

JACKSON HOLE'S

Galaxy

ARTS, EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

Jews, Christians remember the Holocaust

by Danielle Shapiro

Sixty years ago, Allied forces liberated Nazi concentration camps in Europe. What they found in the death-ridden camps was beyond the pale: a scale of organized atrocity later recorded in the murder of 6 million Jews, 3 million Soviet prisoners of war, tens of thousands of Gypsies, 200,000 mentally or physically disabled persons, and thousands of political, social or religious dissidents. It was genocide of the most wicked order.

May 1-8 is known nationally as Days of Remembrance. Congress mandates the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to educate Americans about the Holocaust and to remember its victims in this national observance.

Locally, the Jackson Hole Jewish Community will recall those tragic years with documentary films shown in three local churches, and a May 26 screening of "Choosing One's Way: Resistance in Auschwitz/Birkenau" and "It was Nothing ... It was Everything: Greece," about Greek rescuers. Films will screen at 7 p.m. at the Teton County Library.

The Jewish Community also has donated films to Jackson Hole High School and Middle School to use in their World War II and "Courage in Crisis" curricula, and to keep in their libraries.

The Jewish Community approached local churches to participate as a part of this year's theme: "Righteous Christians," acknowledging the brave and few gentiles or non-Jews who saved Jews from the Nazis.

"I think churches exert moral leadership, and I think there are moral and spiritual lessons to be learned from the Holocaust," said Karin McQuillan, who is coordinating the countywide Remembrance. "I have also read that it was in countries where the churches spoke out that most Jews were saved."

Jewish Community President Rose Novak emphasized the importance of those who risked everything to save others in the history of the Holocaust. She said the films are a good way to recognize those people and to appreciate them. "There are specific lessons about tolerance, but there are also larger



lessons [forcing us to ask] 'What would I do? Would I hide someone in my loft?' It's a good question."

The Jackson Hole Christian Center showed a portion of "They Risked Their Lives: Rescuers of the Holocaust" at last Sunday's service. The entire film will also play in the lobby that day. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints showed "It Was Nothing ... It Was Everything: Greece" on Monday; St. John's Episcopal Church will screen the same film at noon this Friday. The event at St. John's will include a brown bag lunch with drinks provided, and a discussion led by Joni Weed, Assistant Office Manager.

May 6 is Yom Ha Shoah, Holocaust Memorial Day. "It's important to [commemorate the Holocaust] in our world today, because history tends to repeat itself," said Weed. "There are always people who want to dominate others, and they are willing to do that by dehumanizing others ... the Holocaust is a poignant example of that."

Patty Atkins, coordinator for events at the Christian Center, shares a long-standing commitment to Israel and the Jewish people with her husband, Pastor Mike Atkins. She willingly commemorates the Holocaust in an attempt to express brotherhood between Christians and Jews.

"I'm embarrassed of what Christians did in the Holocaust," she said, recalling how most stayed silent. "Now we have a way to say to Jews we're sorry for not standing stronger with you and for what has been done to Jews in the name of Christianity. Our focus will be on prayer, for penance, for Israel and for the commitment that as Christians we'll put a stop to these actions."

Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal and Jackson Mayor Mark Barron wrote official proclamations declaring the week "Days of Remembrance." The governor underscored the continual need to "overcome prejudice and inhumanity through education, vigilance and resistance."

"It never hurts to have an awareness, even in little old Jackson," said Weed. "These things have happened, do happen and will continue to happen, and what are we called to do? What are we really made of?"