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VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

**ANNUAL
GENERAL
MEETING**

**EXHIBITION
LAUNCH**

**RENEWED
VHEC
OPENING**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2018 | 7 PM

NORMAN ROTHSTEIN THEATRE

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE OF GREATER VANCOUVER, 950 WEST 41ST AVENUE, VANCOUVER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST CENTRE SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION & REMEMBRANCE

Official AGM Business

Presentation of Kron Sigal Award

Presentation of Life Fellows of the Society

EXHIBITION LAUNCH

FACES OF SURVIVAL

Features portraits of local Holocaust survivor volunteers
by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer **Marissa Roth**.

IN FOCUS: THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH THE VHEC COLLECTION

Showcases artefacts entrusted to the VHEC by Holocaust survivors and their families.

RENEWED VHEC OPENING

The completion of the renewed VHEC enables us to reach more students, to fulfill our obligation to collection donors, and to ensure that artefacts are better integrated into exhibitions and educational programs.

SEATING IS LIMITED. PLEASE RSVP: info@vhc.org | 604.264.0499

Dear Readers,

June 2018 marks an exciting moment for the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's core constituents — our Holocaust survivor community, student and teacher audiences, members, volunteers, community partners, lay leadership and professional team. A very special program celebrating the reopening of our Centre will take place following our upcoming Annual General Meeting, introducing our audiences to the culmination of the Centre's recent facilities renovations, dedicated to advancing our commitment to Holocaust education and remembrance now and into the future.

Informed by best practices in the field, we know that the VHEC's collection of artefacts, documents, photographs and video testimonies will be increasingly important in the years ahead. These materials were entrusted — and continue to be entrusted — to the Centre by local survivors, their families and the community in support of our mandate. Local stories and local materials are of great interest to students and teachers, as highlighted in Lise Kirchner's contribution to this issue.

Visitors to our renewed space can look forward to interacting with the depth and breadth of our collection and its significant potential for teaching the Shoah and its enduring lessons. An inaugural exhibition, *In Focus: The Holocaust Through the VHEC Collection*, offers visitors unparalleled access to highlights of our collection, displayed in bespoke, museum-grade cases that support the preservation and exhibition of our materials. A learning lab of electronic access portals featuring interactive captions will deepen the visitor experience. Audio-visual upgrades to our programming space will allow VHEC Outreach Speakers to interact with students in remote locations, increasing our reach to audiences throughout Metro Vancouver and beyond.

A new research area features the VHEC's new Collections Management System, which will support onsite and online access to our museum collection, archives, testimonies and library; the exciting implications of this system is featured in this issue.

The reopening program will also feature the launch of our new temporary exhibition, *Faces of Survival*, featuring portraits of local Holocaust survivor volunteers by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Marissa Roth. The exhibition will honour and put a human face on those who survived the Shoah and contributed to the community. The VHEC looks forward to welcoming you all to our renewed space, and to hearing your feedback. Thank you to all our members and supporters, who make possible everything that we do.

Finally, I am pleased to share that this issue is jointly edited with my colleagues, Acting Executive Director Rome Fox and newly engaged Assistant Director Jonathan Lerner. As I head on maternity leave, I leave *Zachor* and the Centre in excellent hands, and look forward to reconnecting with everyone upon my return.

Sincerely,



Nina Krieger
VHEC Executive Director

VHEC Renewal Project Complete

BY PAT JOHNSON

Multi-year undertaking includes improved visitor experience, workspaces, original exhibitions, interactive electronics and visible storage.

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre is nearing completion of the most significant physical redevelopment of its space since the Centre opened in 1994.

Aspects of the VHEC's Renewal Project have been underway for several years and will be completed for a June 20, 2018 opening. The completion of the Renewal Project and the opening of the redeveloped space, including two new exhibitions, will coincide with the organization's Annual General Meeting, also slated for June 20.

"The Renewal Project included the renovation of the VHEC space," says Rome Fox, Acting Executive Director of the VHEC. "The public exhibition area, the education room, the archives and collections work area, as well as the library and staff working spaces have all been revamped. While the Centre's footprint has not changed, the space has been utilized more efficiently, making better use of every component of the available area."

In the past, the VHEC's extensive collections of artefacts was stored out of sight from the public. With the incorporation of five new visible storage units, the Centre will be able to display rotating portions of its own collections, as well as travelling exhibitions.

Each 11-foot-long modular cabinet is made from museum quality glass and provides a controlled stable environment for the sensitive artefacts on display. The drawers below can hold archival documents under a glass top or some can be opened to access tactile replicas of artefacts for hands-on learning. Below the public display sections there is additional closed storage to accommodate the growing collection. The display cabinets were designed to meet

conservation standards, and VHEC staff will monitor changes in humidity and light exposure to prevent fading and material decay.

"There is room for rotation," says Ilona Shulman Spaar, Education Director of the VHEC, "original exhibitions can be accommodated, as can visiting exhibitions that may come to us. Another function of these units is to divide the public space and the workspace behind it. There will be strategic sightlines through which visitors can see part of the workspace, where archives and collections staff work on digitization and other projects."

Accompanying the opening of the renewed Centre will be two new original exhibitions.

The first exhibition is called *In Focus: The Holocaust through the VHEC Collection*.

"This is the first time that we have been able to display the pieces of the collection to this extent," says Shulman Spaar. "The pieces that are selected are 'in focus' in the sense that we look closer at them and the themes that they speak to within the study of the Holocaust. Simultaneously, when looking at the displayed items, we look at the VHEC collection as if looking through a focal point."

Some of the themes determined by the nature of the VHEC's collections are Pre-War Jewish Life, Propaganda, as well as Identity and Belonging. Three interactive electronic access portals, as well as a bank of computer tablets, will allow students and other visitors to engage digitally via touch screen with some of the artefacts and archival items displayed in the *In Focus* exhibition. This



The Renewal Project includes an improved visitor experience with interactive electronics and modular visible storage. Courtesy Illene Yu.

feature gives visitors the opportunity to find out more about a specific item by engaging with associated visual or textual materials, a related survivor testimony excerpt, or donor of the item to find out more about the circumstances surrounding their Holocaust experience and other details. The digital platform makes the experience of seeing the artefact more fulsome and educational.

“For instance,” says Shulman Spaar, “Rebecca Teitelbaum’s recipe book, which she compiled at great risk in Ravensbrück concentration camp for women, is an artefact that visitors can see. They can then use the portals to learn more about Rebecca and her experience by engaging with a video-recorded survivor testimony excerpt by child survivor Alex Buckman, Rebecca’s nephew.”

The electronic components of the Renewal Project are enhanced by an enormous multi-year project that initiated the VHEC’s collections digitization project. These vital enhancements were made possible through grants from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which funded the digitization of video-recorded Holocaust testimonies, and from the estate of Edwina and Paul Heller, which funded digitization of artefacts and archival holdings. Access

to the collection catalogue is, in turn, made possible and significantly enriched by the creation of a custom, online Collections Management System. (For more on this component of the Renewal Project, see story, page 11.)

Also, in keeping with the connection between the broader history of the Shoah and the local community, a portrait project will form the second new exhibition, called *Faces of Survival: Photographs by Marissa Roth*.

“Marissa Roth is a Pulitzer award-winning photographer who did work for the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles and other renowned institutions,” says Shulman Spaar. “Over several months, Roth met survivor volunteers, and also descendants of survivor volunteers who have passed, and she took portraits of them.”

The exhibition includes 40 portraits in all, each with a brief narrative accompanying it.

“After the photo sessions with Marissa Roth, survivors and family members of deceased survivors were asked two questions,” says Shulman Spaar. “One question was, why do you think it is important to remember the Holocaust? The



LEFT: Andreas Schlichting consulting with exhibition curator Ilona Shulman Spaar on artefacts to be displayed. RIGHT: Carl Schlichting mounting an archival document in a visible storage drawer. Courtesy Ilene Yu.

other question was, what message do you want to convey to students? From their answers, quotes have been chosen as captions for the portraits.”

Visitors will see interconnections between the portraits of the survivors and posthumous portraits and the artefacts that are exhibited, because many of the items in the VHEC’s collections were donated by survivors.

An important objective of the Renewal Project has been to enhance the levels through which students and other visitors can interact with the information, including visual, textual, tactile and through deeper research using technologies to explore at an individual’s own pace and following their specific interests.

Although the Renewal Project involved consultation with students and teachers, and a strategic plan with architect Brian Wakelin of Public: Architecture + Communication, VHEC professional staff do not consider the project finite.

“It’s an experiment, a pilot project,” says Shulman Spaar. “We have always sought feedback from visitors, but it has been difficult because, for example, school groups have limited schedules. Now, we are integrating an interactive guest book, which allows students and others to type their comments and suggestions on a keyboard, see their

remarks displayed on the wall in real-time, and gives us the ability to review feedback to determine what people benefit from and what we could improve.”

Also more visible is the donor wall, which was easy to walk past near the Centre’s entrance. “The donor wall recognizes the people who supported the VHEC when it opened in 1994,” says Fox. “It provides a significant history of the many local survivors who came to Vancouver and wanted to leave a legacy in memory of those who perished and to educate successive generations.”

The revitalized Education Room, now features technology that will allow survivors and other educators to speak remotely to students throughout the province. The space is also multi-functional, accommodating workshops, classes of students, child survivor meetings, board meetings and other VHEC group activities.

“Multi-functionality was crucial to the Renewal Project,” says Fox. “So was the introduction of much needed storage, work stations and a reconfigured library and research area that simply better utilized existing space.”

Every component of the Renewal Project was designed to be modular and transportable. With the planned

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

New VHEC Exhibition: *Faces of Survival – Photographs by Marissa Roth*

BY ILONA SHULMAN SPAAR

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre is proud to re-open its recently renovated exhibition space with the new exhibition *Faces of Survival*, a commissioned series of portraits of Holocaust survivors by Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Marissa Roth.

While the Centre has undergone renovations over several months, survivors and families of survivors who have passed, met with American photographer Marissa Roth to have their photographs taken. It was important to both the artist and curatorial team that survivors who have passed away also be included.

The result is stunning: the forty portraits depict the survivors — VHEC’s founding members, Outreach Speakers, Board Members and volunteers — both past and present – in a unique and powerful way. The close-up portraits, in particular the eyes of the faces of the survivors, tell us about pain, loss and suffering. They also express kindness, hope, resilience and the victory of the human spirit.

Following the portrait sessions, the survivors and descendants were asked two questions: “What message do you want to convey to students?” and “Why is it important to remember the Holocaust?” Based on the answers to these questions, quotes were selected by the curatorial team to accompany the portraits. The diversity of the messages from the survivors and descendants is impressive: they remind us to commemorate and honour the ones who perished, to not forget those who rescued them, and to not remain silent but to take actions against any kind of discrimination and persecution. They also prompt us to regard education as a key for preventing racism and antisemitism, to never take democracy and



Marissa Roth during a photo session with Holocaust survivor Evelyn Kahn.
Courtesy Illene Yu.

human rights for granted, or simply, to tell our families that we love them.

Faces of Survival is a documentation project that coincides with a time of transition, for the VHEC and its survivor volunteer community and for Holocaust education in general. The survivors featured in the exhibition are among the last remaining eyewitnesses of the Holocaust. As they share their experiences and reflections with students and the general public, the survivors serve as a



The exhibition *Faces of Survival* includes posthumous portraits of survivors with their descendants. Jocy Lowy with Richard K. Lowy, family members of Holocaust survivor Leo Lowy z'l. Courtesy Illene Yu.

bridge to places and times in the past, and offer insights with tremendous relevance for the present day.

For many Canadian students, the Holocaust seems to be a distance occurrence, an event that happened more than seventy years ago and took place in European countries, some of which they have never heard of. How then do we bring an event that so fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization closer to students? One way to teach about the Holocaust is through personal stories, and in the case of this exhibition, through personal stories of survival. This project puts a human face on history and those who survived the Shoah. Some of them survived ghettos, labour camps, concentration camps, and death marches. Others survived by hiding or were saved by diplomats. As students encounter the portraits, they are standing face to face with a survivor, looking directly into their eyes, and into their hearts. They feel and see history and vulnerability and the fierce will of the depicted person not only to survive, but to thrive after witnessing unimaginable atrocities. Students

also gain an understanding of what it meant for the survivors to come to Canada, learn a new language, a different culture and to begin fresh lives. By encountering the posthumous portraits that include the survivor's children and grandchildren, students learn about intergenerational links and that the Jewish people have continued and thrived.

The exhibition shares its space with another new VHEC exhibition *In Focus: The Holocaust through the VHEC Collection* featuring more than eighty artefacts from the Centre's collection. Many of the artefacts and documents are directly linked to the stories of the survivors depicted in *Faces of Survival*. By entering the new VHEC space and engaging with both exhibitions, students, educators, and the general public are given the opportunity to interact with stories of the Holocaust on diverse levels with multiple entry points.

Initial conversations between the VHEC and the photographer Marissa Roth about a possible undertaking



LEFT: Portrait session with Holocaust survivor Danny Wollner. RIGHT: Rita Akselrod, portrait session. Courtesy Illene Yu.

of this portrait project started five years ago. Both the Centre and the photographer shared the common understanding that memory and time are crucial in teaching about the Holocaust, and for drawing meaningful connections to the past while inspiring understanding for now and the future.

Roth expressed that it has been a pleasure meeting and photographing the Vancouver survivors, and that she felt an unexpected personal connection with a number of them because of their Hungarian background, as she is the daughter of a Hungarian survivor of the Holocaust.

Survivors shared with the curatorial team that they were impressed by the high level of professionalism that they encountered during their portrait sessions with Roth. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Marissa Roth is an internationally published freelance photojournalist and documentary photographer. Her assignments for prestigious publications including The New York Times, have taken her around the world. Her work has been

exhibited in solo and group exhibitions, and a number of her images are in museum, corporate, and private collections. *One Person Crying: Women and War*, Roth's thirty-one-year personal photo essay that addresses the immediate and lingering impact of war on women in different countries and cultures around the world, is currently an international travelling exhibition, with a forthcoming book. A commissioned portrait project by The Museum of Tolerance/ Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, to photograph the Holocaust survivors who volunteer there, *Witness to Truth*, is on permanent exhibition at the museum.

Elie Wiesel once famously said: "Honoring our survivors symbolizes our victory over forgetfulness." *Faces of Survival — Photographs by Marissa Roth*, is born out of respect for the unimaginable hardships that the Holocaust survivors experienced, and out of hope for a more peaceful and tolerant world. ■

Dr. Ilona Shulman Spaar is the Education Director at the VHEC and co-curator of the exhibition Faces of Survival – Photographs by Marissa Roth.

Discovering a Lifeline for Teaching About Genocide

BY JASMINE WONG

During my first years as a Canadian teacher working in the United States, a chance encounter with someone from *Facing History and Ourselves*, an international educational nonprofit, breathed life into my long hours, grounded my teaching with a whole new approach, and opened up exciting ways to inspire my students. It started with the way I taught the classic American novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and seeped into how I thought about engaging students in identity, civil society, difference, and the study of genocide and mass violence.

Jimmy Jones, a senior program associate in the organization's Boston office, knocked on my classroom door one night after visiting with a colleague of mine. He saw my light was still on, long past when it should have been. He thought he'd introduce himself and see what was keeping a teacher at her desk so late.

Being Canadian, I had found myself with a copy of Harper Lee's classic, a diverse group of middle schoolers to teach, and a lack of context about the nuances of race in America. I didn't know the history or how to approach the novel, I told Jimmy. The next morning, I found a plethora of *Facing History* resources on my desk (It was like I had a visit from a teaching angel!) and a friend and mentor in Jimmy in the years ahead. These were the missing pieces I needed to connect the dots and address the complicated themes in the book with my students.

Yet, beyond just *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Facing History* provided me with an entirely new approach to engaging my students' minds and hearts; one that can be used with even the most difficult of histories like the Holocaust. I now had a whole new framework for

understanding how my students can absorb information and a whole new confidence in myself as a teacher. And confidence is important in this profession. When it comes to genocide and teaching middle and high school students, we are asking young minds to wrap their heads around unthinkable acts of violence perpetrated against others for something as arbitrary as their religion, race, or ethnicity. We can't teach such heavy topics if we're feeling uncertain ourselves or if we don't have the extra support we need to gain that confidence. *Facing History's* mission — to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry — sparked that in me.

Which is why after years in the classroom, I joined the organization as the senior program associate in our Toronto office. For the past eight years I've had the privilege of leading seminars and workshops that equip teachers with the skills, tools, and resources they need to tackle difficult topics with their students. This summer, I'm honored to be leading our three-day seminar, *Foundations for Genocide Studies: Holocaust and Human Behaviour*, from July 10-12.

We're excited to partner with the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, which has graciously provided us space, a docented tour of their exhibitions and arranged an evening of learning with scholar and professor, Dr. Roger Frie, whose new book, *Not in my Family*, explores German memory and responsibility after the Holocaust.

At the core of this seminar is learning a framework for teaching genocide that can be applied to any difficult history. Our approach, known as our "Scope



Participants gather at one of the *Facing History and Ourselves* seminars. Courtesy Nick Kozak.

and Sequence,” takes big moments in the past, like the Holocaust, and breaks it down into individual choices to help young people understand that history was not inevitable. It did not just happen. People have agency in the choices they make and so do our students: they can create positive change that leads to a more compassionate world free of hatred and bigotry.

And this is an incredible notion for them to grasp, especially today when we’re seeing such polarizing rhetoric, an increase in hate crimes, and a rise in populism. Our young people are watching us as they strive to understand the world around them: how we respond to each other and how we treat each other. That’s why questions of how to best build and maintain democratic societies that are pluralistic, open, and resilient to violence are more relevant than ever. Studying the history of a genocide allows students to wrestle with profound moral

questions and fosters their skills in ethical reasoning, critical thinking, empathy, and civic engagement — all of which are critical for sustaining democracy.

This can seem like a daunting task for educators. How do you break down such violence? How do you address the scale of destruction that the Holocaust created? How do you acknowledge how it shaped the current world we live in today? That’s where this seminar comes in. And it provides educators the chance to discover additional resources that look beyond the Holocaust, such as the development of the term “genocide,” how to apply this approach to other histories like Canada’s Indian Residential School System, and responses to contemporary instances of genocide and mass violence.

Perhaps even more importantly, after the seminar, teachers have the chance to develop formative

partnerships with our program associates at Facing History. This is someone they can reach out to for planning, to ask questions, or even just to be a sounding board for ideas and strategies they have in mind. The learning doesn't end after only a few days of professional development.

That was one of my biggest lessons all those years ago when I met Jimmy Jones during that rocky start with *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I didn't know what I didn't know until there was someone — a lifeline — to help me navigate an unfamiliar terrain.

Genocide is one of those unfamiliar terrains for most of us, especially as the generations between those who survived the Holocaust and their families widen with time. That's why we're grateful to partner with VHEC for this seminar. We hope educators will join us and see the genuine strength they have when we all come together as each other's lifelines to learn and grow because that is a powerful confidence to take back into the classroom. ■

Jasmine Wong is a Senior Program Associate for Facing History and Ourselves' Canada Office. She received her Bachelor of Education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto and an MA at Stanford University's School of Education.

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

THREE-DAY SUMMER SEMINAR FOR TEACHERS

Foundations for Genocide Studies: Holocaust and Human Behaviour

JULY 10TH - 12TH, 2018 | 9 AM - 5 PM

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THREE-DAY SEMINAR FEE: \$350.00* | REGISTRATION FEE: \$50.00
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Presented by the VHEC in partnership with Facing History and Ourselves.

VHEC RENEWAL PROJECT COMPLETE, FROM PAGE 4

redevelopment of the Jewish Community Centre, in which the VHEC is located, the purpose of the Renewal Project was to upgrade the Centre to maximize its functionality for the next several years, while ensuring that the upgrades would be able to be relocated when a new, purpose-built Centre is completed, at some point in the future.

"Because of The Renewal Project, the VHEC will be more effective and accessible, both to visitors inside the walls of the Centre and, online, to researchers, students and others worldwide, through access to our digitized collections," says Fox. "This is such an important project, which will keep the VHEC at the forefront of educating about the Holocaust, human rights and social justice for years to come. To all who have been involved in this ambitious project and those whose financial support for the VHEC allows us to continue our work with greater impact and relevance, we want to express our deep and heartfelt gratitude". ■

Pat Johnson is a consulting writer with the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre gratefully acknowledges the following support for the Renewal Project:



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**Recognition opportunities are still available for those
interested in supporting the Renewal Project.
For more information, please contact the VHEC at 604.264.0499.**

Holocaust Centre CMS Creates Global Access to Collections, Supports B.C. Curriculum

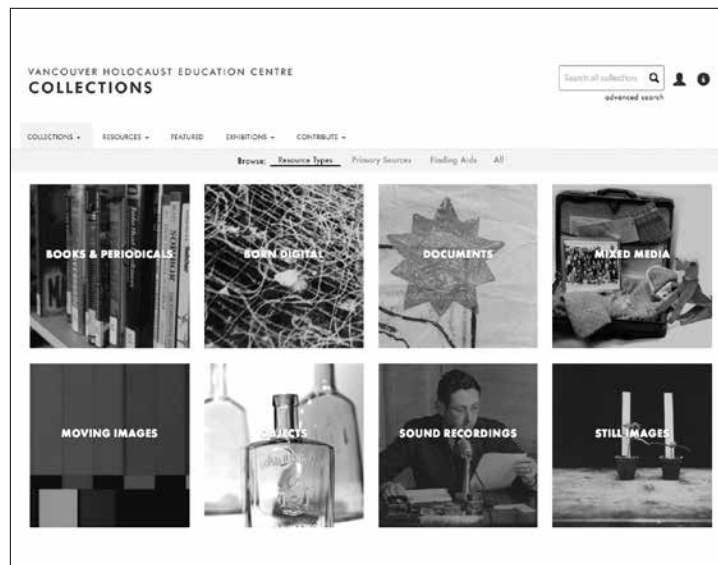
BY PAT JOHNSON

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has developed a Collections Management System (CMS) that integrates all the components of the Centre's diverse holdings into an online platform featuring educational resources aligned with the B.C. secondary curriculum to support teaching with primary source materials.

Part of a larger physical redevelopment of the Centre, the CMS allows visitors to the VHEC and online users to explore the holdings in a way that eliminates divisions between the museum, archives, library and audio-visual testimony collections.

"When you search for a keyword term, it will return records from each collection," said Caitlin Donaldson, the VHEC's Registrar, who was on the project team that coordinated the development of the system. "We worked collaboratively to design the metadata so that catalogue records are fulsome and so that users will get really rich relationships between items." Their user-centered design approach prioritized the needs of the Centre's educational mandate and community.

"It's very unique," she said. "A lot of other, larger institutions have specific systems for each of those departments and then another software layer that makes them all talk together and also produces a front-end website for the public. The VHEC's system does all of that. It also has some administrative modules and features so that we can track conservation, storage location, loans, accessions and donations, so it's a really powerful tool for us as a non-profit organization with a small staff."











Browse the VHEC Collections catalogue across multiple resource types and genre.



The VHEC Collections comprises four departments: Archives, Library, Museum and Holocaust Testimony.

COLLECTIONS

 <p>Wallet 19th century</p>	 <p>Stone fragment from Jewish cemetery circa 19th century</p>	 <p>Jump rope early 20th century</p>	 <p>[Photograph of Bick family] [between 1900 and 1914] Bick family</p>	<p>FILTER BY</p> <p>COLLECTION TYPE</p> <p>RESOURCE TYPE Books & Periodicals Objects Still Images</p> <p>SUBJECT</p> <p>GENRE</p> <p>PEOPLE & ORGANIZATIONS</p> <p>LANGUAGE English German Hebrew Polish Russian Yiddish</p> <p>PLACE</p>
 <p>[Photograph of Bick family posing in garden] [between 1900 and 1914] Bick family</p>	 <p>1/8 litre measuring cup late 19th to early 20th century</p>	 <p>1/32 litre measuring cup late 19th to early 20th century</p>	 <p>[Photograph of two men and dog in front of S. Bick store] [after 1907] Bick family</p>	

Search results can be filtered by categories shared by each collection metadata schema.

A researcher, student or visitor to the VHEC can view the video testimony of a survivor, then easily see all the Centre's holdings that relate to the individual, such as books written by or about them, documents or artefacts donated by them and broader information about their place of birth, their Holocaust experiences and the camps, ghettos or other places they survived.

The VHEC is committed to assisting teachers to use primary sources effectively in the classroom to teach about the Holocaust and social justice broadly. The VHEC has created worksheets to guide students through searching the CMS and analyzing artefacts. *Lightbox* is a tool within the CMS through which users can create, manage and share collections of items from the catalogue. Students can use this digital workspace to collaborate on projects and further independent research.

The CMS was developed using *Collective Access*, an open-source collections management and presentation software created by Whirl-i-Gig, which provided development services for the VHEC. *Collective Access* is

used locally by the Vancouver Maritime Museum and the newly opened Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre at the University of British Columbia.

"The open source software allowed us to benefit from the collected knowledge of other institutions and to also contribute back to that base of knowledge through the development of some modules that were created just for our needs," said Nina Krieger, executive director of the VHEC. "This Collections Management System allows us, our visitors, researchers, students and anyone in the world unprecedented access to our collections, with the opportunity to contextualize artefacts and information in ways that were not remotely possible when the Centre was created two decades ago."

The development of the online catalogue and CMS was made possible through a generous donation by Dr. Irene Bettinger on behalf of the estate of her parents, Paul and Edwina Heller. ■

Explore the VHEC Collections online at collections.vhec.org.

A version of the same article will be published in *Roundup*, Spring 2018, issue 272 by the BCMA.

Museum in the Classroom: Teaching with Primary Sources in the VHEC's Online Collection

BY LISE KIRCHNER

The VHEC's newly-launched Collections website offers educators a unique and leading-edge resource to bring digital artefacts into their classrooms, connecting a new generation of students with the experiences of local Holocaust survivors.



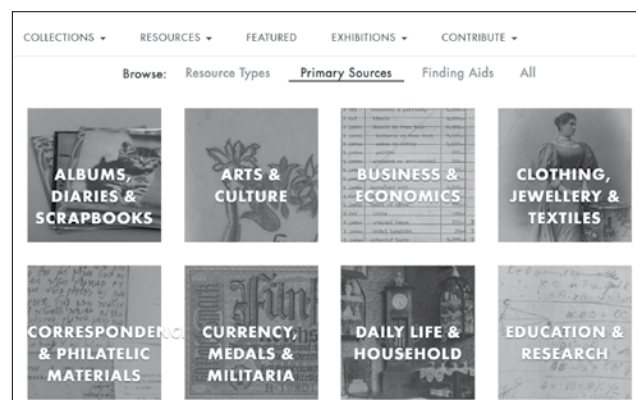
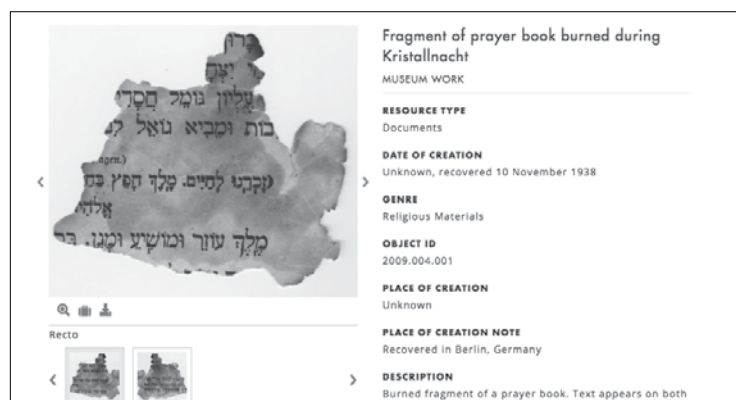
Explore interactive timelines to see relationships between items and place them in historical context.

As a docent at the VHEC, I have led hundreds of school groups through the Centre's exhibitions and workshops. One of the most effective teaching tools I have encountered has been the use of primary sources — artefacts, archival records and eyewitness testimonies from the VHEC's Collection — to actively engage students with the history of the Holocaust.

