within the organization itself.

Shortly after receiving the request for the article, I was reading “The Advocate,” a gay and lesbian newsmagazine, and came across an editorial that quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He said “Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.” This reminded me of another comment that I will paraphrase...first they came for...and I did nothing...and then they came for...and I was silent...and then they came for me, and there was no one.

Intolerance of all forms, of which homophobia is only one, can be subtle and unconscious. I am reminded of the lieutenant in the musical “South Pacific,” who laments his own racism in a song that tells how we are all so carefully taught. Having grown up in a society that teaches us all too well, I cannot claim to be free of intolerance in many forms. But I can try to be constantly aware of the evidence of these defects when they manifest themselves in my thoughts or deeds, and try to correct them.

We may never unlearn what we have learned. We are humans, and our experiences and influences can be pushed deeply into our unconscious. But we can be aware of our actions and our impulses, and try to act differently. Through constant vigilance, we can retrain ourselves to be what we are—all humans, fascinating and wonderful in our diversity, supporting each other in that fascination and wonder.

Omission of one group from the whole is creating silence for that group, and that reminds me of another quote, a slogan of ACT UP, “Silence=Death.” Enough said for political reasons for exclusion. I feel that an organization with a mission to eliminate intolerance should be fostering inclusion rather than practicing exclusionary politics.

Letter From Senator Jeff Bingaman – Honorary Board Member

Dear Mr. Gellert:

I am writing you to express my support of the New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum and Study Center. It has been a great privilege to be an Honorary Board Member of the organization. The Holocaust and Intolerance Museum is an invaluable asset to the people of the State of New Mexico.

The current climate of fear and violence in our country has made the museum and its message even more significant. Your work to educate teachers, children, and museum visitors is extremely important. I understand that in your first year of operation you have had over 2,000 visitors and have started training symposiums for teachers

around New Mexico in conjunction with the Houston Holocaust Museum.

The museum should be commended for reaching out to so many in our community in such a short period of time. New Mexico is fortunate to have the Holocaust and Intolerance Museum.

Thank you again for the privilege of being an Honorary Board Member. I am proud to be affiliated with such a wonderful organization.

I wish you continued success in all of your future endeavors.

Sincerely,
Jeff Bingaman, United States Senator

Please Help Us Continue Our Work

What, NO envelope?

That's right, (however) we really would like and need your help in continuing our important mission:

Friend	\$18	Very Good Friend	\$50
Good Friend	\$36	Misbucha (relative)	\$100 +

Please Bill My Credit Card for \$ _____:

Visa MasterCard

Card #: _____

Expiration date: _____

Signature: _____

Please return this form to New Mexico Holocaust and Intolerance Museum & Study Center, 415 Central NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102

***NOTE:** You can also make your credit card donation online using our secure form. Just point your browser to www.NMHolocaustMuseum.org and click on the "DONATE ONLINE" link.*

My Check is Enclosed

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 415 Central NW
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To: