

the Friendship Club. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Friendship Club for all they have done in service to our community and wish them the best of luck for their next three decades and beyond.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
SOUTHEAST TEXAS COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Southeast Texas Community Development Corporation, Inc. (SETCDC) on the occasion of its 10th Anniversary.

SETCDC which serves the Beaumont—Port Arthur area of Southeast Texas was founded and incorporated on May 20, 1993, by State Representative Al Price and received its tax-exempt status in January, 1994. SETCDC has contributed to neighborhood redevelopment and revitalization by eradicating blight and building new homes throughout Southeast Texas.

During these ten years, the Southeast Texas CDC has constructed 73 new homes and 19 units of multi-family housing and rehabilitated 28 existing homes. With the support and cooperation of local officials it has had a significant and positive impact on the lives of children and families of the region.

Mr. Speaker, SETCDC has had an economic and business impact of over \$10 million in the local community through construction loans and mortgages, through purchase of construction materials and through contracts with local small businesses.

I ask my colleagues to join me in sending congratulations to Representative PRICE and all those associated with the Southeast Texas Community Development Corporation as they celebrate ten years of outstanding service to the citizens of Southeast Texas.

“IT MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN,
LEST IT BE REPEATED,” A TRIBUTE
TO THE LIFE OF MAX
LEWIN ON NATIONAL HOLO-
CAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, “It must not be forgotten, lest it be repeated.” This is the message of the life of West Virginia Holocaust Survivor Max Lewin. Though Max left us this year, his community in southern West Virginia recently honored him. Today, on National Holocaust Remembrance Day I wish to share with my colleagues the story of Max Lewin, a proud West Virginian and a brave survivor.

No phrase should ever weigh heavier upon our collective conscience than, “it must not be forgotten, lest it be repeated,” as we consider world history, and negotiate America’s foreign policy and humanitarian priorities. The lesson

of what happened during the Holocaust surely shows us that every day we live in a world of diversity, filled with respect for peoples of various religious, ethnic, and racial backgrounds is a day that assaults the vile teachings of the Nazi regime. Every day that as legislators of this great Nation we look across the globe and make certain no person or group of people are singled out to live lives of indignity, is a day we truly remember the lesson of the Holocaust. Today, on Holocaust Remembrance Day, let us come together to remember our great teachers of this lesson.

So that I may share with my colleagues the story of Max Lewin, I ask that this recent article in the Beckley Register-Herald be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the Register-Herald Reporter, Apr. 7, 2003]

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL TO HONOR MAX LEWIN
(By Mannix Porterfield)

Even before his health began to fail, Max Lewin made sure his tortured life as a Holocaust victim and the lessons of the 20th century’s darkest hours were never forgotten.

What he did was make a pact with a 10-year-old girl to keep alive not only his excruciating memories but those of the Holocaust in general.

That promise was kept, and Margaux Siegel, now 11, will cover Lewin’s heroic struggles Sunday in this year’s Holocaust Memorial, set to begin at 1 p.m. in Mountain State University’s Carter Hall.

“Max felt his greatest fear was that the story would die with him and its lessons wouldn’t be learned,” explained Margaux’ father, Dr. Normal Siegel.

Lewin was the key figure in past Holocaust services in Beckley, a difficult assignment for a man who lost most of his family after German troops stormed into Poland in 1939, signaling the start of World War II.

“I think certainly he had an authentic voice, though sometimes it was difficult to hear precisely what he was saying,” Siegel said.

“I think, through his accent and tears, everyone felt the pain.”

Lewin died last Aug. 24 at the age of 83.

A slight man with an ever-present smile belying the pain of surviving the murderous regime of the Nazis, he often sought to rekindle interest in the Holocaust by calling on schools in West Virginia to teach its lessons.

In several newspaper interviews, Lewin voiced a fear that future generations, as the adage holds, would be condemned to repeat history if such lessons were ignored.

This year’s service, in fact, marks the first such occasion in which the Lewin story is told in the third person.

A gifted writer who won an award last year in elementary school competition, Margaux relied on numerous newspaper clippings chronicling Lewin’s storied life from 1978 forward. In addition, an old friend of his, Helen Huzoski of Pax, provided access to his personal papers.

Affidavits also were researched, and a letter from a German court confirmed his concentration camp serial numbers.

Actually, Margaux has delivered her vivid account of Lewin’s life on other occasions, where the audience was limited to two or three. Come Sunday, the audience will be considerably larger. “She had promised him she would tell his story when he wasn’t around, so this is sort of fulfilling it,” her father said.

Strangers would never have guessed the kind, gentle Lewin, a fixture in Beckley’s business community for years, had suffered unimaginable pain at the hands of the Nazis, although a trace of sorrow never quite escaped his smile.

Even those familiar with his story couldn’t have stepped into his shoes for a full appreciation of his life.

In a eulogy at Lewin’s funeral, Rabbi Victor Urecki put it succinctly: “None of us could ever imagine what it was like to be Max Lewin. He always tried to smile. He never lost his respect for humanity, his love for humanity.”

For Lewin, the placid, country life of a farm family was shaken at the roots when his native land was invaded.

In a tear-laden 1996 interview, he recounted for The Register-Herald the horrific scenes that ensued.

Some 100 robust young men were gathered by the invaders, given shovels and ordered to dig a 4-foot-deep trench. Jews were lined on either side, then gunned down, and the youths were then directed to spread dirt over the victims, some still writhing in agony.

Lewin lost most of his family in a mass execution March 10, 1943. A sister succumbed in a concentration camp. A brother died in another mass murder a few weeks afterward.

Lewin’s wife, Fruma, only 19, vanished, presumably a victim of the Nazi execution squads.

Arriving in America after surviving Auschwitz, he joined older brother Harry in launching Harry’s Men’s Shop, a business he inherited and kept running after Harry’s death in 1982.

Lewin lent his experiences to the Governor’s Commission for Holocaust Education that works to keep alive the tragic lessons of the past.

As she has done in past observances, Sam Armstein will serve as master of ceremonies at the Sunday memorial.

Amie Lamborn of Charleston and Michelle Levin, wife of Dr. Barry Levin, will conduct the “Lighting of the Candles,” followed by Huzoski’s narrative, “Understanding,” another look at Lewin’s life.

“Max, Mountain University and Me” will be performed by James Silosky, the school’s executive vice president and provost for extended learning.

Another tradition, this one embracing the audience, “The Tearing of the Cloth,” will be led by Mark Lamborn, also of Charleston. Dr. Joseph Golden of Beckley will offer a commentary on Holocaust prevention.

“Growing Up With Survivors” will be presented by Dr. Levin, after which Tom Sopher will perform a poetic reading.

The Holocaust claimed a known 6 million Jews in Europe and some of them will be recalled personally with the traditional “Reading of the Names,” led this year by Beckley attorney Stan Selden. Members of the audience will be invited to help with the reading.

Rabbi Paul Jacobson, acting rabbi at Temple Beth-El, will perform a song, “El Malei Rachamin,” and say the kaddish, a Jewish mourner’s prayer. Pianist for the program will be Becky Leach, also of Beckley.

Seven years ago, MSU dedicated a special section of its campus to the memory of the city’s most renowned Holocaust survivor with “The Lewin Family Bell Tower.”

Inscribed on it are the names of Lewin’s parents, Yechiel and Sarah; wife Fruma; and his siblings, Awner, Joseph, Harry, Leah, Hannah and Chaia.

Just above those names, a phrase captures the reason for revisiting the horrors of the Third Reich in such ceremonies:

“It must not be forgotten, lest it be repeated.”