

Sisters value rare heritage

BY DANIELLE BRESHEARS
Staff Reporter

Two students from Truman State claim to be living relatives of one of the most highly recognized Jewish victims of the Holocaust, Anne Frank. Sisters freshman Emily and junior Sara Hahn said their connection to this magnified Jewish persona has affected their family greatly and has impacted each of their personal lives.

The girls' grandfather, Richard Hahn, was second cousin to Anne Frank, Emily said. His father, Rudolf Hahn, was Frank's cousin by marriage. Rudolf's sister, Hortense, married into the Frank family through Herbert Frank, Otto Frank's brother.

"I often feel a strong connection to remembering those who were lost in the Holocaust and World War II. It has always been a main interest for my brother, sister and me," Emily said.

The sisters said Richard told them the Hahn and Frank families were close and used to have dinners together. Richard and Anne were playmates during their youth and would have fun pestering one another regularly, Emily said.

"Anne would run around and throw small rocks at my grandpa and his friends," she said. "Richard did not find this to be terribly amusing. However, he would return the favor and chase Anne around their backyard for hours."

Despite busy schedules the girls still find time to reflect about their heritage and what

it means to them during their day-to-day life.

Although the family doesn't have a certain tradition of placing importance on their relation to Anne Frank, Emily said they grew up educated about the subject and the Holocaust is something they frequently think about.

"[We] often feel a strong connection to remembering those who were lost in the Holocaust and World War II," she said. "It has always been a main interest for my brother, sister and me."

However, the family agrees the connection not only is about Anne Frank and her family, but about the war and its overall effects, said Eric Hahn, the girls' father.

Their family emphasizes learning from past mistakes to prevent such a tragedy from happening again, Emily said.

Both sisters have had personal experiences in Germany that helped them realize the significance of their relation to Anne and gain an understanding about what life was like for their grandfather, Emily said.

"To grasp more of what [my grandfather] went through, my junior year of high school I lived in Germany for the entire year and gained insight on the German perspective of World War II and the Holocaust," she said.

Sara said she had a similar experience during a childhood visit to Belgium and Germany. She said she felt unbelievably sad and angry at what people in concentration camps had to endure, when she visited Breendonk concentration camp.

She said she remembers seeing how small,



Submitted Photo
Junior Sara Hahn, left, and her sister, freshman Emily Hahn, smile for the camera. The sisters claim to be distant relatives of Anne Frank.

cold and dark the rooms were, and a tour guide told her people in the concentration camps were woken up every two hours to march around the camp.

"I felt a sort of sadness that I had never felt before," she said. "It made me angry and sick to my stomach that so many people had to go through such horrors just because of something they believed in."

Emily said she found out about the connection at a young age. As children she and her sister were told Holocaust stories often. Their parents thought it was important for them to be exposed to these stories growing up, Emily said.

Emily and Sara grew up with Catholic and Jewish traditions.

"We'd have Hannukah one week and Christmas the next day, and Passover and Easter usually fall around the same time, too," Sara said.

To be related to such a well-known Jewish identity evokes pride throughout different senses for the sisters, they said. Although it isn't completely prevalent during their daily lives, the impact still is recognized.

"One can't not be proud when you understand the courage, strength and positivity of the Frank family," Emily said.

Sara said she has a pride in what Anne did for others. She said she thinks Anne's story truly could help people understand the Holocaust and the effects it had on all surrounding peoples during that time.

Eric Hahn, the girls' father, said he agrees there is a certain pride to be connected to Anne Frank.

"Anne Frank is a piece of that story [the Holocaust], and I have certainly thought about the personal connection my family has had with her ... but I feel it is much more important to understand the nuances of the rise of oppressive societies," Eric said.

The whole family agrees the link with Anne Frank they share has affected them all one way or another, whether big or small. Eric said any connection with the past could be insightful.

"No matter who we are, we cannot escape the ancestors of our past," Eric said. "They all have some lesson to teach us, whether they are from Anne Frank or not."

Professor employs unusual methods

History professor creates different experience for students

BY CHRIS BROWN
Staff Reporter

History Professor Marc Becker's distinctive teaching methods are a source of inspiration and a challenge for history students.

Becker is the topic of much discussion among students who have taken his classes, for his experimental teaching methods and his goofy personality, junior history major William LaChance said. LaChance said Becker's classes are known for educational experi-

ments, which, whether they succeed or fail, promote a different way of learning.

One aspect students often find fascinating is Becker's inclusion in conservative author David Horowitz's book "The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America," LaChance said.

Becker said he feels his inclusion in Horowitz's list is based more on the political leanings of Horowitz than on the actual danger of Becker's ideology.

Becker said he tries to use a variety of methods to get his students to interact with the material and each other. He said he thinks students are not empty vessels that can be filled with knowledge,

but instead benefit from engaging in a process known as critical pedagogy. He said this is the idea that students should interact critically with subject matter in an active form, by discussing or presenting material instead of reading or listening to lectures. He said he thinks the purpose of the classroom is to get people to interact.

"A corollary that a lot of my students really hate is that I'll give them group projects and really minimal instructions," Becker said.

He said he gives his students vague assignments to stimulate them and make them interact with each other and the material to come up with their own answer. Becker said he doesn't look for

mulaic answers from his students, but he is interested in testing their ability to work through assignments on their own.

Becker said he thinks as a professor it isn't beneficial for him to create artificial environments that don't bare any resemblance to what students are going to encounter in the professional world. He said he thinks life beyond the university often presents challenges that don't come with a complete set of instructions for how to deal with them.

One example of a situation specific to the university is the final exam, Becker said. He said there rarely are real-life situations where people are forced to sit

down and regurgitate everything they know about a topic onto a piece of paper.

Senior history major Margaret Licklider, who is enrolled in her third class with Becker, said he uses mandatory group discussion, projects where students are required to teach class and creative projects designed to make the students decide how to present the information and what information to present. Every final in the class is different, Becker said.

Becker said he doesn't think what he has to say necessarily is more interesting or more important than anyone else. He said he thinks he can learn from the students as much as they can learn from him.



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