

Brighton man recalls 'night of broken glass'

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

BRIGHTON — One day in 1938, Adolf Eichmann was waiting to meet Lieutenant General Heinrich Stumpf in his headquarters — formerly a palace — located in Vienna, Austria.

Austria had been annexed by Germany in March of that year, and Eichmann, then employed by the Jewish Department of Germany's Security Service, had come to Vienna to organize the forced emigration of Jews.

When Stumpf emerged from his office, however, he ignored Eichmann and the various other prominent Nazis waiting to see him, and immediately motioned to Israel Weinbach — a Viennese Jew — and his 10-year-old son, Kurt, to come into his office.

The elder Weinbach had been summoned for an audience with the general, whom he had befriended when both men served in the Austrian army during World War I. In an interview last week, Kurt Weinbach noted that the friendship between his late father and the late general is detailed in the 1986 book "Heroes of the Holocaust," by Arnold-Geier.

Israel Weinbach, then a corporal, lost track of Stumpf, a devout Catholic, after the war. Weinbach had reestablished contact with him when he wrote Stumpf a letter congratulating him upon his promotion from brigadier to lieutenant general by the Germans after they entered Vienna.

As Kurt Weinbach recalled, he and his father were rather nervous waiting in a room filled with the kind of men who dedicated their lives to harassing and persecuting Jews.

"We were scared to breathe," he remembered as he spoke in his Brighton home.

Stumpf did not immediately put the young Weinbach at ease, he added.

"He was a very large man," Weinbach recalled. "Very regal."

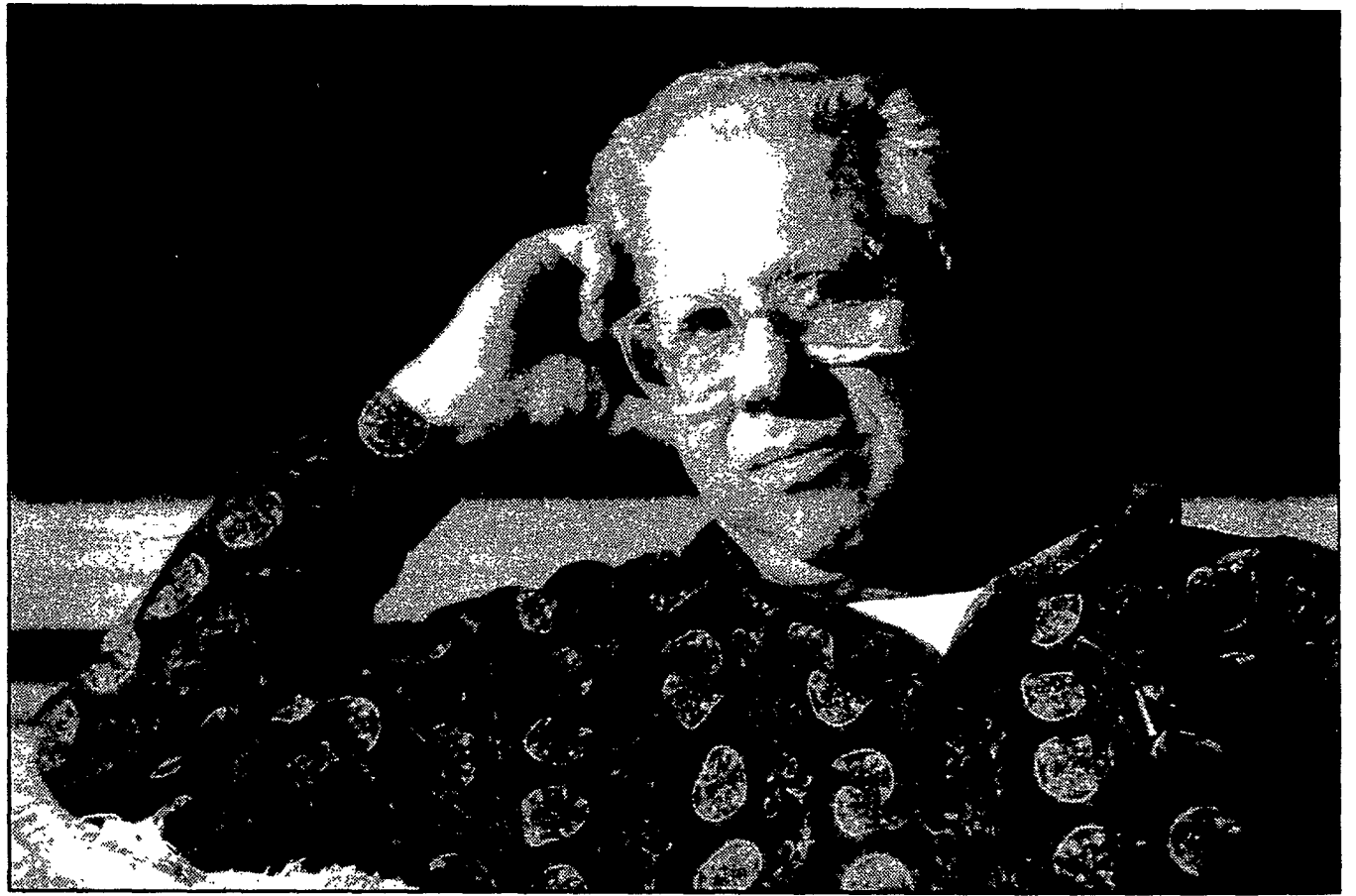
When they had entered Stumpf's office, the general initially made their nervousness even worse.

