

Leibiger gives presentation about use of literature's influence during Holocaust

By Travis Gulbrandson

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Anti-Semitic propaganda was utilized by the Nazis prior to and during the Holocaust, and last week, visitors to I.D. Weeks Library had the opportunity to see for themselves how the group used it to indoctrinate Germany's youngest citizens.

On Nov. 6 and Nov. 8, Carol A. Leibiger, Ph.D., associate professor, University Libraries, gave the presentation, "Of Foxes and Poisonous Mushrooms: Julius Streicher and German Children's Literature in Support of National Socialist Racialist Politics."

The lecture was made possible by a grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council, and ran in conjunction with "Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race," a traveling exhibit from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum now on display at the library.

During the course of her talk, Leibiger examined two notorious children's books and discussed the negative stereotypes they perpetuated.

"Their content is disturbing, and their intent unmistakable. ... These children's books were cultural products that both represent and seek to influence - even determine - their context," Leibiger said.

The books in question were mailed to Leibiger's father in New York by his German grandmother as a birthday present in 1938.

While his parents did not give them to him, he discovered them when he settled his father's estate in 1981. Leibiger herself engaged with them the first time only when she was preparing

her lecture, she said.

"I wondered what their affect on my father might have been had he been exposed to their content," she said.

Both books feature "unmistakable negative Jewish images on the covers," she said.

On one, Jewish people are associated with animals such as wolves and foxes, while the other features a mushroom with a stereotypical Jewish face and a Star of David.

Both were published by Nazi Julius Streicher, most famous for his newspaper, Der Stürmer, which he founded in 1923 to support the Nazi Party.

"It remained a highly popular right-wing news organ until 1945, with a circulation of nearly 500,000," Leibiger said. "Special issues on such topics as Jewish ritual murder had circulations as high as 2 million."

However, even more people than this are estimated to have read the publication, as it was on display in guarded, glassed-in bulletin boards in many German towns and cities, she said.

The primary focus of the paper was scandals involving Jews, caricatures showing the worst possible images of Jews and the names of Germans who "collaborated" with Jews.

There also was a strong pornographic component, Leibiger said.

"So racy was the sexual content that Streicher was labeled the 'national pornographer,'" she said.

The main idea of the books presented by Leibiger was to teach children how to identify Jews and equate them with all things evil.

The first was written by 18-year-old



Carol A. Leibiger, Ph.D., gives a presentation on the use of children's books for purposes of indoctrination in Nazi Germany.

(Photo by Travis Gulbrandson/Plain Talk)

preschool teacher Thodolinde "Elvira" Bauer, with a title that translates as "Don't Trust a Fox on the Green Heath, or a Jew on his Oath."

The title itself is a reference to a poem by Martin Luther that appeared in his book, "Of the Jews and Their Lies," Leibiger said.

"The book consists of poems and illustrations on facing pages," she said. "The illustrations are brightly-colored and simply drawn. Red type accentuates the important words. If one reads only these words, one readily understands the message of the book."

Two of the red-printed words are "Jew" and "devil."

"The book describes Jews as evil, lazy and devious, with physical attributes that reflect their inferior

position among the world's races," Leibiger said.

By contrast, Germans are all portrayed as honest, good-looking, pious Christians.

The second book - "The Poisonous Mushroom" - was written by Ernst Hiemer, one of Streicher's assistants, and features many of the same themes as the previous book.

It also portrays the same "solution to the problem" - Streicher and Der Stürmer.

Streicher himself went on to become one of the highest-profile defendants of the Nuremberg Trials.

"Streicher was brought before the Nuremberg court on charges of having been an accessory to the murder of millions of Jews by inciting hatred and

persecution, and perverting the minds of Germans, especially children, through his speeches and writing," Leibiger said.

He was executed on Oct. 16, 1946.

To say that his guilty verdict was purely the result of Streicher's message being acted on by his readers is "an over-simplification," Leibiger said.

"To paraphrase Hilary Clinton, 'It takes a culture to raise a child,'" she said. "German schoolchildren were enculturated not only by the means of textbooks, but by teachers and administrators."

Families, friends, churches and youth organizations also played significant roles, she said.

"To place the blame for poisoning German youth on only one of these agents, and to target only one individual, is scapegoating," she said. "This is not to excuse Streicher for his role in socializing German youth into anti-Semitism, but to point out he was not alone responsible for indoctrinating Germans."

Many of Streicher's works are now available online via historical groups, but also by neo-Nazis and white supremacists.

