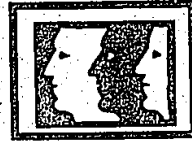
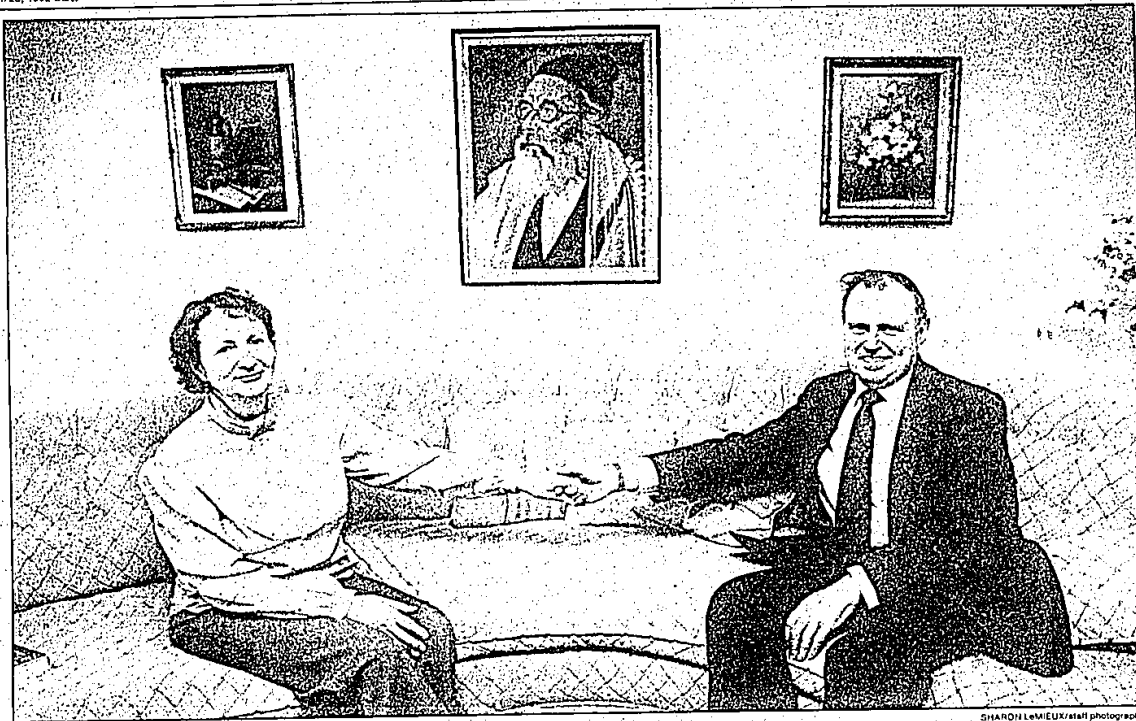


Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



(FHC)

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At her husband Sylvan's urging, Goldie Szachter Kalib related her story of horror and survival during the Holocaust. Some 12 years later the book, "The Last Selection: A Child's Journey through the Holocaust" is a poignant, stark account of her and her family's ordeal.

Haunting memoir

Book recalls a terrifying journey through Holocaust

"I thought it was such an overwhelming job and in my own mind I realized, "How in the world am I going to somehow make him understand, to see a picture of what these camps were like when each one was so different?"

— Goldie Szachter Kalib
Holocaust survivor



By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

AS GOLDIE SZACHTER KALIB points out in the book of her horrific experience as a child during the Holocaust, her survival was predicated on an unlikely series of miracles.

"The Last Selection: A Child's Journey Through the Holocaust" aptly documents these blessings of fate amid the constant state of panic in a stark, poignant manner.

The Farmington Hills resident's story is told matter-of-factly, including the chilling account of her march to the gas chamber in the notorious Auschwitz death camp as one of the last "selections" in Nazi Germany's reign of terror during World War II.

After being chosen by Dr. Josef Mengele, "The Angel of Death," Goldie and her mother were herded into a room with several others where a flourlike powder was thrown on the floor, presumably poisoned gas. There they stood, praying and walling while waiting to die.

But they didn't die then. An order had come down for the gassing to be stopped at Auschwitz as Allied troops advanced.

Rachela and Goldie stand at the gravesite of their mother, Miryam Rivkah Szachter, who died in a hospital after enduring the "death march" from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen in Germany.

Typical of the cruel, inhumane methods employed by the Nazis, Goldie and the rest were left to twist for the entire day in the belief death was imminent. Undoubtedly, she would say later, her survival that day is the biggest miracle.

SUCH SUFFERING is incomprehensible. Goldie is a 13-year-old living during this time of unprecedented human decimation that left both parents and 24 other members of her family dead.

Yet "The Last Selection: A Child's Journey Through the Holocaust" is a painful story that could have been confined within a family. Her husband and co-author of the book, Sylvan Kalib, wouldn't let it.

"Actually, initially I was against it to tell you the truth," said Goldie, 60. "I didn't think he should write it. I thought it was such an overwhelming job and in my own mind I realized, 'How in the world am I going to somehow make him understand, to see a picture of what these camps were like when each one was so different?'"

The book not only covers her ordeal in the Starachowice forced labor camp, Auschwitz in Poland and ensuing "death march" to Bergen-Belsen in Germany, it goes into meticulous detail on the mood of anti-Semitism of World War II Poland and her hometown Bodzentyń leading up to her imprisonment.

The imagery of the lump of sugar her mother gave her to eat on the train to Auschwitz and the gold coin which her older brother, Moshe, handed to her sisters

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Resale boutique operates in the quest for kid's stuff

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

At the Children's Orchard in West Bloomfield, old threads quickly become new again. Some would call it magic.

Owner Sue Mierkiewicz doesn't have to wave a wand at her resale store in Old Orchard Mall at Orchard Lake and Maple roads. The illusion of the clothes shrinking on kids right after buying them is an illusion parents would readily attest to seeing regularly.

And thanks to the quick growth of children, wear and tear on merchandise is minimal and sometimes nonexistent.

"In this neighborhood, I have two types of people coming in," said Mierkiewicz, a former Farmington resident and graduate of Redford Bishop, Borgess High School. "I have people who sell me clothes and people who come in and buy clothes."

In terms of location, Children's Orchard perhaps has the best of both worlds. Bordering affluent communities such as Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills and West Bloomfield, there's an endless supply of quality items and brand names being brought in.

Considering the economic climate, there's no shortage of people in search of a bargain either.

"IT'S FASHIONABLE to be frugal," said Karen Lynch, president and founder of Children's Orchard. Lynch started Children's Orchard in 1983 in Newbury Port, Mass., after she found herself surrounded by a pile of clothes and toys her daughter had outgrown.

Not only has her daughter grown, but so has a number of franchises of Children's Orchard. There are 40 of the resale stores, spanning Maine to California. Six more franchises are in development.

While retail outlets are feeling squeezed in this recession, places such as Children's Orchard appear to be flourishing.

One thing that separates Children's Orchard from other resale shops, though, is it maintains upscale, boutique atmosphere. They also pay cash for resalable items, which comes with a stringent buying policy.

Clothing must be "nearly new" and freshly laundered while toys and other equipment must be clean and in complete form. Anything with rips, stains, broken zippers or buttons and non-contemporary styles are usually deemed unacceptable.

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Sue Mierkiewicz of Children's Orchard in West Bloomfield finds there is plenty to choose from

operating a resale boutique for kid's fashions and toys.

DAN DEAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER