

Audience moved by story of Holocaust

Alter Wiener shares his experience during WWII

By John William Howard
Sports Editor

It's not often that one man can change the lives of everyone he speaks to in just a few short minutes. That was the case last Thursday when Alter Wiener, a Holocaust survivor, author and speaker, came to share his story with a packed and silent McLoughlin Auditorium.

Wiener sat in the furthest corner of the stage, nearly hidden by the podium, as the crowd filed in. There was an expectant hush, not the usual drone of voices that typically precedes the many speakers that Clackamas Community College brings in. Something was different about this one and everybody knew it.

As Wiener stood, a picture flashed on the screen behind him. Gaunt, black-eyed and nearly lifeless, the image bore no resemblance to the man standing next to it. The image was taken of Wiener the day he was liberated from a Nazi labor camp by the Russians in May of 1945 after nearly three years of incarceration.

From that first moment and for the next 90 minutes, Wiener held the audience in the palm of his hand. He wove his horrifying story from one end to the other, stopping every so often to point out the terrifying effects of prejudice on a people and how he found it "completely absurd."

Using a string of experiences, Wiener not only told his tale but also illustrated some incredible moments of hatred, compassion and sickeningly close brushes with death.

Wiener told of how, when starving while working in a textile factory, a German woman took pity on him. Against the rules, the woman made eye contact with him and motioned to where she had hidden a sandwich of white bread

and cheese. The woman continued to feed Wiener for another 30 days, despite the incredible risk to herself.

Also told was the story of the day the Russians freed the prisoners. The Russian tanks rolled up to where the prisoners were waiting to be taken to the work site and an officer shouted to them that they had been liberated to do as they pleased.

"When they saw our bodies, they broke down," said Wiener. "They cried with us."

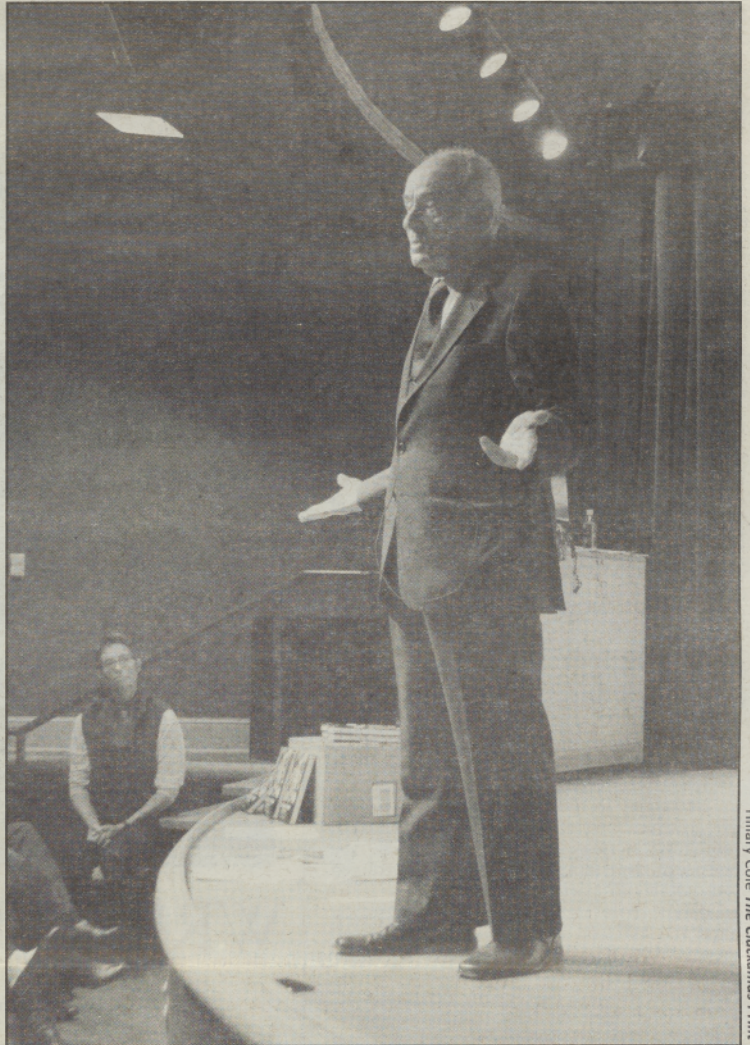
By the time Wiener was finished with his presentation, the audience was also in tears. Moved by the incredible tale of unthinkable brutality, tearful admirers crowded around the stage as others filed quietly out of the auditorium.

"It's emotional because how do you live through that? I just can't believe that people have had to survive such awful things," said Loretta Mills, one of the many onlookers. "He's on a mission... he was touching people's lives and I think he's doing a great job."

