



LEGACY

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 09

2009 DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE TO COMMEMORATE THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOYAGE OF THE ST. LOUIS

A full house is expected at the Yavapai College Performance Hall at 6:30 P.M. on Monday, April 20, 2009 when Liesl Joseph Loeb is the featured speaker at the Greater Prescott **Days of Remembrance Event** – a commemorative ceremony to remember those who perished during the Nazi reign of terror from 1933 until 1945. This year's event is particularly noteworthy because Ms. Loeb is one of the few remaining survivors from the perilous sailing seventy years ago, in May 1939, of the M.S. St. Louis.

If there was ever any question about what Hitler's intent was for the Jews of Europe, it was answered on the evenings of November 9 and 10 of 1938, when the Nazi government sanctioned anti-Jewish riots that resulted in the destruction of 267 synagogues, the looting of 7,500 Jewish businesses, and the incarceration of more than 25,000 Jewish men into concentration camps. This pogrom came to be known as Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, and was the deciding factor for many German Jews to leave Germany and seek refuge in more tolerant countries. But leaving Germany was no easy task, and perhaps no story from the Holocaust illustrates the hopeless plight of Jews fleeing Hitler's terror than the voyage of the M.S. St. Louis.



On the far right, Liesl Loeb as a child on the M. S. St. Louis, May, 1939. Her father Joseph and mother Lilly are on the far left.

In April of 1939, Germany's Hamburg-America Line announced a special voyage to Havana, Cuba on the luxury liner St. Louis. Almost all of the 937 tickets for the trip were purchased by German Jews desperate to leave Germany, but what these fugitives from persecution did not know – the landing permits they had purchased to enter Cuba were invalid. Once the St. Louis left Germany on May 13, 1939 the passengers finally breathed a sigh of relief, and actually enjoyed their first taste of freedom while at sea on the luxury liner. However, upon their arrival in Cuba, these persecuted refugees discovered they were as unwanted abroad as they were in Germany.

Ms. Loeb is one of the few remaining survivors from the perilous sailing seventy years ago, in May 1939, of the M. S. St. Louis.

Denied entry into Cuba, the St. Louis set sail for Miami hoping that the United States would allow the passengers to enter

rather than be taken back to Germany. Despite their tenuous situation, the U.S. State Department refused to intervene on behalf of the passengers and the Coast Guard denied the St. Louis entry into U.S. waters. Although they could see the palm tree lined boulevards and lights of Miami, the passengers of the St. Louis were turned back to an unknown fate in Europe. What happened to the 937 Jews on board the St. Louis? Did they find safety on their return to Europe or did they become victims of Hitler's death camps?

To hear the answers to these questions, come to Yavapai College Performance Hall and listen to Ms. Loeb's eyewitness account of these historic events. As a child passenger and the then ten-year-old daughter of the chairman of the St. Louis passenger committee, Ms. Loeb provides details about the voyage lost in the history books. The event is free to the public and seating is open with no tickets required. The Foundation hopes to see you there. ★



“DEEDS OF GIVING ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORLD.”

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**NEW FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP
BRINGS
JEWISH FREE LOAN PROGRAM
To Greater Prescott**

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Although the Foundation has much to be proud of during its first ten years of charitable activities in the Greater Prescott community, now is not the time to rest on past accomplishments. Difficult financial times are now upon us as witnessed by more and more members of our community being without a job or a way to care for their families. It is during adverse times just like these that the Jewish tradition of tzedakah (charity) becomes an even more important value to embrace.

The Foundation has been fortunate that, despite economic uncertainty, its donors have continued to be generous in their giving. Because of this generosity, the Foundation is pleased to announce it will increase funding for the Community Grants Program by 20% this year. Our community has an excellent network of organizations that serve the needs of those less fortunate and the Foundation is proud to support these organizations through its grants programs.

David S.Hess, M.D., President

Please know that your comments and feedback are welcome and can be sent by email to info@jcfgp.org.

Jewish Free Loan of Phoenix, working in partnership with the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Prescott, is offering its unique assistance program to Jewish residents of the greater Prescott area. The Jewish Free Loan (JFL) was founded in the 1940’s in Phoenix to assist Jewish individuals and families with financial aid, often when they had no place else to find such help. JFL has made thousands of interest free loans, giving people a fresh start or allowing them the opportunity to bridge a difficult time in their lives.

Jewish Free Loan is a non profit 501c(3) organization funded entirely by private donations with the purpose of providing people with financial aid in a process that respects their dignity and privacy. The program is “a hand-up, not a handout” and allows borrowers to become educated, self-reliant and future contributors to the community.

