We're mean and aggressive,' says Hunt

By JASON THOMPSON
Staff Reporter

In a brief stop at JSU April 2, Alabama governor Guy Hunt spoke out on the proposed closing of Fort McClellan, saying in the long run, the Anniston area will see one of the greatest economic booms in the history of our state.

Hunt, who addressed an approximate crowd of 100 people in Montgomery Auditorium, said he had sent the head of the Alabama Department of Economic Community Affairs back to Anniston to meet with local officials to establish a task force to fight the Fort McClellan battle.

"Actually, the Fort McClellan battle is bigger than just the battle for the fort because of the tremendous impact it would have upon the community," Hunt said. "I met last month with Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney at the Pentagon for a briefing and I told him we were mean and aggressive and were going to do everything we could to make sure they don't mistreat us."

Hunt emphasized the facts Fort McClellan may never close and people need to have faith in the community and go on with their lives.

"If Fort McClellan did close, it would be a long way down the road after a long fight," he said. "But we've got a fine community here and we need to continue to bring in economic development."

Hunt said the chemical weapons and training aspects of Fort McClellan would definitely continue to be stressed.

"Chemical weapons are going to be something that we are going to have to be prepared to defend ourselves against, and one of the best training places we have is here in Fort McClellan. In fact, I understand that it is the only one in the free world," he said.

"I think it would be very difficult to move that, and I think a lot of communities would not accept that, as well as the people of Anniston," he said. "The relationship between the city and the fort is something that all of the professional military people point out. Just the good feeling is a strong thing in our favor."

Alabama has the largest National Guard in the country, Hunt said, pointing out that much of the training is done here in Calhoun County.

"We have more military people in the Alabama National Guard than there is in the California National Guard," he said. "We do a lot of training at Fort McClellan and we depend on it.

"We all recognize that military policemen can be trained a lot of places, but we think there are other attributes that, when the final tests come in, the Pentagon will surely back up on this."

Hunt said although the situation has created quite a bit of controversy, he believes the area will benefit in the long run.

"I think when everything is over with, you're going to have even a better community with a brighter future."

Survivor speaks during commemoration

By TERRI CHEATWOOD
Staff Writer

It has been almost 45 years since Adolf Hitler and the Nazis opened a hole of death and pushed six million Jews over the edge. Forty-five years many seem a long time to some, but April 3, 250 people were brought together by a Holocaust program sponsored by the Student Government Association, the Center for Southern Studies and the JSU Holocaust Committee, which consists of Phil Attinger of the SGA; Clint Baker, a student; Linda Cain, assistant professor and assistant librarian; Teresa Suco, assistant professor of foreign language; and Steve Whinton, professor of English.

The program started with a welcome by Attinger and then was followed by an invocation by Dan Spector of Temple Beth-El in Anniston. Music was then provided by Samuel Brown and Jerri Davis of the JSU Department of Music. Poems and comments were made by Teresa Carter, Attinger, Matt Brooks, Clint Baker and Susan Methvin, who is also the instructor in the Department of English. There was also a silent slide presentation, which depicted the horrors and hope of the Holocaust.

The highlight of the presentation was the story of Ruth Siegler, a survivor. She described her life in a very frank and human way.

In the late 1930s, her father left Germany for Holland to escape the Nazis. Before he could return, Germany captured Holland. His family joined him at a deportation camp in Holland called Westerbork. They had to register as Jews and wear the Cross of David.

"Every Monday," said Siegler, "the soldiers would round up thousands and put them on the cattle train."

Once people left, they were never heard from again.

In 1944, her brother was assigned to be shipped out. The family decided they wanted to be together so they all went. The family was shipped to Theresienstadt, which was a "model camp" set up by the Nazis to show the Red Cross how well the Jews were being treated.

"People did not get enough to eat," Siegler said. "People just starved to death."

The family was then sent to Auschwitz.

"They herded us into the train like cattle," she said. "There was not much food or water and the air was stale."

When they arrived at the camp, all possessions and then clothes were taken. The group was then herded into the gas chambers.

"I can still feel the cold grains of the floor on my bare feet," she said.

The floor was in reality a trap door that opened and emptied the bodies from the gas chamber.

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**Survivor**

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For some reason Siegler’s party was not gassed. The doors were opened and they taken to a neighboring compound. Here she and her sisters were separated. She said her family was never reunited.

The two sisters were then taken to Birkenau, which was a labor camp.

“We were beaten all the time, or mistreated just to keep us busy,” she said. “If you refused to work they (the Nazis) would take your life.”

As Russian forces advanced against the Nazis, the sisters were forced to march with 800 other prisoners. On the way, hundreds died.

“Out of 800 people only 50 survived,” she said.

As the group was nearing the sea, one of their guards told them to run for their lives. Weak and sick with typhoid, they ran and began searching for a place to stay. Eventually, they came to a house but discovered 20 Nazi soldiers inside. The Nazis left them alone and when they awoke the next morning, they discovered they were alone. A Russian major found them and arranged for them to go to a hospital for treatment.

After the war, Siegler moved to the United States. She now lives in Birmingham.

At the end of Siegler’s speech, Suco presented her with long-stemmed yellow roses.

The program was ended by Rudy Kemp, an Anniston business man. After speaking briefly, he asked the audience by reciting the Kaddish, a prayer of mourning.

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**Survivor**

Two sisters were forced to run with 800 other prisoners. They were later discovered by a Russian major and taken to a hospital.

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**Survivor**

As Russian forces advanced, the sisters were forced to march with 800 other prisoners. On the way, hundreds died. Eventually, they were left alone and a Russian major found them.

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**Survivor**

The two sisters were then taken to Birkenau, a labor camp. They were beaten and mistreated, but eventually they were left alone and discovered by a Russian major.

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**Survivor**

As Russian forces advanced, the sisters were forced to run with 800 other prisoners. They were later discovered by a Russian major.

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**Survivor**

Two sisters were forced to run with 800 other prisoners. They were later discovered by a Russian major. A prayer of mourning was recited.

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**Survivor**

As Russian forces advanced, the sisters were forced to run with 800 other prisoners. They were later discovered by a Russian major.

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