March of the Living, May 2005 Adult Mission

In the spring of 2005, 18,000 men and women—young and old, Jew and non-Jew, Holocaust survivor and WWII veteran—will gather together in Poland to stand united against hatred and prejudice.

On May 5, 2005, Holocaust Remembrance Day, 18,000 people of diverse ages, religions, and cultures will assemble amid the ruins of the former Nazi death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau to honor the memory of the victims of Nazi tyranny and to commemorate the Allied victory in Europe.

Please join our efforts to create a more peaceful and secure world... for ourselves and for future generations.

Travel Dates
March of the Living 2005 will take place between May 2 and May 15, 2005. Participants will visit Poland, where they will commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israel where they will take part in Israel’s Remembrance Day and Independence Day Ceremonies.

For more information, please contact:
Yair Tabenkin, Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver
ytabenkin@jfgv.com, 604.257.5100, www.marchoftheliving.org

Holland and the Holocaust:
New Display in the Education Room

As part of the Anne Frank project, Jonathan Friedrichs, Research Assistant, and Naomi Seixas, Intern, have curated a small exhibit using artifacts and images from the VHEC archives relating to the Nazi persecution of Jews in Holland. In an attempt to situate Anne Frank’s story within a wider experience of Jews living in Holland during the Holocaust, this exhibit uses VHEC archival sources which includes artifacts as well as enlargements of archival photographs. These artifacts are accompanied by texts which include personal accounts of those living in Holland. These archival resources are rich teaching materials and the centre is committed to using them with a belief that primary sources offer students a direct link to history.

Included are artifacts which have been donated to the VHEC archives, such as local child survivor Louise Stein Sorensen’s mother’s real and forged photo ID cards from Amsterdam. The two cards are displayed together, allowing their differences to be compared. The name change, from a Jewish “Stein” to a non-Jewish Dutch “van Strien”, and exclusion of a large stamp of the letter “J” denoting (by law) her Jewish ethnicity are poignant reminders of the humiliation and degradation imposed on Jews. Local survivor Emmy Krell donated her Resistance Bracelet, made from ten-cent Dutch coins. She explains that “Nazis brought in zinc money and took from the Dutch their copper, silver, and gold coins. They didn’t specify bracelets, so we went by their word and made bracelets. Later on they wanted everything – even all the jewelry. Because we were newly married, we took our dimes (the rich people took quarters) to a store where we knew the resistance people would make a resistance bracelet.” This unusual piece of jewelry, along with Louise Sorensen’s mother’s ID cards and a number of other items are part of the display in the Education Room. This exhibit will be on display with the Anne Frank exhibit from October 15th through December 15th.
OPENING PROGRAM

Anne Frank: A History For Today
Thursday, October 14, 2004, 7:30 PM
In the Norman Rothstein Theatre at the JCC
Reception to follow in the vhec

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Anne Frank’s Diary: The Mystery of its Appeal
By Dr. Rolf Wolfswinkel
Professor of Modern History at the School of Continuing and Professional Studies at New York University.

Also speaking will be Dr. Robert Krell, a hidden child in Holland during WWII, founder and Past President of the vhec.

TICKETS
$10 vhec members, teachers & students
$15 for non-members
Call 604.264.0499 for tickets

The vhec is proud to launch the start of our special 10th anniversary year with the opening of Anne Frank: A History for Today, the internationally acclaimed traveling exhibit produced in association with the Anne Frank Center in Amsterdam. The opening program on October 14, 2004, at 7:30 PM in the Norman Rothstein Theatre features a keynote address; Anne Frank’s Diary: The Mystery of its Appeal given by Dr. Rolf Wolfswinkel, Professor of Modern History at the School of Continuing and Professional Studies at New York University. Dr. Wolfswinkel’s talk will explore why The Diary of Anne Frank became a worldwide bestseller. Also speaking will be Dr. Robert Krell, a hidden child in Holland during WWII, and founder and past president of the vhec.

Dr. Wolfswinkel, a native of Holland, and a published author, has conducted extensive research into the intersection of history and literature. Co-authored with Dick Van Galen Last, Anne Frank and After, Dutch Holocaust Literature in Historical Perspective.

The exhibit Anne Frank: A History for Today is designed to introduce students and the public to Anne Frank in her historical context and offer a first exposure to the history of the Holocaust. The exhibit follows the story of the Frank family beginning in 1929 in Germany. Amidst the rise of the Nazi party, the Frank family seeks refuge in the Netherlands in an attempt to escape Nazi persecution. Themes of exclusion, bullying, and persecution, as state-sanctioned instruments to marginalize Jews and others is covered in the exhibition panels. Personal eyewitness accounts of other individuals with related experiences are inserted in the exhibition. The exhibit includes material that allows viewers to reflect on issues in today’s world, concluding with an emphasis on the importance of human rights, individual responsibility, and moral courage.

