

# West Virginia Commission on Holocaust Education

## Annual Report Fiscal year 2007-2008

Exhibit in Clarksburg



Speaker in Clarksburg



Presentation in Parkersburg



Awards presented in Morgantown

Presented to:

The Honorable Joe Manchin III, Governor  
State of West Virginia

The Honorable Members, West Virginia Senate

The Honorable Members, West Virginia House of Delegates

June 30, 2008

**Legislative history:**

On April 8, 2003, via provisions of **House Bill 2879**, the commission was “renewed” until July 2009. Funding as a legislative budget line item, in spite of the legislative committee’s recommendation, was not provided. Through the years Dr. Levy, as the executive director and chairperson, donated her services and did NOT receive a salary. In 2005 Dr. Levy the chairperson and executive director requested that Governor Joe Manchin III appoint Dr. Mary E. Haas to be the chairperson for the commission so that Dr. Levy might reduce her workload to executive director and chair emerita. This arrangement has been effective for the last three years.

After ten years of struggling to maintain a program without the assurance of an annual income, the commission was pleased to receive a line item in the budget of \$15,000 beginning with the fiscal year 2007-2008. This budget allocation means that the commission will not have to spend time searching for money for the rent and phone. The original proposed budget for 2008-2009 eliminated this small amount of funding as a line item and thanks to the efforts of several delegates and senators especially Delegate Harry White, chair of the finance committee, it was restored for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. The WVCHE is still in need of additional funds for a secretary so that the office can maintain regular hours to allow scholars, teachers, and the public at large to make use of the extensive library of resources on the Holocaust. A modest budget for a full program is attached as an appendix and is estimated to total \$112,000. The commission will be searching for additional funds. The budget suggests only a modest salary and benefits for an executive director. The communications with educators and the public requires a considerable number of hours as does arranging for public exhibits, remembrances services, and their publicity. Seeking and writing grants for funding for programs, exhibits, and teacher workshops also requires time and resources. It is common for the total costs for speakers and exhibits to be three to five thousand dollars including the costs for transportation and housing an honorarium. Since teacher workshops usually require several speakers to provide the various types of scholarly presentations and information needed to teach such a complex and emotionally difficult subject, the costs for workshops to assure that the teachers are competent and comfortable with teaching the Holocaust amounts to \$10-15,000 per week or more. Modern technology can substitute for some of the travel, but it too has a dollar cost.

Thank you for again providing the WVCHE a line item in the budget. We will use the funds wisely to continue our important work in service for the state. As is evident in this year’s annual report, we worked in several areas of the state this past year in cooperation with schools and civic groups to educate the public and

to remember and honor those who died and those who liberated the camps. We are in need of more funds to have the complete program we would like to conduct for the people of West Virginia.

### **Exhibits and Remembrance Programs:**

The selection of January 27<sup>th</sup>, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz the place where the greatest numbers of people were executed during the Holocaust was designated by the United Nations as the day to remember the victims of the Holocaust. A weeklong exhibit was part of the program hosted at the Harrison County Recreational Center. A thirty-panel exhibit, originally prepared by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, illustrated the major events associated with the Holocaust. On January 27<sup>th</sup> a guest speaker who was a child survivor in the Netherlands during World War II spoke on Sunday to a very large group including students and adults of various ages, and several World War II veterans shared their personal experiences on entering the camps at and after the liberation.

The survivor explained what she believed to be the most important pathway to ending the prejudice and hateful actions associated with the Holocaust. Following her presentation, the veterans volunteered expressions of their personal experiences and assured those present that the Holocaust was a terrible

experience that, in spite, of what some have and continue to say the Holocaust had indeed taken place. The veterans



expressed the hope that others would never see what they had witnessed.



Throughout the week many more came just to see the exhibit. Students, many of whose teachers attended the January 27<sup>th</sup> program came to visit the exhibit. Some teachers made attendance an integral part of the course and others gave extra credit to students who usually attended in small groups with a parent or other adult. A total of nine buses of students viewed the exhibit.

Three busloads of students were brought to the exhibit on one day from Robert C. Byrd High School alone. Pictured here is that group being introduced to the exhibit with a special presentation by an adult who volunteered and consulted the WVCHE to be assured that she was both knowledgeable about the content of the Holocaust



exhibit and important points to emphasize to prepare the students for their viewing of the panels. Other teachers have contacted the WVCHE directly for various forms of assistance in their teaching as a result of visiting the

exhibit and hearing the speaker. A number of those attending the January 27<sup>th</sup> remembrance program purchased THE HOLOCAUST IN PERSPECTIVE, the book prepared by Dr. Edith Rechter Levy for the WVCHE to use in the education of youth about the Holocaust. Clearly this program and exhibit was a great stimulus to teaching and learning about the Holocaust in West Virginia.

Dr. Edith Rechter Levy graciously continues to make personal presentations about her experiences during the Holocaust and the work of the WVCHE. She is shown here receiving a certificate at the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown following a presentation to them in April. In April of each year the federal employees take part in an experience about the Holocaust as part of their human relations program. The federal employees present were fascinated with Dr. Levy's presentation. They asked many questions and all purchased a copy of her book to read and share with a relative or friend who has children or is a teacher. Dr. Levy also addressed a state meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution explaining why Holocaust Education is important in the schools and how best to accomplish the task.



