

*A girl and a book*

## Peggy Shurban remains a student of history

Story and photos by Lyn Berner

In the summer of 1963 on a cattle ranch in Modesto, California, a young history buff sat under a tree reading *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* while her horse grazed nearby. Peggy Shurban, a committed museum volunteer since January of 2023, started studying World War II in high school. Now almost 80, she continues to focus on some of the events that led up to the Holocaust. She greets and engages with visitors to the museum. Our mission is hers: to encourage our fellow humans – all of us being equal – to become upstanders.

“My parents had some obvious prejudices. I never really understood it and I did not follow in those footsteps. I never was opposed to any group.”

A former resident of myriad places across the United States – St. Louis to Los Lunas – Peggy finally landed in downtown Albuquerque about five years ago. For almost 20 years in Los Lunas, Peggy and a business partner ran a kennel where they bred and showed sighthounds: Whippets, Salukis, and Azawakhs, all big hunters.

“I cut my teeth on dogs. I’ve had dachshunds since high school,” said the 1963 graduate. She remembers them fondly: Jennifer, Iva, Maddy, Luke, and now five-year-old Rambo. Museum employees all know Rambo because he accompanies Peggy to the museum no matter how often she comes in to volunteer. She serves as a pinch-hitter at the front desk as well as a library staffer, covering and shelving books.

Besides the dog raising business, Peggy led a multi-faceted career life starting with the aforementioned family-owned cattle ranch. She has spent time with the Air Force and in a computer chip manufacturing plant. She also was a ward clerk in the intensive care unit of the Veterans Administration hospital. In between, Peggy stayed home while her three girls grew up. She now is anticipating the birth of her 11<sup>th</sup> great-grandchild.



Peggy and Rambo working together at the front desk.

---

## NMHIM’s volunteers stay dedicated to the mission

by April Parli

The museum has an incredible volunteer force, and Peggy is a great example of that. Volunteers spend many hours working in the library, leading school tours, and managing the front desk to ensure that we achieve our mission to educate and inspire communities of upstanders. The success of the museum relies heavily on the people who so generously donate their time. If you are interested in learning more about the various volunteer opportunities at the museum, please visit: [nmholocaustmuseum.org/donate-volunteer/](https://nmholocaustmuseum.org/donate-volunteer/)

# Congregation Albert, Temple Beth Shalom, and NMHIM join forces to honor the legacy of MST Torahs

by Nathan Johnson

In 1942, the Nazi Central Office sent instructions for all Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia to send their valuable items to the Jewish Museum. Prague's Jewish community and museum professionals then persuaded the Nazi occupiers to also allow them to bring other religious treasures from deserted communities and destroyed synagogues to the museum in Prague. In 1964, a cache of Czech Torahs was placed in trust with Westminster Synagogue in London and the Memorial Scrolls Trust was established. Many of the 1,564 scrolls now are on loan to synagogues and organizations around the world. Congregation Albert, Temple Beth Shalom in Santa Fe, and the museum are the trusted caretakers of three of these scrolls.

On December 8, we co-hosted an event at Congregation Albert memorializing the 60th anniversary of the arrival of the Memorial Scrolls Trust Torahs in London. The service was developed and led by our amazing partners, Rabbi Celia Surget of Congregation Albert and Rabbi Neil Amswych of Temple Beth Shalom. This event was the first time that all three MST Torahs in New Mexico have been brought together. The commemoration highlighted the survival of these Torahs from destruction by the Nazis with presentations of the Torah's history and religious ceremonies involving the scrolls.



Pictured, from left, are Andy Holten, Rabbi Neil Amswych, Cantor Barbara Finn, and Rabbi Micah Citrin at the MST event. Photo courtesy of John Rivers and the team at Congregation Albert.

## ***Stand Up, Speak Up***

# Exploring stories that shape the world

by Nathan Johnson

We are continuing our program series into 2025 with four new and exciting presentations. Thanks to the generosity of Bernalillo County District 4 Commissioner Walt Benson, we can provide free admission to these presentations. The series *Stand Up, Speak Up* explores stories that helped shape New Mexico's diverse history as well as the world we live in today:

Rapheal Begay was originally scheduled for February 9, but sadly the program had to be canceled. It will be rescheduled as soon as possible. Begay is a Diné visual artist who presents storytelling traditions and showcases his culture through photography.

The New Mexico Japanese American Citizens League will present *Community in Conflict: The Legacy of the Santa Fe Internment Camp*, an award-winning documentary about the legacy of WWII trauma in Santa Fe. The program begins at 2 p.m. on March 9 in the UNM Student Union Theater ([UNM Campus, Building 60](#)).