Anne Frank’s story is the vehicle through which students coming to the Centre will critically examine prejudice, bias and discrimination. It is the universal and timeless application of the story of Anne Frank that is explored in this new exhibition. Teachers will choose between two programs: Children in Hiding (grades 5 - 8), which examines the parallel stories of local Child Survivors and The Myth of the Diary: The Diary on Trial (grades 8 - 12), which examines the history and reception of the Diary in critical terms, while exploring its historical and contemporary importance.

The vhec expects a record number of school groups to tour the exhibition. Thanks to the generous gifts from donors to the Anne Frank project, each student attending the interactive docent-led program will be given a copy of The Diary of a Young Girl.

Anne Frank: A History for Today was developed by the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and is sponsored in North America by the New York based Anne Frank Center USA, Inc. Sponsorship for the exhibition in Vancouver has been generously provided by The Gordon Diamond Family Foundation, The Conference on Material Claims Against Germany- The Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Research, Documentation and Education (logo), Susan Mendelson & Jack Lutsky, and Miriam Wosk. Posted with the support of the City of Vancouver and Viacom JC Decaux.
The Roommate of Anne Frank
By Nanda van der Zee
REVIEWED BY MICHAEL POULLOS

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl has become a world classic. I remember seeing the 1959 motion picture picture of “The Diary” as a young teenager. As I recall that screenplay, my memory rests not on Anne’s roommate, the Jewish dentist, Franz Pfeffer, but on Anne’s relationship with Peter van Daan as it developed over the two years of their confinement. Not an unusual memory for me at the time, as I was an impressionable youth coming of age.

In “The Diary” Anne portrays Fritz as ‘Dussel’—“a ‘dullard’, a daydreamer...a narrow-minded, irritating and gloomy figure”. The Dutch historian, Nanda van der Zee, in this companion book: The Roommate of Anne Frank attempts to rehabilitate the image of ‘Dussel’ in contrast to the portrait that the precocious, opinionated teenager Anne paints. The Roommate of Anne Frank was originally published in the Netherlands in 1990 and again in 2001. It is now available in an English translation.

In 1987, an employee of The Anne Frank Foundation found a small bundle of personal belongings, photographs, and news clippings at a flea market in Amsterdam. Later other material was located, including letters. These objects belonged to Charlotte Kaletta. Charlotte was the lover (and but for the circumstance of war) wife of the divorced Fritz Pfeffer. These archival materials, in addition to information provided by Pfeffer’s sons and friends, cast Fritz in a new light. He emerges “an affectionate man...a caring warm lover”... and a stern but nurturing, loving father.

The collected material could be presented as an empirical historic account. Rather, van der Zee chooses the form of a fictionalized interview, interwoven with facts collected, and anecdotes recounted. Actual letters in German (with English translation) and contemporary pictures are included—over forty pages in all.

Despite many flaws, the book needed more rigorous editing, the syntax is awkward. Occasionally transitions between the historical background and the fictional story line are abrupt. The narrative sometimes gives too much detail. Such errors interrupt the flow of writing. The reader is left hanging in places. Nevertheless, “The Roommate of Anne Frank” is worth reading. Like the diary itself, this book is a testament to the senseless tragedy of war and genocide. As was the fate of millions, Pfeffer this sensitive, caring man was transported (in this case from Holland to Germany)—another victim of Hitler’s “Final Solution.” At the twilight of WWII, he perished at Nauengamme. “She weeps without giving a sound...her eyes wander away, the clear light in them has disappeared...He, she, all of them. They disappeared anonymously. They are so alone.”

Because of a small bundle—a happenstance find at a flea market, one of them, Fritz Pfeffer, the roommate of Anne Frank is not forgotten.
Exhibit Hours
October 15 – December 15, 2004
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9 – 5
Wednesday 9 – 8
Friday 9 – 4
Sunday 1 – 5

Free Public Programs
EVENTS TAKE PLACE IN THE VHEC

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2004
3:00 PM Screening of “The Short Life of Anne Frank”. This documentary film narrated by Jeremy Irons, tells the story of Anne Frank, her diary, the secret annex and World War II.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2004
3:00 PM Screening of “Dear Kitty”. Documentary film that tells the story of the life of Anne Frank through quotes from her diary, photos from the Frank family album and historic film footage.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2004
3:00 PM Screening of “The Short Life of Anne Frank”. This documentary film narrated by Jeremy Irons, tells the story of Anne Frank, her diary, the secret annex and World War II.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2004
7:00 PM “Hidden” – Local Child Survivors talk about their experiences in hiding.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2004
7:00 PM “A Girl from Frankfurt: Anne Frank’s German Background.” A talk by Dr. Chris Friedrichs, History Department, UBC.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2004
3:00 PM “Hiding a past, revealing the present: the complexity of rescue relationships in wartime Holland”. A talk by Dr. Richard Kool.