In addition to what she normally does in her work as a professor of social studies education K-12 at WVU, Dr. Mary E. Haas, chair of the WVCHE, made several presentations on behalf of the commission in 2007-2008. She presented a sample unit using trade books appropriate for elementary and middle school students to teachers attending the West Virginia Council for the Social Studies meeting at Pipestem State Park. On the campus of WVU Parkersburg she addressed an auditorium filled with over 125 students concerning the Holocaust and its history as an educational tool.



The WVCHE also shared several of its videos with the WVU Parkersburg campus as part of their Holocaust program in April. The WVCHE looks forward to working with this group for a fall program that will extend into the greater Parkersburg community.

Dr. Haas often accompanied Dr. Levy so that more people became acquainted with her and the work of commission. Other commission members promote

knowledge of the work of the commission throughout the state so that more individuals and teachers will use the resources of the WVCHE to assist them in learning and teaching about the Holocaust.

### **Arts and Writing Contest:**

Winners from the 2007-2008 Arts and Writing Contest were honored at a reception in Morgantown on Sunday October 14, 2008 at the St. Francis De Sale Central School in Morgantown. Individual Awards were presented to the students by Delegates Robert Beach and Ron Fragale and by State Board of



Education member Barbara Fish. Barbara Fish and Delegate Ron Fragale also serve as members of the WVCHE. Students, parents, and teachers heard a short speech by Mr. Scott Rotruck who spoke of the need to remember those who died in the Holocaust and the importance of teaching the youth the lessons of the Holocaust. He praised the work of Dr.

Levy and the WVCHE. Parents and teachers who accompanied the winners expressed appreciation for the work of the commission and interest in knowing about the Holocaust and seeing that not only their children but their children's classmates have the opportunity to continue to learn the important lessons of the Holocaust especially in these days of denial and increased incidents of bullying,



hate, and genocides focused on people because of their religion or ethnic heritages. The winning students were very pleased to meet Dr. Levy and enjoyed having their pictures taken with her and asked to have her autograph their personal copies of the textbook she authored, THE HOLOCAUST IN

PERSPECTIVE that they received as part of the awards.

Remembering those who died in Inter-faith services is regularly done in the spring near the official day in the Jewish calendar to remember the victims of the Holocaust, Yom HaShoah. Dr.

Levy greeted people at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Morgantown prior to a very moving program of readings and lighting of candles. Following the service people viewed a small exhibit that reminded them of the many tragic events associated with the Holocaust and talked with



Dr. Levy and Dr. Haas concerning their support for Holocaust Education, thanking them for providing leadership in the remembrance of the victims and encouraging learning the lessons from the Holocaust especially at a time of increasing religious conflicts and ethnic cleansing in the world.



The Governor issued a proclamation encouraging remembrances throughout West Virginia and various remembrance services took place during this time period. “Unto Every Person There Is A Name” is an international program encouraging reading the names of people who, as victims, died during the Holocaust. Such reading the names recognizes common people including

some of the million and a half children who died in the Holocaust. One such program performed by citizens and students at WVU is a 24-hour reading of

names with periodic reciting of the traditional prayer for the dead. Those hearing the names and ages of the victims are struck by the fact that entire families were killed and that through this act of reading and listening they are remembering people and families who have no loved ones left to recall that they ever lived.

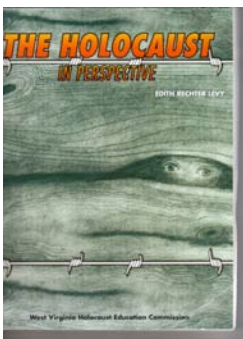
The commission helps teachers in the public schools to remember the victims with their classes in various ways. It is important that the teachers instruct the students about the Holocaust so that they understand why they are taking part in an act of remembrance. Such acts help students to express support for the importance of life not only their own but of all people and it helps them to recognize that handicaps, race, and religion should not be a criteria that negates the right to life.

In particular, Vickie Osborne who attended a WVCHE summer workshop in 2007 and teachers at Beckley-Stratton Middle School taught her students about the Holocaust using *THE HOLOCAUST IN PERSPECTIVE* along with the ideas she encountered in the 2007 workshop. They also listened to a presentation from a guest speaker who was among the liberators of the camps.



Her 6<sup>th</sup> grade class planted a weeping cherry tree on their school's grounds in remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust. This picture appeared in the local Beckley newspaper.

A major emphasis of the WVCHE was the creation and distribution to schools throughout the state of an introductory student textbook about the Holocaust appropriate to use with middle school learners and a teacher's manual to assist teachers. The book was officially a recommended text for the state of West Virginia by the legislature in 2003 for purchase by WV schools and placed on the official adoption list as a supplementary text. To this date 39 of the 55 counties have purchased or received 3,400 copies of the book for their students to use. This year additional school districts began using the book because of a special gift of \$1000 to assist in the distribution of these texts and from an honorarium received for a presentation. Textbooks are provided at cost to West Virginia schools.