Through the generosity of local survivors, families and community members, the Centre has been entrusted with a wide-ranging collection of original materials created during the Holocaust and the pre- and post-war eras. The Collection includes correspondence, diaries,

identity documents, photographs, propaganda materials, artwork, clothing, currency, religious items, family heirlooms and everyday objects from this tragic period of history. These sources of historical evidence are known as "primary sources" as they provide first-hand evidence of experiences, events and conditions during the Holocaust.

In recent years, primary sources from the Collection have been incorporated into VHEC exhibitions (for example, *In Defiance*, *Enemy Aliens*, *Out of the Archives* and *Carl Lutz and the Legendary Glass House in Budapest*). The latest VHEC exhibition *In Focus: The Holocaust*



LEFT: Museum work catalogue record describing the object with digital scans and photographs. RIGHT: Students can easily search and browse for primary sources.

through the VHEC Collection includes more than eighty primary sources for students to engage with. The use of original artefacts brought themes in these exhibitions to life for students in a tangible way. Examining artefacts aroused their natural curiosity, motivating them to ask questions, apply information they had learned from other sources and draw inferences in an attempt to understand the Holocaust stories revealed by the artefacts. The artefacts often personalized Holocaust history, eliciting empathy in the students as they made connections between the artefacts, themes in history and the experiences of local survivors. The response of students and teachers to these opportunities to work with the VHEC's primary sources was overwhelmingly positive.

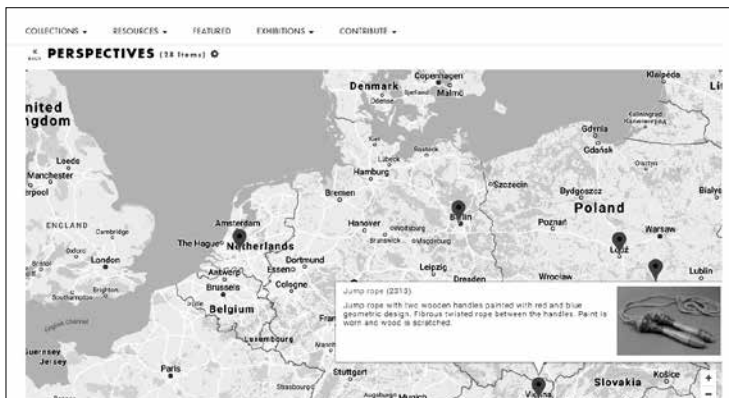
This success was an inspiration in bringing the Collection into the digital world. As part of a large-scale collections strategy made possible by the vision and generosity of Dr. Irene Bettinger on behalf of her parents, Paul and Edwina Heller, the Centre's Collection is being digitized, catalogued and made broadly accessible online through the VHEC's new Collections website. The website was customized by the Centre's staff incorporating digital tools and pedagogical resources to maximize opportunities for students to work with primary sources.

The launch of the Collections website is timely, as it coincides with the implementation of the new B.C.

curriculum. Analysis of primary sources has been included as a key competency at every level of the social studies curriculum from grade 4 to grade 12. During these years, students are expected to: identify and analyse primary sources; draw conclusions and corroborate inferences using primary sources; assess credibility and reliability of primary sources; and evaluate perspective, bias, motive and audience of primary sources of historical evidence.

The Collections website has been designed to support educators in achieving these curricular objectives. The teaching materials and interactive digital tools of the website allow teachers to seamlessly integrate the VHEC's primary sources into their classroom activities. Some of these features include:

- DETAILED CATALOGUE RECORDS**
 Over 1000 primary source items are described individually in detailed catalogue records allowing students to independently investigate the creation, appearance, use and history of any item in the Collection and discover how the artefact relates to a unique Holocaust story.
- HIGH-RESOLUTION DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS**
 The catalogue records include high-resolution digital scans and photographs of each artefact from numerous angles. In the traditional museum setting, artefacts must be viewed behind glass in the low light conditions



LEFT: Artefacts can be viewed on an interactive world map according to place of origin. RIGHT: Shared digital workspace where students can annotate and comment.

necessary for their preservation. With the Collections website, students can use the online tools to magnify artefacts and see details not visible to the naked eye.

- **WORKSHEETS FOR ANALYSING PRIMARY SOURCES**

The VHEC has created printable online worksheets to guide students as they work with primary sources. Using the worksheets in conjunction with the website's catalogue records and high resolution digital photographs, students learn how to analyse primary sources and place them in historical context. The worksheets prompt students to compare various sources of evidence, consider diverse perspectives, assess reliability and make inferences to deepen their understanding of Holocaust history.

- **LINKING RELATED ITEMS IN THE COLLECTION**

Items in the online Collection are linked to one another by subject matter, place, historic event, people and organizations. Search results can also be filtered using multiple criteria. By exploring these links and filters, students can compare how different sources of historic evidence speak to common themes, events, people or places. The links also allow students to pursue their own inquiry and seek more information about topics of interest to them.

- **LIGHTBOX**

Lightbox is a digital tool that allows users to create and share a customized collection of items they have

selected from the website. Lightboxes can be used to give class assignments, make presentations or facilitate group projects.

- **WEB-BASED SLIDESHOWS**

Lightbox collections can be displayed in the classroom as a slideshow directly from the Collections website to accompany a lesson plan or class presentation.

- **INTERACTIVE TIMELINES**

Items in a Lightbox can be viewed on an interactive timeline based on each item's creation date. Navigating through the timeline allows students to see the chronological relationship between artefacts and place them in historical context.

- **GLOBAL MAPPING**

Artefacts can also be viewed on an interactive world map according to their place of origin. By locating artefacts on the map, students can trace a survivor's Holocaust story across the globe, see the geographic relationship between artefacts, and visualize the far-reaching impact of the Holocaust and its aftermath.

- **SHARED DIGITAL WORKSPACE**

Lightbox serves as a shared digital workspace in the classroom where users may leave comments or questions for response by others. In this way, teachers can create class assignments by annotating a Lightbox

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

On Meeting a Holocaust Survivor

BY MARC PEREZ



David Ehrlich shares his story with *Writing Lives* student Marc Perez. Courtesy Marc Perez.

Before participating in the *Writing Lives: The Holocaust Survivor Memoir Project*, I read books — fiction and non-fiction — about the Holocaust, including works by W.G. Sebald, Viktor Frankl, and Primo Levi, whose stories and insights made a lasting impression on me. Then, I spent a whole semester studying historical facts and literary truths of the Holocaust as a part of the program. Despite all the preparations, however, the task of assisting a Holocaust survivor write his memoir remained daunting.

In one of his lectures, Gene Homel, our history professor, said that to study the Holocaust meant that we must stare into the abyss to get beyond it. Collaborating with David, my survivor partner, demanded such a feat. He lived in the abyss and, with his insurmountable courage, survived to tell the world what he had witnessed.

Perhaps because of my experience as a caseworker at a homeless shelter, Dr. Rachel Mines, our English instructor, assigned me as the main interviewer in our

group. Hence, I took on the task of making the initial contact with David. I searched all over the campus for a quiet spot and found a vacant Science room in A Building. I closed the door behind me. I spread my laptop and agenda on the long table, rehearsed the questions I had prepared, and then dialed David's number.

I stuttered through my introduction.