FINANCIAL AID FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Through funds provided by The Claims Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, the Vancouver Holocaust Centre and Jewish Family Services are able to provide support to some of the neediest Nazi victims. This support can be used to assist needy survivors live out their lives with dignity.

For those that qualify there may be support for homemaking services, medical equipment and medication. Emergency help is also available for dental work. For more information on these grants please contact Gisella Levitt at Jewish Family Services (604 257-5151).

LOCAL CHILD SURVIVOR’S EXPERIENCE IN HIDING

Marion Cassier
I was born on November 28th, 1936 in Berlin, Germany. I was an only child. In 1942, my mother obtained fake ID’s by trading her own ID with a non-Jewish girlfriend. This person was later shot for helping us escape. One week later we walked to Holland having no idea that it had already been occupied. The Jewish committee in Amsterdam hid me with a young couple. However, I was arrested and sent to a detention camp. From there the Underground smuggled me out and hid me on a farm with the Beelen family. The farm was primitive with very little to eat, no electricity or indoor plumbing. I was considered to be part of the Beelen family, and participated in all the Christian religious activities. I always felt a sense of warmth and love from them. With the help of the International Red Cross, my mother found me after liberation in September of 1945. Until I was an adult, I still doubted that she was really my own mother. We emigrated to the U.S. in December 1948. I moved to Richmond, BC, Canada in 1989. To my great sorrow at least 148 members of my extended family were killed in the Holocaust.

Ruth Sigal
“I was born in Kaunas, Lithuania in 1936. In 1941 the Germans invaded Lithuania. In June they killed approximately 10,000 Jews, the remainder were rounded up (about 5000 Jews) and put into two ghettos. The day they came to round up the 823 children in the ghetto in order to kill them, I hid with my four-year-old sister Tamara. We hid for hours but then my sister started crying for our mother so we left our space and were caught. The guard put us both in the last truck leaving the ghetto to the killing fields. A relative was able to convince the guard to release me. They took my sister and killed her. After this I was sent outside the ghetto to hide. First I was hidden in a factory, after, I was hidden at a farm with a Catholic family, the Regauskis. I was kept in a closet and attic for four months. I stayed there until we were liberated in 1944. My parents had also escaped and then they came to pick me up. When my parents came to get me I wouldn’t go with them. Eventually I did, and in 1951 we came to Canada.”
After the Annex: Anne Frank's Final Months
BY JONATHAN FRIEDRICHS

On August 1, 1944 Anne Frank wrote an entry in her diary not knowing that it would be her last. On August 4, three days later, German and Dutch Nazis arrived at 263 Prinsengracht and raided the Secret Annex. After surviving for over two years in hiding, the Frank family and the four others with them were now exposed. As they were dragged out of hiding, the Nazi police looted the apartment and confiscated everything of value; Anne’s diary was left behind on the attic floor.

The Diary of Anne Frank is often the first exposure that young people have to the Holocaust. It tells the story of a remarkable girl, with vast insight and intelligence beyond her years. Anne was radiant, passionate, self-critical, and an example of the strength and will of the human spirit during a cataclysmic time in history. But in many ways, her diary portrays a sanitized version of the Holocaust; it does not tell the story of the atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Jews and therefore does not tell the full story of Anne Frank. The story must also include the seven terrible months Anne Frank spent in the Nazi death camps of Europe.

After their arrest on August 4, Anne and her family were taken to Amsterdam’s Weteringschans Prison. On August 8, they were transferred to Westerbork, the transit camp where the vast majority of Dutch Jews were held before deportation to concentration camps in the East. At Westerbork Anne was put to work in a factory disassembling batteries. The work was tolerable and according to inmates who worked there and knew Anne at this time, she was still energetic and capable of laughter.

On September 3, with the Allied forces now barely 120 miles away, Anne and her family were put on the very last transport of Jews from Westerbork to Auschwitz. The Franks were loaded into an overcrowded cattle car where they had to stand for two days and nights with no food or sanitation. They arrived to the gates of Auschwitz late at night on September 5. Of the 1,109 Dutch Jews on that last transport, 549 were immediately sent to the gas chambers, including all those under the age of 15. Anne, at 15 and with a mature appearance narrowly escaped this first “selection.” Anne, Margot, and their mother Edith were immediately separated from the men. It was the last time they were ever to see Otto Frank.

Upon arrival at Auschwitz, Anne Frank had her head shaved and her arm tattooed. Anne, her mother, and sister, were sent to Frauenblock 29, one of the women’s barracks. They were put to work carrying stones, forced to subsist on starvation rations and were made to stand through endless roll calls. An ominous cloud of smoke from the gas chambers filled the sky. Death was all around them.

