

Book recalls a child's Holocaust experience

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through a crevice in a latrine become singular in their symbols of survival.

At the same time, the descriptions of the billowing flames of the crematoria and the unmistakable stench of burning flesh at Auschwitz and the blood-stained snow on the death march to Bergen-Belsen are haunting and inescapable memoirs.

From the first time they met, Sylvan would hear bits and pieces of his wife's ghastly reminiscences through the years. He also discovered the more pleasant anecdotes such as the Polish Christian woman who sheltered his wife for a year after the Nazis invaded; risking her own life in the process.

The more he heard, the more Kalib knew her story had to be told.

"ONE TIME after dinner, I finally said 'Goldie, we're starting now,'" said Sylvan, who has been married to his wife for 37 years. "I had a few pieces of paper. I asked her question after question. Again, I had the outline of the story, but I had to fill in the myriad of details."

In the 12 years following, the enormity of filling in the details was borne out. Relying on his wife's recollections, Sylvan also interviewed her two surviving sisters, Irka and Rachela as well as her cousin Rivche Ehrlich. Such recollections brought the horror to life in his own mind. Kalib had lived in the United States at the time of the Holocaust, news filtering through the Yiddish press of the panic taking place in Europe.

In his own mind at the time, there was the feeling that the same barbarism could take place here.

Through several interviews, though, Sylvan found discrepancies.

Some of which were seemingly minute as to what and how many times a day they were fed in the forced labor camp to far more looming questions as to how her father and brother both died on the train to Auschwitz.

"I WANTED to get everything as accurate as possible," said Sylvan, a professor of music at Eastern Michigan University.

He tackled both types of inconsistencies with uncompromising zeal.

Her younger brother, Sholimo, had vowed he'd never be taken to Auschwitz alive and for years, Goldie be-

lieved he had jumped off the train en route to the death camp in south Poland.

After several last-minute frantic phone calls, including one to her surviving cousin, Sylvan found both his wife's father and brother actually died in a fight that broke out in the hot, suffocating box car en route to the death camp.

Her husband's quest to completely flesh out and understand his wife's ordeal still proved frustrating even after nailing down pertinent details.

"He thought he had the story and that he understood everything," Goldie said, "but to paint this picture of the different camps . . . When I listened to him when he would question my sisters and they would relate to him whatever they knew then when to turn ask a question: From his question, I would realize he misunderstood something."

Sylvan finished the manuscript, a 300-plus page story. Friends who read it agreed it was a compelling but didn't read smoothly. He asked EMU English professor Franklin Case for advice. He in turn, recommended Ken Wachsbarger, who shares as a co-author of the hardcover book available at area outlets for \$29.95. The first edition of "The Last Selection: A Child's Journey Through the Holocaust" has already sold out and the publisher University of Massachusetts Press is in the process of printing another run.

Wachsbarger had written a couple of books including "Voices from the Underground: Insiders Histories of the Vietnam Era."

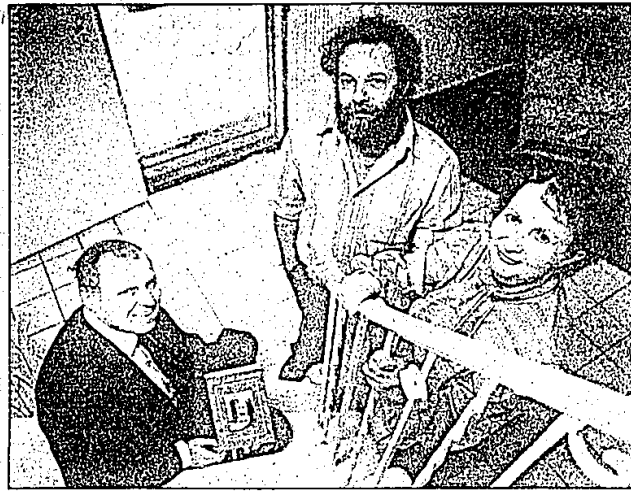
"THE STORY itself was tremendously powerful. . . but from a writer's standpoint it had a lot of repetition," said Wachsbarger, who lives in Ypsilanti.

In the process of whittling and fine tuning the manuscript, more questions arose for Kalib to track.

"I was really afraid because I realized the way I had written it, I had poured my heart into it," Sylvan said. "I didn't want it skimming down to the point where one would read a catalogue of facts. I wanted the heart retained."

Wachsbarger understood. In the final stages, the two worked closely together gathering more details to emotionally and accurately tell the story.

There will be a book signing for "The Last Selection: A Child's Journey Through the Holocaust" Thursday, May 7, at Border's Book Shop, 13 Mile and Southfield Road, Birmingham. For information, call 644-1515.



Writer Ken Wachsbarger (middle) helped transform "The Last Selection" from a heart-

-rendering story as told by Goldie's husband, Sylvan, into a compelling narrative.



A bid to help

Ann Oppenheimer (left), Jackie Griot and Marion Prover show off some of the many items to be auctioned by the Women of North Farmington 7:30-11:30 p.m. Saturday, April 25, at Mulwood Clubhouse, 35055 Mulwood Drive, off Drake Road and north of

Grand River. Last year, the group raised \$5,000 for the Senior Citizens Meals on Wheels Program and the Farmington Advisory Council in the fight against substance and child abuse. Donations are \$5. For information, call 474-2561 or 553-2255.

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Resale shop focuses on kids

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What is acceptable, and certainly popular, are designer names such as Esprit, OshKosh and Bugle Boy, according to Lynch. Mouse feather dresses are quite the rage as well for resale shoppers. Such items are sold in turn for 50-80 percent off retail.

ASIDE FROM clothes, toys and

equipment such as infant car seats, cribs and strollers have a tremendous resale value. Mierkiewicz said Little Tikes indoor toys go quickly.

Mierkiewicz has become quickly enthralled with children's resale. After working in consumer products sales management for 13 years, she decided to open her own Children's Orchard outlet in October.

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