"I've been expecting your call," David said. His accent was crisp and mellow.

He requested for me to speak a bit slower and louder. With our calendars handy, we set up the date and time for the interview. As for the place, he said he was taking care of his wife, Grace, and their caregiver was on leave, so to stay close to his beloved, he invited our group to his home for the interview.

He then told me that he wanted to organize the sessions into three sections—from childhood to the round-up and ghetto; then from Auschwitz to liberation; finally, from liberation to current life. It was a relief as I had suggested the same structure to my group.

He also inquired about the members of my team. He wanted to know their complete names with their correct spelling. Patiently, he listened as I uttered each letter, and I imagined him at the other end of the line, pen and paper in hand, writing them down. Recalling how the Nazis deprived the prisoners in Auschwitz of their names and tattooed them with numbers, I suddenly felt embarrassed for not knowing the last names of my groupmates.

Before we ended the conversation, I asked him which flavor of cupcake he liked because Yukiko would love to bake some for him. "I'd like to have a good one," he said, laughing. "Don't forget to make six, one for each of us."

Following the guidelines provided by Dr. Mines, I called David again two days before the appointment to confirm it. "It's already written in stone," David said. Then for about half an hour, he gave me a general rundown of Jewish history. With the erudition of a seasoned orator, he talked about Moses and the exodus out of Egypt, the Torah and Jewish holidays, liberal and Orthodox Judaism, religious tolerance and miscegenation, and the origins of the Yiddish language. From time to time, he drifted off to lambaste Donald Trump. Before saying goodbye, he encouraged me to pursue my writing endeavors and advance my education.

The day of the interview came. My group met at a shop near a train station. We had agreed on a semi-formal dress code, and my groupmates looked beautiful in their attire. It was the first time they saw me without a hat. We took a bus, and when we got off, Yukiko, balancing the GPS and cupcakes in her hands, guided us to David's house. We arrived thirty minutes early.

We debated whether we should wait or not, and fifteen minutes went by. I located David in the directory and dialed his number. A woman with a sweet voice answered. Grace said her husband had gone down to the entrance of the apartment building to pick us up.

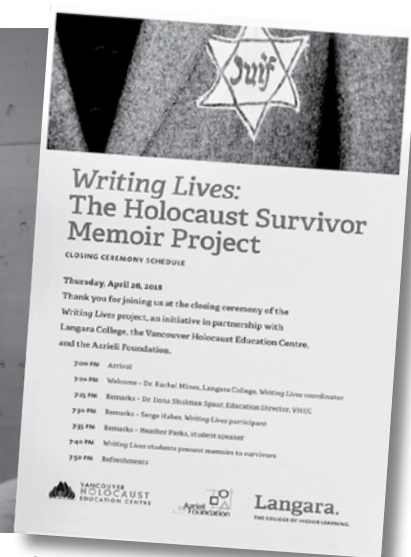
The elevator door parted, and a man with thin, white hair approached us. He wore a blue sweatshirt. David welcomed us in with a smile and led us to the suite he shared with Grace. His home was extremely organized, and the carpet looked fresh. So it was a surprise when he told us that we did not have to take off our shoes. "They're already clean," he said, smiling, "because you walked a few blocks from the station."



David Ehrlich and Marc Perez with fellow student Yukiko Takahashi-Lai at the *Writing Lives* closing ceremony. Courtesy Jennifer Oehler.

Grace helped us with our winter jackets, and she hung them in the closet. We followed David to the spacious living room. Light streamed through the wide window. Framed pictures lined the walls and shelves; clearly, David valued photographs. The low coffee table had bowls of popcorn and cheese puffs. Grace offered us coffee or tea, and we declined politely. Our group settled on the comfortable couch, and David sat on a single wooden chair across from us. Grace began to read a book by the wide window.

Hardly a few minutes into the small talk, David started telling us about his grandfather and his large extended family. I had to interrupt, because I had not turned on the recorder. Making sure the device functioned properly, I placed it on the table. David expertly directed the conversation, wasting no time. With the dexterity of a woodworker, he joined images and scenes to create an intimate narrative. Generously, he shared precious memories from his childhood. He was a compelling storyteller. He mesmerized me with his lucid memory and ironic humor. He reminded me of the novelist, Saul Bellow. Even his digressions fascinated



Holocaust survivors Rita Akselrod, David Ehrlich and Louise Sorensen at the *Writing Lives* ceremony. Courtesy Jennifer Oehler.

me, and often, I missed opportunities to interject to get us back on track. He spoke with such urgency that it felt like his stories had happened very recently.

Time flew by quickly, and Yukiko nudged me for a break.

The couple took us to the dining area, and we all sat around the table. Grace had baked a loaf of honey bread, which she placed on the table with Yukiko's chocolate cupcakes. They were delicious to say the least. Again, David offered us tea, and this time, I opted for a cup.

Grace held the microphone, so to speak. She shared memories of her hometown in Saskatchewan and some family anecdotes. Then they told us about their caregiver, Rubina, who was currently in the Philippines to take care of her son suffering from dengue fever. I could not help but admire the honest concern they had for this woman and her son. Though not blood related, they spoke as though she was a part of their family. As a Filipino immigrant, I had heard numerous stories of Filipina caregivers who survived abusive employers.

The couple's compassion deeply moved me.

As David washed the dishes, wiping them dry before returning them to Yukiko, Grace noticed that we had

already finished the honey bread. She requested for more slices from her husband. "This is not a ration, David," she joked.

We listened to David and Grace talk about a diverse range of topics until we realized that two hours had already gone by since our arrival. We had to leave. We expressed our deep gratitude. As we gathered ourselves, David and Grace showed us to a room with some more old photographs displayed on the wall. David then shared that on different occasions during the Holocaust, someone had stolen pictures of him and his family.

Finally, we said our farewell. By then, the pressure of anxiety and self-doubt that had haunted me had vanished from my chest. Learning from someone as knowledgeable, kind, and emphatic as David proved to be a humbling and inspiring experience.

David closed the door behind us. The sky had already darkened, and the wind was frigid. I zipped up my jacket. I pulled the recorder from my pocket and checked the timer. We had secured a solid hour of interview. This was only the beginning. In a few days, David would give us a glimpse of the abyss called Auschwitz. ■

Marc Perez is a Langara Student whose creative nonfiction and prose fiction appear in Ricepaper Magazine and PRISM international 56.3.

The Annual Conference of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants

BY DR. ROB KRELL

November 5 – 8, 2017. Mount Scopus, Jerusalem, Israel.

For almost forty years after the war ended in 1945, child Holocaust survivors did not identify themselves as survivors. Jewish children were discouraged from talking of their experiences. Adults assumed they were too young to have memories, and children were told they were lucky not to remember. Their suffering went unrecognized.

Well-meaning adults urged children to forget whatever memories they possessed in order to get on with their lives. But that is not how it works. Trauma experienced in early childhood is not forgotten. Memories remain and they return.

In the early 1980's, a few of us became aware of various consequences from that earlier life, aware of Holocaust trauma. Throughout the 80's awareness grew and child Holocaust survivors began to speak with each other and to speak out. This led to a gathering in New York in 1991 attended by 1600 persons, the majority of whom had been hidden during the war as well as children who had fled on *kindertransports* and some who had survived concentration camps. It was a breakthrough of great significance and spawned the publication of three books on child survivor experiences. The workshops led to greater self-awareness amongst the participants. For most, it was a healing moment.

