

Saving Memories

History as Witness to the Future

The Ninth Annual Holocaust Art and Writing Contest

We invite you to participate in the Ninth Annual Holocaust Art and Writing Contest, presented by Chapman University and The "1939" Club, one of the largest and most active Holocaust survivor organizations in the United States.

This contest is supported by a grant from the Samuelli Foundation and a gift from Yossie and Dana Hollander. Please examine the contest information that follows to learn more about this significant student learning experience. We hope you will involve as many of your students as possible.

Each school is invited to submit the work of three students, a total of three entries, consisting of either prose, poetry, works of art or a combination thereof. These school representatives will be eligible to win the first prize of \$500 and the second prize of \$250 in each category in the middle and high school competitions.

School representatives in attendance at the awards ceremony will receive certificates and a copy of *The Holocaust Chronicle: A History in Words and Pictures*, a unique one-volume history of the Holocaust. First and second prize winners will receive their cash prizes at the ceremony. Additional prizes will be awarded to schools and school representatives in attendance at the awards ceremony.

The three student representatives from each school, with their teacher and/or principal (depending on seat availability), are invited to the awards ceremony on **Friday, March 7, 2008 at 11 a.m. in Memorial Auditorium at Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866**. The highlights of the event will include:

- the announcement of the winners of the prose contest and the reading of the two winning prose entries (one middle school and one high school)
- the announcement of the winners of the poetry contest and the reading of the two winning poems (one middle school and one high school)
- the announcement of the winning works of art and their display during the reception. These art works will become part of the collection of the Sala and Aron Samuelli Holocaust Memorial Library at Chapman University
- a reception to honor our guests
- the opportunity to meet and talk with Holocaust survivors, many of whose video testimonies are posted on The "1939" Club Web site

Background for Art and Writing Prompt

In January 1933, Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party, became the chancellor of Germany. Once in power, the Nazis moved quickly to replace democracy with dictatorship. While some Germans enjoyed new opportunities and could hope for a better future, others—who for various reasons did not fit the Nazi "ideal"—experienced just the opposite. Those whose religious or political beliefs were at odds with Nazism or who dared to speak out and write against the Nazis; those who were differently abled; those whose sexuality did not conform to Nazi racial ideology; those who were Roma and Sinti (the so-called Gypsies) and those who were Jews or were defined by the Nazis as Jews because of their heritage, were subjected to harassment and then persecution.

Constant propaganda—in the press, in schools, even in churches—sought to convince ordinary people that to be a true German meant obedience to the Fuehrer. Many people went along. Some became Nazis by conviction, but many others just tucked their heads down and tried not to see what was happening around them. Many deluded themselves into believing that once the Nazis settled into the routine of governance the excesses would cease. Some of those targeted by the Nazis did everything they could to flee but were unable to break through the paper walls of immigration requirements set by the United States, Canada, and many other countries. Some who were successful and received permission to emigrate were unwilling to leave family members behind.

Persecution only escalated as Germany annexed or occupied other lands. On September 1, 1939, Germany attacked Poland and Europe was at war. Under the cover of war, Nazi leaders implemented new plans and policies that affected millions, especially Jews, whom the Nazis targeted for extermination. The Nazi world was one of ghettos; deportations; slave labor, concentration, and death camps; and mass executions.

In this world of unrelenting brutality and inhumanity, people could survive only by drawing upon all their resources, physical, mental and spiritual. In this battle to survive each day, memory became a source of strength—a reminder of a very different world where there was love and laughter, friendship and family.

Then, as now, memory was unique to every person—in the same way the composition of a photograph is changed by the angle of the camera. Yet memory was also shared. In sleepless nights in crowded barracks, over a tiny bowl of inedible soup, on a death march, people exchanged their memories—of holidays and birthdays; of friends and family members; of enough food so that everyone could have second helpings. When everything else was taken—even one's name—memories were all that one had. Memories gave one sustenance and hope; memories were each person's hidden treasure.

The Holocaust brought new memories—memories of a very different kind. These were memories of being torn away from home and loved ones; yet in the midst of these terrible experiences, people also created memories of compassion and generosity and solidarity that became thin threads of hope, linking past to present to future.