A partial list of the types of loans available include: student educational

loans, family emergency, medical and dental bills, women and children in crisis, small business start up, debt consolidation, rental housing deposits, loss of primary provider, home repairs, adoption and fertility services, and much more. When asked about the program, Foundation president, David Hess, said: “The Jewish Free Loan program will be a wonderful addition to our Jewish community; students, young families, and those with financial crisis can now turn to this new resource.”

To apply for a loan the borrower must be Jewish, an Arizona resident, at least 18-years old, able to show a photo ID, and able to provide co-signer(s) who meet the same criteria as the borrower. All loan requests from the greater Prescott area are processed in a confidential manner by the professional administrative staff of the Jewish Free Loan in Phoenix. For further information, go to www.jewishfreeloan.org, or request information by calling (602) 230 - 7983. ★

**FOUNDATION NOW ACCEPTING
COMMUNITY GRANT PROPOSALS**

The Foundation’s Community Outreach Grant Program was developed to improve and enhance life for the residents of the Greater Prescott community. In keeping with its Mission statement, the Foundation supports those grant proposals that provide humanitarian, social service, health, arts, and cultural programs. The Foundation will be accepting grant applications for 2009 until Friday, April 10, 2009. Approved grants will be announced on Monday, July 1, 2009. To learn how to apply for a grant, please visit the Foundation’s web site at www.jcfgp.org. ★



BYCER FAMILY DONATES HOLOCAUST COLLECTION TO PRESCOTT LIBRARY

Hundreds of books, films detail 1933-1945 Nazi atrocities



From the left, Foundation president, David Hess, thanks Abe Greenberg, Scott Davis, and Herman Schloss for their efforts in selecting the editions for the Holocaust Collection.

The Prescott Public Library recently unveiled its “Holocaust Collection” in a special dedication ceremony on the library’s main level cafe area. The new, permanent anthology of more than 200 books and films provides an extensive record of the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and genocide of European Jews and others deemed “undesirables” by Nazi Germany and its cohorts from 1933 to 1945.

Donation of this historical collection by the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Prescott was made possible by a generous gift from Jay and Karen Bycer. In a recent interview, the Bycers said, “As one of the important learning centers of our community, it felt appropriate that the library should have these materials available to the public, so that those who perished in the Holocaust are never forgotten. It’s paramount that society understands the horrors of genocide and learns from the lessons of history.”

Earlier this year, the library was one of the community sponsors of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s traveling exhibit, “Fighting the Fires of Hate: America and the Nazi Book Burnings” and hosted several showings of Holocaust-

themed films. Later, noting numerous requests by library patrons for other movies on the topic, Director Toni Kaus enlisted the help of the Jewish Foundation to expand the library’s selection of Holocaust-related media.



With books and films from the Holocaust Collection in the background, Prescott Public Library Director, Toni Kaus, thanks the Bycer Family for their donation.

Foundation volunteers Herman Schloss and Scott Davis, assisted by scholars at the Holocaust Museum, compiled a list of relevant book and film titles for the new collection.

“The Holocaust Collection is a welcome gift,” said Kaus. “The Bycers’ generosity sets a wonderful example of how others in our community can share their passions by working with the library to create special collections.”

The public may access the Holocaust Collection at the library on 215 East Goodwin Street in downtown Prescott. To learn more about this or other library collections, call the Prescott Public Library at 928-777-1500 or visit online at www.prescottlibrary.info. For more information about the programs of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Prescott, call 928-717-0016 or visit online at www.jcftp.org. ★



Jay Bycer at the library dedication of the Holocaust Collection. An enlargement of the film plate is seen in the background.





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FOUNDATION WELCOMES RABBI BERKOWITZ



*Rabbi Berkowitz of
Temple B'rith Shalom*

In the fall of 2008, Temple B'rith Shalom announced that Rabbi William Berkowitz was assuming the position of Rabbi for its Reform congregation. A graduate of Harvard College with a degree in Psychology and Social Relations, Berkowitz attended the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem, before receiving his seminary ordination and Master Degree in Hebrew Literature from the college's New York campus.

Rabbi Berkowitz is no stranger to Temple B'rith Shalom, having been its first full-time rabbi from 1995 until 2002, overseeing the rapid growth of the congregation and the building of northern Arizona's first dedicated temple on Brohner Way.

During that time, Rabbi Berkowitz was active with many community programs such as Interfaith Coalition for Compassion and Justice, Yavapai Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YRMC Chapel Advisory Panel, and the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Prescott.

Returning to Temple B'rith Shalom after a six year sabbatical, Rabbi Berkowitz said: "I was overwhelmed with the warmth and friendliness of the congregation." The Jewish Community Foundation welcomes Rabbi Berkowitz and wishes him the best as he assumes his duties as the religious leader for our vibrant Jewish community. ★

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