Amongst the plenary speakers were Abe Foxman (himself a child survivor from Poland), Sarah Moskovitz, Judith Kestenberg, and myself. Elie Wiesel was the closing speaker. Annual gatherings followed in such places as Los Angeles, Houston, Cleveland, Toronto, Montreal,

Prague, Warsaw, Amsterdam, Jerusalem, and Berlin. This year we were back in Jerusalem for the third time.

Historically, it was a special year. Just prior to the conference, I celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Balfour declaration on November 2nd by walking throughout the city all day, eventually ending up at the Kotel.

I was surprised how little notice was taken of this momentous date in Israel, or so it seemed. Prime Minister Netanyahu was in fact in Great Britain to mark the occasion. As luck would have it, there was a family wedding of my late cousin Milly's grandson prior to the gathering. My mother's three first cousins who were in pre-war Holland, were all newlyweds and there



Dr. Alfred Garwood, Elisheva Van Der Hal, and Dr. Rob Krell, lighting the memorial candles during the closing ceremony at the conference in Jerusalem.

were four children. Only one cousin, his wife and child survived. That child was Milly and she and I grew up together in postwar Holland.

She eventually married, had four children who all made *aliyah*, and there are now 11 grandchildren. I met them all at the pre-wedding celebrations on Shabbat. The gathering opened on Sunday, November 5 with dinner and opening remarks. It is an evening marked by many reunions of friends and family.

Monday morning's keynote address was delivered by Professor Yehudah Bauer, age 92, Israel's leading Holocaust historian. He held the audience of 400-500 attendees, spellbound. It was a brilliant talk. As I recall, he said, "There is an unconscious phenomenon that considers the Holocaust as something exceptional." "But," he went on, "It was not the perpetrators, or the numbers, or the cruelty. The Chinese have suffered greater losses. And one cannot really compare degrees of suffering among genocides, whether death comes from bullets, knives, gas or typhus." Although therefore not exceptional, he did regard the Holocaust as unique in that for the first time in history this was an "ideological genocide" for the Jews possessed no army to defeat, no country to occupy, nor did they have political representation in Germany. The ideology was antisemitism, which is hatred of Jews and which was invented by an antisemite in order to hate the Jews. For the first time the intention was to kill every Jew in the world.

Bauer discussed Jews as a cultural/ethnic group because Jews themselves are not biologically established given there are white, brown and black Jews. But Nazis wanted to destroy the symbols of democracy and freedom, the prophets of the Jews. And that is why, Professor Bauer asserted, the world has become interested and that in turn accounts for the fact there are now more Christian scholars of the Holocaust than Jewish scholars.

Following the opening lecture, conference participants dispersed to various workshops. Here are some titles:

For survivors only: "How are the experiences during the Holocaust still affecting my life today?"; "Facing the future-with new circumstances ahead-needing to accept change-how am I coping?" For second generation: "How has growing up in survivor families affected us?" And for second and third generation: "Dealing with aging and loss in our survivor families" and "What have we gained in our relationships with our parents and grandparents?"

The latter workshop was to be led by Dr. Ira Brenner (himself a psychiatrist/psychoanalyst and second generation) and myself. But our group was too large, so we each took 30 participants to ensure greater interaction, which there was. Perhaps half of the participants were speaking about feelings not expressed for decades.

Three days of workshops are the backbone of the gathering. In between are lectures, panels, films and of course, being in Jerusalem, tours of the Knesset and Yad Vashem. Rabbi Benny Lau spoke on "What can we do to carry on the remembrance of the Holocaust in future generations?" Rabbi Lau is the nephew of former Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau and the son of the late Naphtali Lau-Lavie, a former Israeli Consul to New York. The Lau brothers both survived Buchenwald.

On two evenings, dinner was followed by music and dancing. And on Wednesday November 8, a number of child Holocaust survivors had their Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the Kotel. The president of our organization, Stefanie Seltzer from Philadelphia participated and proudly showed me her certificate. It is sometimes forgotten that persecuted Jewish children were deprived of the opportunity to attend school and participate in Jewish traditions. Even in our late 70's and early 80's, we are still catching up on opportunities taken for granted by others who grew up in normal circumstances.

I have attended at least 20 of these international gatherings and at each of them remarkable things have occurred. And so it was in Jerusalem.

Amongst the few surviving children in Auschwitz were five little girls.

Greg Schneider, the Executive Vice-President of the Claims Conference shared the following story in his Report on the gathering. He told of a “small miracle” he witnessed when he met Tova Friedman.

“Tova was one of only five girls to make it back to her town of Tomaszow Mazowiecki in Poland after liberation. As World War II came to a close in 1945, many people returned to their hometowns in an effort to identify those who had survived. In Tomaszow, only 300 of the approximately 13,000 Jews that were deported during the war returned. Of those who returned, only nine were children and of those, five were girls. Four of the five girls who survived reunited sometime later using social media to reconnect and stay in touch. But they were unable to locate the fifth girl.”

One of those girls is my long-time friend, Frieda Grayzel, a social worker/psychologist in the Boston area. In November 2016, she gave me a book and inscribed it. Titled “Surviving Auschwitz: Children of the Shoah” edited by Milton J. Nieuwsma, it chronicles the stories of three of the five girls, Tova Friedman, Frieda Tanenbaum (Grayzel), and Rachel Hyams.

At this conference, Tova wondered out loud as to the whereabouts of the fifth girl. On that same afternoon she was reunited with Ruth Meltzer.

Schneider continues, “Unlike the other girls, who had all settled in North America after the war, Ruth had stayed in Europe, ultimately settling in Munich, Germany. The women were brought together at the conference through a myriad of network connections that led to another conference miracle.” ■

The 2018 Gathering will be in West Palm Beach, Florida from November 9 to 12 and is open for registration to Survivors, their children and grandchildren at www.holocaustchild.org.

Dr. Robert Krell is a Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia. He is a child survivor of the Holocaust and is the founding president of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society for Education & Remembrance.

MUSEUM IN THE CLASSROOM: TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES IN THE VHEC'S ONLINE COLLECTION, FROM PAGE 15

with questions to direct their students' inquiry into a selection of items. Similarly, students can respond to questions, share observations and collaborate with one another on group projects within a shared Lightbox.

These are just some of the features of the Collections website. Students are sure to make their own discoveries as they explore the Collection in this digital environment. With the launch of the website, the VHEC's Collection moves beyond the physical confines of the Centre into the digital world, engaging new audiences with the Holocaust experiences of local survivors and furthering our survivors' mission of education and remembrance for generations to come. ■

The Collections website can be accessed at collections.vhec.org. The primary sources in the Collection may be browsed at collections.vhec.org/Browse/landing and resources for educators are found at collections.vhec.org/About/researchers

Lise Kirchner is a VHEC Project Coordinator. She has served as a volunteer docent since 2000.

Many survivors and community members have Holocaust-related artefacts, even the smallest of which can tell an important story and reach a broad audience for generations to come through the Collections website and the Centre's exhibits and programs.