At Wiener's ripe age of 85 and with a story like his to share, he has plenty of wisdom to give out everywhere he goes. He speaks in front of all ranges of audiences from elementary school children to college students to book clubs and always seems to stress that people should appreciate what they have because "you never know what is going to be tomorrow."

Another of Wiener's points was how important it was to hear about the past so that it could be avoided in the future, and that we should never despise those around us just because they're different.

"[To keep it from happening again] number one is to not gravitate towards hatred," said Harry Wise, another member of the audience who met Wiener personally. "Whatever you go about, go about by love."



Hilary Cole The Clackamas Print

Alter Wiener shared stories from his past with Clackamas Community College students and faculty last Thursday in McLoughlin Auditorium.

SMH

STANDUP FOR MENTAL HEALTH

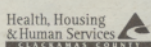
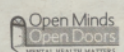
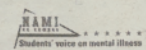
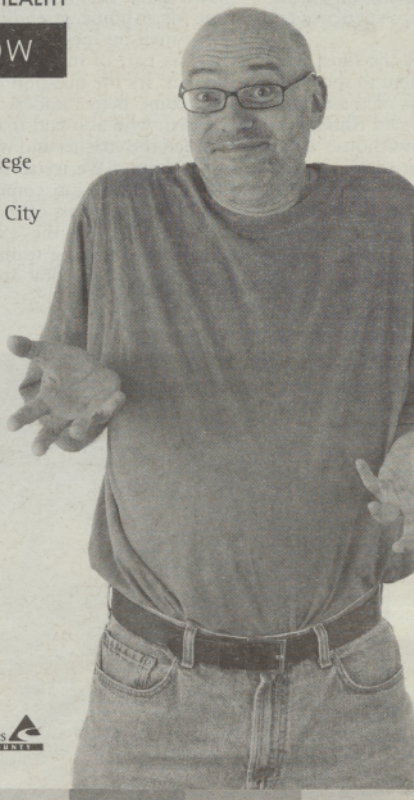
COMEDY SHOW

Where:
Clackamas Community College
McLoughlin Theater
19600 Molalla Ave. Oregon City

When:
Monday, Nov. 7th @ 2:30PM
Tuesday, Nov. 8th @ 7:00PM

Cost:
Free to the Public
General seating is limited.
Light refreshments served.

Produced by:
David Granirer, Founder
Stand Up for Mental Health



For more information contact kathyf57@yahoo.com.

NASA: Former CCC student speaks about career after school

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"I'd recommend taking a lot of different classes at least to get a flavor for it. I hated chemistry in high school. It's only by giving things a chance and coming across it later in life that you find out you really like it," said Burton.

Throughout his education for his career, Burton has had many people he counts as idols. Burton talked about some of his biggest influences throughout his journey.

"The biggest influence[s] on my way to NASA were Nick Hamel and also my adviser at PSU that I did my graduate research with. Our research there was also founded by NASA on the origins on life," said Burton, "just having these science mentors that you really build close relationships with really keep you going."

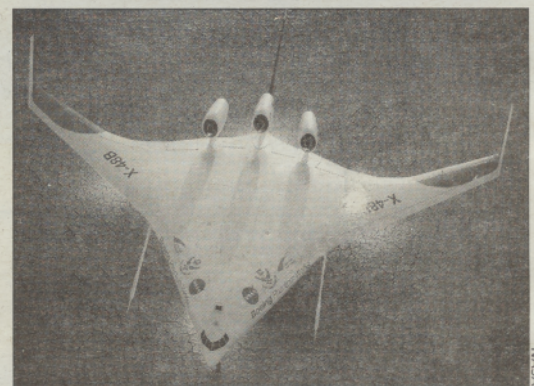
The presentation caught the interest of many, as there were more than 20 students and staff members in the audience. Burton spoke for

an hour with a PowerPoint presentation full of visuals that caught everyone's eye such as the visits of Bill Nye and the staff of "Robot Chicken" to Burton's lab in Maryland.

"I like that he was relaxed. Normally presentations about intense sounding stuff have the guys in suits and are all stuffy. He was really relaxed and made it fun," said Emma Wilson, who stayed the entire hour

of the presentation and enjoyed what she learned.

After the production, many of the students said that they would definitely go to another event similar to Burton's NASA presentation. CCC had a great opportunity to learn and hear from one of the nation's best scientists. Students and staff would be smart to take the chance to learn if the opportunity comes around again.



The Z-48B is used by NASA and the Air Force to study the structural aerodynamic and operational advantages of the Blended Wing Body.

NASA