

SEVENTH ANNUAL HOLOCAUST ART AND WRITING CONTEST

Moments of Decision: Perpetrators, Witnesses, Rescuers

We invite you to participate in the Seventh 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 Dana and Yossie Hollander.

Each school is invited to submit a total of three entries, consisting of essay(s) and/or poem(s) and/or works of art. 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. 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 10, 2006 at 11 a.m. in Memorial Auditorium at Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866. The highlights of the event will include:

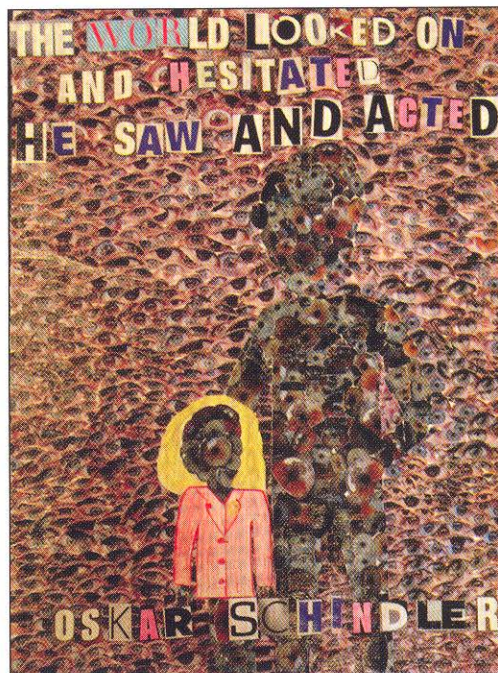
- the reading of the two winning essays (one middle school and one high school)
- the reading of the two winning poems (one middle school and one high school)
- the announcement of the winning works of art and their display during the reception. These art works will become part of the collection of the 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

Background for Art and Writing Prompt

"Life is not made of years. . . . Life is made of moments. It is the moment that illuminates or darkens your life. The sum of the moments is the sum of one's life."

Elie Wiesel

Holocaust Witness and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
From a speech at Chapman University on April 11, 2005,
the 60th anniversary of his liberation
from the Buchenwald concentration camp



Monique Becker, Lakeside Middle School
First Place, Middle School Division in the
Sixth Annual Holocaust Art and Writing Contest

In creating this collage which includes photos of eyes from dozens of my classmates, friends, and family, I wanted to encourage people to reflect and think for themselves that there lies a hero within us all. It might be in full view or hidden, only a shadow, but it is there.

During the time of the Holocaust, ordinary people faced moments of decision that defined them as perpetrators, witnesses, or rescuers. Sometimes these moments seemed very significant; other times they seemed inconsequential—but in both cases these moments of decision changed lives.

In Poland, in July 1942, a group of middle-aged men, deemed too old for army duty and assigned to a special Police Battalion, were ordered to perform an heinous and horrible task, to round up and shoot Jews—men, women, and children. The battalion commander, Major Trapp, gave his men the option to refuse the order. They only had to break ranks and step forward. They would be reassigned but not punished. Yet, only a handful accepted his offer; the majority chose to obey. In this crucial moment of decision, these ordinary men became perpetrators.

In 1942, in Amsterdam, twenty-two-year-old Marion van Binsbergen witnessed what she describes as a "terrible thing." One morning, on her way to school, she saw Nazis throwing Jewish children, including babies, into trucks. She also saw two women intervene to stop the action. They were thrown into the trucks as well. At that

moment of decision, Marion resolved that rescue was "more important than anything else" she might do. She translated her decision into action. Marion van Binsbergen Pritchard saved the lives of 150 Jewish children and took one life, shooting a Dutch Nazi policeman who would have betrayed her and the Jews she was hiding. Her moment of decision led her to become a rescuer.

On May 6, 1945, sixteen-year-old Sam Goetz experienced his first day of freedom in six long years. At that moment, the gate of the concentration camp where he was imprisoned opened and he saw "a figure in an olive brown uniform emerge from the tank." Sam had survived three concentration camps, including Ebensee, a sub-camp of the infamous Mauthausen concentration camp near Vienna, Austria. He had faced countless moments where his decision could mean life or death. In the decades after liberation, Sam made the decision to witness to his experiences by writing the book *I Never Saw My Face*, by easing the suffering of others through providing free eye examinations to the poor and underprivileged in his role as a doctor of optometry, and by never forgetting the American soldier who liberated him. He searched 60 years for him until summer 2005 when he discovered that his liberator was U.S. Army sergeant Bob Persinger of Loves Park, Illinois. For Sam, his moment of liberation coincided with the moment when he decided always to witness to what he had seen.

(over)

Art and Writing Prompt

Read the account of a Holocaust perpetrator, witness, or rescuer.

Research the moment of decision that transformed this individual.

Reflect upon a situation in your own life where you faced a moment of decision that resulted in your becoming a perpetrator, a rescuer, or a witness.

Create an essay, poem or work of art that **connects** the historical moment of decision you have researched and your own moment of decision. In your work, capture how these moments "illuminate or darken" life.

Research Suggestions:

The following websites may be useful in your research:

<http://www.ushmm.org>

<http://www.holocaustchronicle.org>

<http://www.yadvashem.org>

<http://www.kleinfoundation.org>

<http://www.facinghistory.org>

<http://www.jewishpartisans.org>

<http://www.vhf.org>

<http://jfr.org>

<http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/people/people.htm>

We encourage teachers to consult:

<http://www.chapman.edu/holocausteducation> for lesson plans and other information.

Art and Writing Contest Criteria:

Essay/Poetry

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

Must be typed or word processed.

Essay must be no more than 750 words in length. Word count **must** be noted.

Poem must be no more than 30 lines. Line count **must** be included at end.

Must demonstrate knowledge of the historical context in which a person faced the moment of decision that resulted in his or her becoming a perpetrator, witness, or rescuer.

Must include authentic and reliable resources.

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" x 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, resources consulted, and a statement of no more than 100 words explaining how this work addresses the prompt.

Must demonstrate evidence of consulting authentic and reliable resources.

May include photography, computer generated images, or may be in charcoal, pencil, watercolors, acrylics or oils. Please note all



April 25, 1942 — As soldiers stand guard and neighbors look on, a group of 650 Jewish deportees, carrying a few personal belongings in bundles and suitcases, march through Würzburg along the Hindenburgstrasse from the assembly center at the Platszer Garten to the railroad station.

Photo from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Courtesy of National Archives

images whether computer, artist or photo generated, are considered property of the original artist. Renderings of other works will be disqualified.

All entries become the property of the Sala and Aron Samuelli Library at Chapman University. All artists are encouraged to retain a color copy of their work since the original will become the property of the Samuelli Library. The Sala and Aron Samuelli Holocaust Memorial Library shall own all the rights to all the entries, including copyrights and may publish the entries, in whole, or in part.

Your school's winning essay(s)/poem(s)/artwork must be submitted electronically to cioffi@chapman.edu or postmarked by February 8, 2006 and mailed to:

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

You may also contact: Jessica Cioffi at (714) 628-7377 / cioffi@chapman.edu or Dr. Marilyn Harran at (714) 628-7377 / harran@chapman.edu

Each participating school will receive:

- 5 seats (availability permitting) at the awards ceremony at 11 a.m. on Friday, March 10, 2006 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