

Holocaust:

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office or from leaving the country," he said. There also were articles about large populations of Poles and Jews being evicted from their homes.

"But what was really going on was that they were marching them to these camps — we now know that," he added.

Whatever experiences Jewish refugees in America told about in the late 1930s were summarily denied in Germany. One article published in March 1933 by The Observer in La Grande was titled, "Persecution of Jews Denied by German Minister." Simpson found other locally published articles with similar denials.

"This is a fairly common theme, even in our newspapers. There was a lot of contradiction," Simpson explained. Of course, this added to the confusion of American readers.

Although some American newspapers and magazines did write about the mass murders of Jews and others in concentration camps after 1941, "there was very little visual evidence of the crimes to print," the Americans and Holocaust exhibition stated. "Most Americans, however were more focused on news about the war. Daily reports about battles overshadowed periodic information about the mass murder of Jews and other victims," it read.

The Nov. 10, 1938, issue of the Medford Mail Tribune, which was on exhibit, ran an article titled, "1938 Nation-

wide Attack Against German Jews — Nazis Wreak Vengeance Upon Jews." This was about wrecking gangs that destroyed Jewish-owned stores and synagogues.

Another newspaper on exhibit was the Nov. 24, 1942, issue of the Coos Bay Times, an article that exposed the genocide plan. It was titled, "1942 Nazi Plan to Murder European Jews — Half of Jews in Occupied Poland To Be Killed This Year by Nazis."

'What more could have been done?'

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which produced the traveling exhibition in partnership with the American Library Association, Jews were the primary victims — six million were murdered, but there also were millions of less-known victims.

Those "other victims" included the Roma, people with disabilities in institutions, Poles, Serbs, homosexuals, Soviet prisoners of war, political dissidents, tipplers (chronic drunkards) and Jehovah's Witnesses. "These also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny," stated the Holocaust Memorial Museum website.

"Even though Americans had information about the persecution and later murder of European Jews, rescuing them never became a priority for the United States or for the vast majority of the American people," stated the library's tour script. Simpson said it was up to each exhibition viewer to answer the question, "What more could have been done?"

Chair:

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A heart-felt project

Sipe said this was not only a big project for his students, it was meaningful. Students planned the chair's construction during the pandemic lockdown of 2020-21. When they couldn't see one another in person, they diagrammed the chair remotely.

Students conversed with each other via the internet about the build. When the coronavirus restrictions ended, team members got together once again. At least 35 students pitched in on this project, working whenever they had a free moment.

"I couldn't hazard a guess as to how many hours they spent, but it was a lot," Sipe said.

Heidi Sipe, Umatilla School superintendent and wife to the robotics teacher, also worked to make this gift possible. She said their effort was like other work they had done in the past.

"I always do the organizing and financing piece, and Kyle makes the real work happen," she said.

The superintendent said she discovered this need while at a legislative meeting. Gus' mom was a speaker at the meeting and advocating as an early childhood intervention educator.

"I met her there and was really inspired by her," Heidi Sipe said.

They stayed in touch and discussed the possibility of the Umatilla robotics team helping Gus.

The robotics team often



Umatilla School District/Contributed Photo

Gus Macy, front center, poses next to his new wheelchair in Baker City along with Team Confidential, the Umatilla High School robotics team that built the chair for him.

is busy, but their schedule opened up during the pandemic. There was no in-person school and competitions were canceled.

"The kids needed a project," she said.

Local companies and people also were willing to fund the project. Cattle Drive Leather Co. was the primary sponsor.

The Lorence Family and Evangeline Gifts were sponsors, too, and Amazon Web Services helped fund the team's trip to Baker City to deliver the bike to Gus.

Fostering community involvement

Avery Gutierrez, Confidential officer and member for three years, said she was happy about this project. She said she hadn't done community service work previous to joining Confidential. Lately, she has performed yard work and helped out in other ways with her team.

She said this sort of work brings her closer to others and she enjoys learning new

skills. Though the wheelchair project is not robotics, per se, it did involve wiring and more.

"We started by getting measurements — his height and weight — and we worked to adjust it to his needs," Gutierrez said.

According to Gutierrez, Gus hugged his mom and gave everyone on the team high fives upon receiving the chair.

Meghan Owens, lead of programming and electrical for Confidential, has been with the team for four years. Like Gutierrez, most of her community service has been through her robotics team, she said, and like Gutierrez, Owens gets a lot from her service.

"We get really connected with our community," she said.

She added she has learned much about the people of her community, as well as the area's history, businesses and services. She also said Gus was happy about the chair, even though he had an accident on his first drive.

Adventures started with a spill

"It only took him about five minutes to figure out how to tip it over," Karla Macy said.

Gus steered it into a curb and took a tumble. But she said Gus was fine, and Team Confidential built the chair with safety in mind. A car seat, with a five-point harness, is part of the wheelchair. And he has a helmet.

"What's really good about it is that it's a pretty good size, and I think it's something he can use," she said. "I think this is something that can last him his whole life, with some minor adjustments."

Gus' mother expressed much gratitude for the chair and the kindness of the robotics team.

According to Macy, the robotics team spoke with Gus when designing the chair. Later, when they met him in person, one student presented him with a stuffed toy.

"Those students from Umatilla have been so awesome," she said.

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