The VHEC Collection is the result of generous donations from survivors, families and community members. Those wishing to donate items are encouraged to call 604.264.0499 or email collections@vhec.org to schedule an appointment with Collections staff.

My Father's Legacy

BY VIVIAN CLAMAN

The following remarks were delivered by Vivian Claman at the VHEC's 2018 Yom HaShoah Commemorative Program on April 11.

I am the daughter of two survivors, my mother, of blessed memory, June Frischer Mielnicki, and my father, of blessed memory, Michel Mielnicki. My mother hardly spoke a word about her Holocaust experience; my father never stopped talking about it.

So to follow in my father's footsteps, I'll be speaking about my father's Holocaust story, and the impact it had on all of our lives.

My Father grew up in Vasilkov, a small town outside of Bialystock, Poland. As a kid there were numerous pogroms and incessant antisemitism that turned out to be only a precursor for the unimaginable darkness and horror that destroyed the first quarter of his life.

Soon after the start of the war, my father and his family were sent to the Bialystock Ghetto, then onto the Pruzany Ghetto. In 1942, they were all sent to Auschwitz. My father's mother died on the train, and my father's father was beaten to death shortly after arriving at Auschwitz. My father was witness to all of this.

My father was selected for slave labour in Birkenau, and survived the numerous death marches and transfers, finally being liberated by the British Army at Bergen Belsen in 1945.

The stories of my father's survival during the Holocaust, and even the struggles he had to endure even after liberation are too numerous and horrific to mention now. They are fully laid out in his autobiography, *From Bialystok to Birkenau*, which is available at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center. Suffice it to say that he was witness to virtually every atrocity imaginable.



Vivian Claman at the VHEC's 2018 Yom HaShoah Commemorative Program.



Yahrzeit candles are lit as part of the Yom HaShoah commemoration.

This evening, I would like to tell you about my father's legacy, not what happened to him, but rather what he gave me, my children, and to all the friends and family that were ever graced with knowing my dad.

Despite the brutality and atrocities he witnessed and experienced during the Shoah, my father never sought revenge for what the Nazis did to him, intentionally never joining those who did. Even in the aftermath of the war, and still struggling to survive its impact, my father maintained his dignity, his sense of right and wrong, and his commitment to moral and social justice.

Growing up at home with my father, the message of love and respect for others was a consistent theme. Living life to the fullest and caring for others, were his mottos. For as long as I remember, my dad also volunteered in some capacity, whether it was helping new immigrants; assisting them with everything from providing clothing, furniture and jobs to acting as a docent for the Vancouver Art Gallery.

But my father's most meaningful volunteer activity was speaking to high school students as part of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's Symposia. It was cathartic for him to tell his story, and he believed that passing it over to students was of utmost importance.

I cannot deny that he was a complicated man, whose identity was forged by the trauma and loss he endured during and after the war. He was emotionally volatile and haunted by memories of what he went through. He spoke endlessly about the Holocaust to anyone who would listen, sometimes to the detriment of his mental health.

But in spite of his experience and his need to talk of these heinous crimes, he always advocated for tolerance, education and love as the antidote to hatred, racism and genocide.

My father always taught me to judge people favorably and to approach the world with love and openness, rather than hatred and revenge.

I want people to understand that the potential for evil exists in the world.

The Holocaust — which really wasn't that long ago - demonstrates the human capacity for unspeakable brutality. Even in 2018 that potential still exists.

We cannot be apathetic to the stories of the Holocaust, for risk of becoming apathetic towards each other.

The legacy my father gave to me and to my children, and which I plan to pass on at Holocaust Education Symposia in the future, is that tolerance, education and love is the answer to racism, hatred and genocide. ■

Viviam Claman is the daughter of Holocaust survivors June Fischer Mielnicki z'l and Michel Mielnicki z'l.

Daddy, Yes You Were

BY REGINA, RIVKAH, REVA KANNER DEXTER

*Yes, you were Daddy, the hero we missed
But for the stories, the tales of sheer horror
Yes, you were Daddy, the lover we guessed
But for the glance, the gleam of deep desire
Yes, you were Daddy, the protector we blessed
All love and gentle strength, the will of patient steel*

*I was your Princess, your Post Holocaust Jubilee
I was your precious, your emerald-eyed angel
Your muscled arms protecting your blonde beauty baby bundle
Wrapped in grey rabbit, buttons of hidden gold contraband
How clever, but of course, how else could you
Have survived that Gulag Prison Cell Hell
The years of freezing, fleeing, hunger, thirst and fear.*

*Each sinew of my body now knows it too
Genetic Passover, Tango dancing, Russian swear words
Handmade faux silk dresses
Pride, passion, anger, disappointment, struggle, enduring love,
How you infused me with those
Laughter, song, hope, ambition, Yiddish L'Chaim
How I inherited those
Arguments, Philosophy, seek the Truth, expose the Devils
Oh how I learned those
Daddy, yes you were, yes it was worth it all
You are still my guiding light!*

FEBRUARY 2018

Reva Kanner Dexter is a volunteer docent at The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. Her parents escaped Poland in 1939 and Reva was born in 1944 in Kazakhstan (then the U.S.S.R.)



Clockwise from top: Sarah, Mechel, brother Chaim and Rivkah in Czymkient, Kazakhstan, 1945. Two-year old Rivkah in Bad Reichenhall Displaced Persons Camp, 1946. Mechel, Chaim and Rivkah on bike in Bad Reichenhall, Germany Displaced Persons Camp, 1946. Courtesy Reva Dexter.

THANK YOU VHEC VOLUNTEERS!

OUTREACH SPEAKERS

Janos Benisz, Amalia Boe Fishman, Lillian Boraks Nemetz, Alex Buckman, Mariette Doduck, David Ehrlich, Serge Haber, Jannushka Jakoubovitch, Chaim Kornfeld, Robert Krell, Inge Manes, Claude Romney, Martha Salcudean, Louise Sorensen, Peter Suedfeld, Tom Szekely, Robbie Waisman;
Coordinator: Rita Akselrod.

TEACHER ADVISORY

Eyal Daniel, Mark Figuera, Stephanie Henderson, Kit Krieger, Andrea Webb, Anna-Mae Wiesenthal, Emily Winckler.

DOCENTS

Reva Dexter, Sylvie Epstein, Kieran Forry, Patricia Friedman, Helen Heacock Rivers, Dodie Katzenstein, Lise Kirchner, Ethel Kofsky, Uma Kumar, Lucien Lieberman, Ivan Linde, Ellen Millman, Herb Mills, Cathy Paperny, Gita Silver, Vivian Tsang, Rina Vizer, Anita Willson.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Alex Buckman, Richard Elias, Bonnie Elster, Alan le Fevre, Chris Friedrichs, Norman Gladstone, Ethel Kofsky, Kit Krieger, Ella Levitt, Herb Mills, Cathy Paperny, Debbie Rosenbaum, Stan Taviss.

OUR SINCERE APOLOGIES FOR ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS

Due to technical difficulties, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre regrets that tribute card listings are not available for this issue of *Zachor*. Please rest assured that all tribute cards were sent to their designated recipients. We hope to have full tribute card listings available in our next issue. To send a tribute card please contact our office at 604-264-0499 or go online to www.vhec.org.

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