"Let us hope that organizations such as the National Holocaust Museum and educational efforts like this traveling exhibit will help to counteract such movements and to bring light into even those dark places," Leibiger said.

The next lecture related to the exhibit will be delivered by David I. Burrow, Ph.D., associate professor of history, on Nov. 13 at 3 p.m. and Nov. 15 at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. at I.D. Weeks Library.

Newspaper publisher takes issue with Republican party mailer

By Derek Bartos

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NORTH SIOUX CITY — An election mailer sent out earlier this week to District 16 residents has caused confusion among readers of a local newspaper and conflict between the newspaper's publisher and the local Republican Party.

The Union County Republican Party released a mailer Monday that included information and support for several election candidates. The publication, called the Lincoln Union County Times, featured a nameplate with a font and design similar to the Dakota Dunes/North Sioux City Times. This has confused numerous readers of the Dakota Dunes/North Sioux City Times, according to Bruce Odson, the publisher of that newspaper.

He said he has since received many calls from subscribers wondering whether the publication was an endorsement by his newspaper.

"The comments that we received from many people was that there was mass confusion," he said. "We got

calls saying, 'I can't believe you did that,' and I explained it wasn't us."

The Dakota Dunes/North Sioux City Times published a story on the front page of its Wednesday newspaper to clarify that it does not engage in such practices and that it was the Lincoln Union County Times that had published the mailer.

"One, we don't endorse candidates. Two, we're fair, and third, we thought this infringes upon copyright or brand," Odson said. "I assume they knew that they were creating that confusion when they were sending it out."

Odson also questioned whether the Union County Republican Party and its chairman, State Sen. Dan Lederman, believe in basic business principles.

"I was surprised," Odson said. "I could not perceive in any of the towns that I've lived in prior to owning papers for 17 years that I would take the same masthead of a paper and do a direct mailing, whether it's the Press & Dakotan in Yankton, or the American News (in Aberdeen) or the Public Opinion in Watertown.

You just don't do that."

Contacted Thursday by the Press & Dakotan, Lederman said he took exception to the story in Wednesday's newspaper and the "choice words" said about him.

"I think Bruce Odson thinks people are stupid, because if anybody reads the paper, they'll see the title is completely different," he said. "It's a different name, it's free and it has a full disclaimer on it that it was paid for by the Union County Republicans."

Lederman added that he had no intention of deceiving readers and believes he did nothing wrong.

"The point wasn't to make it look like it," he said. "The point was to use a name that was synonymous with newspapers, which is Times. The name is different. It looks different. It has a different color for the name, and it has a different name altogether."

Odson said he does not plan to take any legal action against the Union County Republican Party, but had hoped for an apology.

According to Lederman, he will not receive one.

"I feel that the only apology should be to me, for



This is NOT our publication.



The front page of this week's Dakota Dunes/North Sioux City Times took issue with a special election publication put out by the Union County Republican Party that the owner of the Times said looked too much like his newspaper, causing customer confusion. Party chairman State Sen. Dan Lederman said the party publication looked "completely different."

(Courtesy image)

OBITUARIES

Florence Wagner

Florence Wagner, 98, of Vermillion, passed away Sunday, Nov. 11, 2012 at the Sanford Vermillion Care Center.

Florence Eidem was born March 3, 1914 in rural Elk Point, on the Eidem Homestead to Gilbert and Mary (Jensen) Eidem. She graduated from the Elk Point High School and married Earl Wagner on June 10, 1936, and they farmed in the Elk Point area until retiring in 1976.

Her husband died in 1985 and Florence moved to Vermillion. She was a member of the Ahlsborg Lutheran Church and took great pride in her work in the church. When the church closed, they both joined the Brule Creek Lutheran Church. She was also active in the Vermillion Senior Citizens Center.

She loved preparing Easter, Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners for friends and relatives on the farm. She liked to go to their retreat on the Missouri river with her husband where they entertained neighbors with coffee and cookies.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Earl; a brother, Herbert Eidem; eight sisters, Alma Wagner, Blanche Eidem, Gladys Cole, Alice Guy, Mildred Martinson, Grace Holscher, Bernice Cwyner and Marjorie Walsh.

Funeral services were 2 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 14 at the Brule Creek Lutheran Church rural Elk Point, with burial following in the Ahlsborg Lutheran Cemetery, rural Elk Point. Visitation was one hour prior to the service at the church. hansenfuneralhome.com.

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Early Deadlines

Plain Talk deadline for the November 23rd issue will be **Monday, November 19th at 4pm** for all display, classifieds ads & news articles

Our offices will be closed Thursday, November 22nd to observe the Thanksgiving holiday.

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