For those who survived the Holocaust, saving memory became a responsibility not only for themselves but for all those who had been taken from them. Without memory, the survivors feared that the executioners would win—nothing would be left of those who were gone. Saving memory meant refusing to allow history to be erased.

For more than sixty years, Holocaust survivors have saved their memories—in oral and written histories, through documentaries and plays and films, in works of art and poetry. They have shared memories of their lives before the Holocaust, of what they experienced during that time, and of their struggle to begin their lives after liberation. They have tried to find words and images that would make us want to remember and that would enable us to become their witnesses to the future.

Art and Writing Prompt

The "1939" Club is one of the largest and most active Holocaust survivor organizations in the United States. It takes its name from the year that Germany invaded Poland changing forever the lives of those who would later join together in Los Angeles to form the Club in 1952.

The "1939" Club has available on its website nearly 100 full-length oral testimonies. Some of these oral histories were recorded in the early 1980s at the University of California, Los Angeles; others were recorded in the mid-1990s in Orange County by the Anti-Defamation League.

- **View and listen** to at least one video testimony from The "1939" Club Web site (<http://www.1939club.com>).
- **Reflect** on the memories that are central to this person's testimony. These may be memories of life before the Holocaust, during, or after. What did you learn through these memories about the history of the time?
- **Choose** one memory that has spoken in a special way to you. Think about the images the survivor uses which have brought this memory to life.
- In prose, poetry, or art, **share** the memory you have chosen to "save." **Explore** how this memory represents a theme important to the history of the time and how you will **witness** to this memory by your decisions and actions.

If an Internet connection is not available, students may view these interviews in the Sala and Aron Samuelli Holocaust Memorial Library at Chapman University from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please contact Jessica Cioffi, Holocaust Education Coordinator, at (714) 628-7377 regarding access to video testimony and scheduling a visit.

We encourage teachers to consult:
<http://www.chapman.edu/holocausteducation/>
for lesson plans and other information

Art and Writing Contest Criteria:

Prose/Poetry

Must be submitted with cover sheet (available at <http://www.chapman.edu/holocausteducation/>)

Must be typed or word processed and **cannot** include reference to student or school name.

Prose entries must be no more than **500** words in length. Word count must be noted.

Poems must be no more than **30 lines**. Line count **must** be included.

Must reflect genuine engagement with the survivor's testimony in its historical context and constitute a thoughtful and creative response.

Art

Must be submitted with cover sheet (available at <http://www.chapman.edu/holocausteducation/>)

Must **not** be matted or framed.

May only be two-dimensional and must not exceed 12" by 18".

Must include fixatives so that works will not smudge or be altered by handling.

Must include an artist's statement with: title of the work and a statement of no more than 100 words including the name of the survivor to whose testimony this work is a response and stating how this work addresses the prompt. Statement must **not** include student or school name.

May include photography, computer generated images, or may be in charcoal, pencil, watercolors, acrylics or oils. Please note that all images whether computer, artist or photo generated, are considered property of the original artist. Renderings of other works will be disqualified.

Must reflect genuine engagement with the survivor's testimony in its historical context and constitute a thoughtful and creative response.

All entries become the property of the Sala and Aron Samuelli Library at Chapman University. Artists are encouraged to retain a color copy of their work since the original may not be returned. The Sala and Aron Samuelli Holocaust Memorial Library shall own all the rights to all the entries, including copyrights and may display and publish the entries, in whole, or in part.

Your school's three entries may be submitted beginning Friday, December 7, 2007 and **must be postmarked by Wednesday, February 6, 2008**. Prose and poetry entries may be mailed or **submitted electronically** to cioffi@chapman.edu. Art work must be mailed to:

Ms. Jessica Cioffi
Rodgers Center for Holocaust Education
Chapman University
One University Drive
Orange, CA 92866

Each participating school will receive:

- 5 seats (availability permitting) at the awards ceremony on Friday, March 7, 2008 at Chapman University
- an opportunity for each entry in essay, poetry and art contest to win the first prize of \$500 and the second prize of \$250
- a copy of *The Holocaust Chronicle: A History in Words and Pictures* for every student representative in attendance
- certificates for the three student representatives from each school
- the opportunity to meet and talk with members of The "1939" Club, a Holocaust survivor organization
- additional prizes to schools, school representatives and finalists in attendance at awards ceremony