Teachers report that the book also works well with older students because it presents a concise background that enables students to better understand the videos and biographical books often used as part of reading programs and because it stresses the importance of critical thinking and character/ethical lessons that a study of the Holocaust examines.

To assure that THE HOLOCAUST IN PERSPECTIVE is presented with accuracy to students with a focus on the lessons to be learned from the Holocaust as opposed to an over simplified sad and terrible story from the past, the WVCHE provides weeklong teacher workshops. These workshops provide speakers who are specialists in various aspects of the Holocaust, the World War II era, post war problems, and appropriate instructional strategies. Because of the great expense associated with workshops and the teacher's investment of time, workshops are usually provided every other year. These workshops are presented in various locations throughout the state to accommodate the teachers. Plans are now beginning to be formulated for a summer 2009 workshop. Funding is vital for the success of this workshop.

Dr. Levy began her work of bring Holocaust Education to the state of West Virginia in 1996 and was encouraged by the responses of student teachers in a seminar she taught at WVU. She realized that reaching the generations of youth who would not be able to talk with those who survived and could personally bear witness to the Holocaust would highly depend on the teachers. Most of her efforts have been toward helping the current teachers to have the knowledge and resources to meet this challenge. Today, as many in the teaching profession are nearing retirement, Holocaust educators on a national level are seeking to assist the colleges and universities in providing their students, especially teacher candidates, with knowledge and skills necessary for accurate and meaningful Holocaust education. This past June Dr. Haas was a participant in a weeklong workshop at the USHMM in Washington D.C. for university methods instructors. Dr. Haas was informed by the chair of the selection committee that her development of the online course in Holocaust education at WVU was one of the primary considerations for her selection as a participant in the workshop. Several of the accomplishments of the WVCHE this past year were in line with these national efforts of reaching out to institutions of higher education in the state and assisting them in providing programs that support the learning of the lessons of the Holocaust. Because of these contacts and the encouragement from the attendance of the public at events sponsored by the WVCHE there are events in the planning stage now for the next calendar year. To accomplish this long-term planning we need continued financial support and an increase in such support from the state is needed. Volunteers have helped us to accomplish much, but we are in need of more regular continuous assistance that can only be accomplished by hiring secretarial staff. We also need to have additional money that can serve

as seed money for programs and transportation to bring in some of the fine people and programs already prepared for use. We are seeking to provide programs that will service more than a few people in one location for an evening. We want to provide multiple types of opportunities for the public, but most or all opportunities for the youth and teachers to attend programs for which they are prepared to attend so that students will receive more than a time a way from the school, but meaningful learning. Attached is a modest budget, based on past expenses, indicating the type of finance that is necessary to provide a complete program of Holocaust Education throughout West Virginia. We are in hopes that the Legislature and Governor Manchin will continue to fund the commission as a line item and increase the amount of funding we receive.

This 10 page report written by the chairperson plus one appendix of our projected budget needs is respectfully submitted on behalf of the WVCHE.

Mary E. Haas

Chairperson

**West Virginia Commission on Holocaust Education**

**Revised Minimal Budget May 22, 2008**

(based on past expenses)

**A. Essential operating**

**Office and Library**

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Rent                       | \$6,000         |
| Insurance                  | 700             |
| Dues (AHO)                 | 250             |
| Telephone/Fax              | 2,000           |
| Computer supplies/Internet | 500             |
| Postage/shipping           | 1,500           |
| Miscellaneous supplies     | 2,000           |
| Printing/Photo copying     | <u>1,500</u>    |
|                            | \$14,450        |
| Miscellaneous 10%          | <u>1,445</u>    |
|                            | <b>\$15,895</b> |

**Salaries**

|                                       |                 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Executive Director – part time        | \$25,000        |
| Fringe benefits                       | 5,000           |
| Staff – part –time                    | 22,000          |
| Secretary @ \$11.00 hour              |                 |
| Librarian                             |                 |
| Grant Writer (may receive % of grant) |                 |
| Legal Representation, CPA             |                 |
|                                       | <b>\$52,000</b> |

**B. Educational programs****1. Classroom focus:****a. Teacher Workshops (Possible partial Grant funding)**

1) Daylong- Arts &amp; Writing, Special Topics @\$1,500 each

2) Week or 2 weeks intensive training (range- \$57,000)

**b. Arts and Writing contest (Possible Partial Donation ) 3,500**

Includes: promotion and prizes, speaker

**c. One Teacher travel award (per year \$2,000)****d. Supplies for free distribution to teachers &**

Lending Trunks of materials (shipping/insurance) 10,000

There will be an additional cost for creating trunks

**2. Schools and General Public****a. Exhibits (rental, transportation, insurance, security) 12,000****b. Library purchases (texts, DVDs, etc) 2,000****c. Plays, musicals, stage performances 5,000****d. Commemorative programs (speakers/films) 5,000****e. Speakers (fees and travel) 7,000**

minimal programming costs \$44,500

**TOTAL Conservative estimate per year excluding grants \$112,395**