On April 27, educator Mary Jiron-Belgarde will discuss her work on Native American education, including culturally responsive programs, student retention, and the development of indigenous language and literacy initiatives. Jiron-Belgarde holds a Ph.D. in educational administration and policy analysis from Stanford University. The program begins at 2 p.m. in UNM Continuing Ed, 1634 University Blvd NE.

Julie Kohner will share her family's story of survival and hope during the Holocaust. Kohner is the daughter of Hannah Bloch Kohner, a Holocaust survivor who appeared in 1953 on the TV program *This is Your Life*. The presentation is scheduled for May 25 at 2 p.m. in the Jewish Community Center of Greater Albuquerque, 5520 Wyoming Blvd NE.

# Archives *Alive!*

## Two new collections available online

by Camelia Caton-Garcia

NMHIM is pleased to announce the publication of two new digital collections: the [New Mexico Holocaust Survivors Collection](#) and the [Hipolito "Paul" Valerio Collection](#).

The New Mexico Holocaust Survivors Collection features personal narratives and testimonies from survivors who have resided or are currently living in our state. One example from this collection of personal stories is that of Zina Brinberg. In her recollections, Zina shares powerful memories of her and her family's experience in the Holocaust. Watching as Nazis marched, singing antisemitic songs, into her hometown of Lodz, Poland in September 1939, Zina writes, "It felt like a knife stabbed through my heart." She would survive the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz II-Birkenau, and Ravensbrück, losing many family members along the way. Painful but compelling stories like these help us understand how the Holocaust shaped the lives of New Mexico community members and emphasize the importance of remembering this horrific moment in human history.

The Hipolito "Paul" Valerio Collection includes photographs of the European theater during WWII, the liberation of concentration camps, and life in Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico, where he grew up and would spend his life after the war. Hipolito served in the 316th STA Company SQ 9th Air Force (US Armed Forces) during WWII. He was active with his company in Belgium, Germany, and France from 1944-1945. The collection also includes liberation photos mass produced by the



Hipolito "Paul" Valerio poses on a downed Nazi warplane, C.1945.

US Armed Forces after the war. These pictures were given to soldiers as a way to bear witness to atrocities committed and provide evidence of Nazi war crimes.

In October of 1945, Valerio was honorably discharged. He returned to Northern New Mexico to work his family's ranch and farm. There he married Alicia Santistevan and became a successful farmer, winning awards for stock raising and experimental farming. Hipolito "Paul" Valerio passed away on August 23, 1999, at the age of 93. This collection sheds light on the wartime experiences of one New Mexican soldier and how these men grappled with the devastation of the Holocaust they witnessed.

These digital collections would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of Olly Millar, Molly French, and Johnny Macas. These volunteers spent many hours researching, digitizing, and cataloging these records. Both collections are open to researchers, educators, students, and the public. The online records can be viewed in full on our website. [nmhim.org/collections/](http://nmhim.org/collections/)



Hipolito "Paul" Valerio in his uniform, C.1945.

*The Herald*

Finding its way to you four times a year  
from staff, volunteers, and board  
members

# Education team goes beyond the classroom to empower the next generation of upstanders

by Alexander King



Alexander King, education coordinator, gives students from Tech Leadership Charter School a tour in preparation for their exhibit project.

As part of our efforts to branch out across New Mexico, a group of NMHIM educators led a professional development session for New Mexico teachers at Zia Middle School in Las Cruces. New Mexico teachers were given invaluable tools and strategies to further educate New Mexico students about the tragedies and lessons of the Holocaust. We look forward to continuing our teacher professional development sessions this spring in northern New Mexico and Albuquerque.



Teachers listening to a presentation at the Las Cruces Professional Development.

## Opera performances support museum programs

The museum benefitted from three performances in Santa Fe of *Voices of Shekhinah: Four Illuminations*, an opera by Valarie Morris. The opera celebrates important women in Jewish history.

Conducted by Will Varner, the presentations, commemorating UN Holocaust Remembrance Day, were sponsored by HaMakom and Unitarian Universalist Santa Fe. A generous donor matched up to \$5,000 in ticket sales to benefit the museum.

---

## Board

---

- Regina Turner– President
- Gloria Taradash– Secretary
- Lindsay Jones– Treasurer
- Rodney Bowe
- Margaret Hirsch
- Lane Leckman
- Scott Melton
- Jennie L. Negin
- Nicole Werkmeister

---

## Staff

---

- Raye Cohen– Executive Director
- Lyn Berner– Director of Administration
- Camelia Caton-Garcia– Director of Collections
- Nathan Johnson– Director of Programs
- Sheri Karmiol– Librarian
- Alexander King– Education Coordinator
- Sheldon Liebman– Bookkeeper
- April Parli– Communications Manager
- Mel Sanchez– Volunteer Coordinator