"Weinbach, I ought to have you shot!" Weinbach recalled Stumpf saying to his father.

The general then extended his hand in a friendly



Provided photo
Lieutenant General Heinrich Stumpf



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Together with his late father, Brighton resident Kurt Weinbach survived Nazi Germany with the help of Lieutenant General Heinrich Stumpf, an Austrian Catholic in the Germany army.

manner and continued.

"All these years, Izzy, we have lived in the same city and you never got in touch with me. Now, you finally remember that I exist. Thank you for your congratulations."

Weinbach recalled that Stumpf quickly got down to business, telling the two Jews that he would do whatever he could to protect them from the murderous days ahead.

German and Austrian Jews saw those days begin for many of them on Kristallnacht — the Night of the Broken Glass — Nov. 9, 1938. This week marks the 55th anniversary of that gruesome event.

Using the assassination of a German diplomat by a Jew in Paris as an excuse for a mass pogrom, Germany's Nazi leaders unleashed a vicious 48-hour attack against Jews in Germany and Austria. Kristallnacht took its name from the thousands of shards of glass that littered both nation's Jewish neighborhoods when Nazi thugs smashed and destroyed hundreds of Jewish-owned stores.

When it was over, Kristallnacht had seen 91 people

killed, almost 200 synagogues burned and 30,000 Jews sent to concentration camps.

But, amidst the horrors, fate smiled kindly on the Weinbachs whose watch and jewelry store was the only Jewish-owned business in a neighborhood of 50,000 Catholics, Weinbach remarked.

"The Gestapo came to smash the place," Weinbach said. "But the neighbors blocked them."

Weinbach remembered that his father was popular among the neighborhood's Catholics because he often did favors for those who were poor, sometimes paying their rent when they had no money.

Yet, even with a German general on their side, and friendly Catholic neighbors, the Weinbachs knew their days were numbered in Vienna, Weinbach said. Thousands of Austrians shared the Nazis' anti-Semitism, he said, and he remembered hearing Hitler speak to enthusiastic crowds at two rallies in the Austrian capital. He added that he once came within 30 feet of the Nazi dictator.

"He never managed three sentences without saying
Continued on page 5

Diocesan effort continues to train marriage-prep couples

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

The Diocese of Rochester is continuing the process of preparing parishes to assume responsibility for marriage preparation.

As part of that process, the diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis has scheduled a training program for couples who lead marriage preparation. The program will take place from 9:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Nov. 12, at St. John of Rochester Parish, 18 Wickford Way, Fairport.

"The purpose of the (session) is to assist the parishes in doing marriage preparation on their own," explained Barbara Carroll, coordinator for sacramental catechesis.

Although Carroll said sessions are open to any interested persons, they will be especially geared to those individuals who will lead marriage preparation for couples at their parishes. The training session is also intended for couples who assist with such programs as New Horizons and Once More With Love, two programs targeting people who have been married before.

Over the past two years, some 100 couples have taken advantage of diocesan training workshops to provide mar-



riage preparation in parishes, estimated Carroll, whose salary is paid with Thanks Giving Appeal funds. The \$25 workshop fee pays for the actual training sessions.

"We've got more teams than there were two years ago," Carroll added. "But we could use more."

Since not every diocesan parish has trained couples to perform marriage preparation, the diocese will continue to offer a limited number of marriage-preparation sessions, Carroll noted. Diocesan officials, however, hope to reduce the number of such diocesan sessions as more parishes take over preparation.

Parishes that send couples to take part in the training sessions will receive a marriage handbook titled, "Faithful to Each Other," published by the Bishops' Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Carroll added.

The Nov. 12 session will be led by Deacon James Fitch, parish deacon at Rochester's Holy Rosary Parish, and Donna Fitch, pastoral associate at Fairport's Church of the Resurrection.

"We facilitate couples looking at their relationships so they can share the gift of their sacrament with couples preparing

for marriage," Fitch said. "It's a real gift to the church when you have couples who are excited about sharing the gift of their sacrament."

In addition to covering marriage's sacramental nature, sessions will deal with basic "nuts and bolts" issues such as how to work with couples receiving marriage preparation, especially in light of varied circumstances those couples bring to the preparation process.

Carroll noted that preparation is evolving to emphasize marriage's sacramental dimension more. This evolution parallels development of practices in terms

of other sacraments to focus increasingly on "readiness." Thus, for example, deciding when a child is ready to receive confirmation is linked to whether the child is ready to receive the sacrament, not just on age or grade level.

"I think we need to do something to make the marriage celebration more faith-centered," Carroll observed. "It's not just a social thing."

For information about the Nov. 12 program, or about becoming part of the New Horizons planning team, contact Carroll at 716/328-3210, 243.



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