

Holocaust survivor to speak to students, community Thursday

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

A gripping tale of survival is in store for area residents today, Thursday, March 19 as Benny Hochman, 85, will share his story of surviving the Holocaust.

The program is scheduled in the HHS auditorium from 2-3:30 p.m. as a school assembly that the community is invited to as well.

Holyoke VFW is sponsoring the assembly and encourages the public to attend.

VFW Quartermaster Steve Millage said he has been trying to arrange for Hochman, who lives in Sidney, Neb., to speak here for several months. Hochman called him early this week and said he could come Thursday, and the plans were set.

Hochman was born in Poland and was carted away in 1939 at the age of 16 to Auschwitz and then Buchenwald by the Nazis when they overran Poland.

Millage points out that since there are those who deny the Holocaust ever happened, he wants the local students to hear about it firsthand. "Genocide is nothing new and certainly nothing old as it is still going on today in Africa and the Arab world," said Millage.

Hochman, with the help of C.J. Cornelius, M.D., wrote a book "From Hell to Here," a World War II autobiography, which was first published in 2001.

At that time, he had told his story at 81 presentation sites in Nebraska, 16 in Colorado, 16 in South Dakota, six in Wyoming, three in Iowa, three in Minnesota, two in Utah and one each in Nevada, New Mexico and Missouri.

The Polish teenager survived the Nazi invasion and imprisonment and was rescued by and served with the U.S. Armed Forces in Germany. He was adopted by a Nebraska family and has been an inspiration for others, as well as an outstanding member of his community for well over 50 years.