

A Rose and Barbed Wire for a Campus Logo

By Lance Hidy © 2008

Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill, Massachusetts, where I teach graphic design two days a week, offers a theme across the curriculum each semester. The catalyst for the Spring 2008 genocide theme was Jim Murphy's plan to produce "The Diary of Anne Frank". When Judith Kamber, Dean of Professional Development, learned of this, she suggested that a speaker series, "Can Democracy Prevent Genocide?", sponsored by the Diversity Committee through her Office of Faculty and Staff Development, was a way to support the important message of the play.

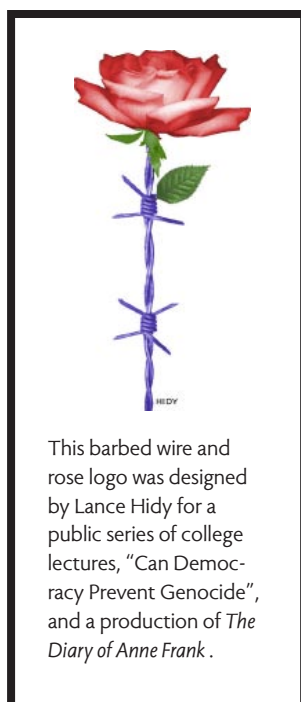
When Judith Kamber's idea of making a logo for the series was seconded by Murphy, I decided to try my hand at it. Being a teacher, I am compelled to explain where the rose and barbed wire idea came from, especially since I can't claim all the credit.

Striving to be a better designer of posters, postage stamps, and trademarks, I have become an avid hunter-gatherer of universal visual symbols. Barbed wire, or "Devil's Rope," is a newcomer to this elite group of symbols. It entered the visual lexicon after World War II as a simple and effective way to represent either genocide, prisoners, or refugees. A familiar example is the Amnesty International logo in which a strand of barbed wire encircles a candle representing the hope of political prisoners.



In 1986 Denmark honored Amnesty International with a postage stamp that used the barbed wire, but replaced the candle with two green leaves sprouting—another universal symbol for hope and renewal.

While many stamps and posters use the barbed wire symbol, two recent stamps that combine barbed wire with flowers caught my eye, poetically expressing both "Never forget," and "Never again."



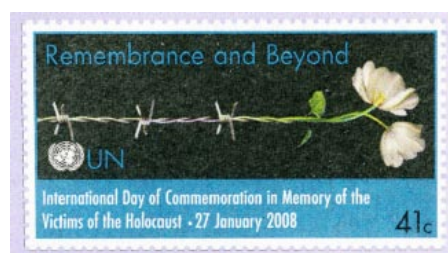
This barbed wire and rose logo was designed by Lance Hidy for a public series of college lectures, "Can Democracy Prevent Genocide", and a production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

A stamp of poppies with barbed wire stems was issued by England in 2006. It commemorated the ninetieth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, 1916, in northern France. With over a million casualties, including 19,240 British soldiers killed, it was among the bloodiest battles in human history.



Then just last week, on January 22, I received an announcement of a series of

flower and barbed wire stamps issued jointly by Israel Post and the United Nations. The announcement said, "In November 2005 the U. N. General Assembly adopted resolution 60/7 designating January 27 as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust." The three U. N. stamps each bear the same slogan in a different language—English, French, and German: *Remembrance and Beyond*; *Du souvenir à l'avenir*; *Gedenken für die Zukunft*.



Normally I would not imitate another designer's idea—but the barbed-wire and flower/leaf symbol has become, like Noah's dove and olive twig, a universal emblem idea that is available for interpretation by any artist. With universal emblem ideas, plagiarism is rarely an issue, unless the symbol has been legally protected as the intellectual property of an artist or corporation. The challenge in using universal symbols is to bring something new to the idea. My variations on the barbed wire and flower theme include the single rose; the barb making the stem of a leaf; and the straight, vertical, purple strand of wire. The possible variations are endless, awaiting new interpretation by other artists.