Hygienic conditions were also abominable in Auschwitz and in a short time, Anne Frank contracted scabies. Anne was banished to the Krätzeblock (barracks for those infected with scabies) and in a show of solidarity, Margot voluntarily went with her. According to a fellow inmate and survivor from Frauenblock 29, it was at this point that Edith Frank became desperate. She relates how Edith snuck towards the Krätzeblock and dug a hole with her bare hands under the wooden wall of the barracks in order to slip her bread rations to her daughters on the other side. In Auschwitz there was only so much one could do to protect their children. On October 28, 1944 the family was divided again; Anne, still ill, along with Margot, were put on a transport and sent to Bergen-Belsen. Edith was left behind in Auschwitz where she died on January 6, 1945.

Anne and Margot arrived in Bergen-Belsen on October 30, 1944. Bergen-Belsen was originally set up as an “exchange camp” from which Jews were to be ransomed for Germans held in territory outside Nazi control. It was considered one of the “better” camps. However, as the war neared the end, living conditions in the camp deteriorated drastically. Inmates had to battle hunger, the spread of infectious disease and bitter cold. Conditions plummeted so severely that in the final months before liberation, thirty-five thousand people died in Bergen-Belsen.
Hannah Pick, one of Anne's schoolmates and close childhood friends (who appears in Anne Frank's diary under the pseudonym “Lies Goosens”) was also interned in Bergen-Belsen. She described meeting with Anne in February 1945 for the first time since the Franks had been in hiding. Hannah later said of this meeting, “It wasn't the same Anne. She was a broken girl.” Malnourished, half-frozen, and emotionally drained, Anne Frank appeared at the end of her strength.

In Bergen-Belsen typhus was rampant and an epidemic broke out. Both Anne and Margot contracted the disease. According to Rachel van Amerongen-Frankfoorder, who first met Anne and Margot in Westerbork and later shared their barracks in Bergen-Belsen, “The Frank girls were so emaciated... They had those hollowed-out faces, skin over bone. They were terribly cold. They had the least desirable places in the barracks, below, near the door, which was constantly opened and closed. You heard them constantly screaming, 'Close the door, close the door,' and the voices became weaker every day.” Margot died in early March, 1945. Anne, thinking her entire family had now perished, could no longer keep up the struggle to survive. She died within days of her sister. Bergen-Belsen was liberated on April 15, 1945, just weeks after the death of Anne Frank.

It is hard to think about Anne Frank without first thinking of her iconic portrait: smiling, with jet-black hair curled up at the ends. This image has become imprinted in our minds. But for those learning about the story of Anne Frank, it is important to know that this picture represents only the beginning of her story, and her diary represents only an aspect of the persecution of the Jews. The full story of Anne Frank must include her physical and emotional torment in the camps, and ultimately, her death at the hands of the Nazis. One can only wonder if Anne's famous optimism and faith in the goodness of mankind would have remained in tact in the midst of all this evil.
Sound Bites from Anne Frank
BY LESLEY SHORE

When colleagues relate that they no longer teach The Diary of Anne Frank, I challenge their "been there, done that" approach by maintaining that Anne's wise voice has a more urgent claim on our post 9/11 curriculum than it ever has. No matter how many times I revisit The Diary's pages, I continue to be astonished by passages I haven't noticed before. While some academics dispute The Diary's status as a 'real' record of the Holocaust, because its writer was young, female, and in hiding rather than in the camps, I suggest that The Diary provides an exemplary user-friendly introduction to the most difficult of subjects and note that it remains (J.K. Rowling notwithstanding) the second most widely-read book in the history of publishing, next to the Bible.

As such I approach Anne's text through what I call "sound bites." Because it is a diary, discreet passages lend themselves to be excerpted for theme-based discussions across a variety of middle and high school subject areas. Such exploration might inspire students to read the text as a whole, while the whole Diary need not be an official curriculum choice. I know that much of what students actually study in English classrooms is determined not by the new curriculum developed in recent years, but by the reality of what lies gathering dust in the school's book room. The sound-bite approach sidesteps that very practical concern.

In a world where adolescent voices are frequently disparaged, Anne's Diary trumpets Wordsworth's dictum that the "child is father to the man [sic]". Adolescents flourish when they are acknowledged as "knowers" precisely because many adults tend to belittle their idealism and hopes for a better world. Making Anne's youthful wisdom explicit validates our students' own voices. "More than anything Anne's story has come to symbolize the power of the book," writes Roger Rosenblatt, praising Time Magazine's choice of Anne as one of its twenty twentieth century "heroes and icons" (June 14, 1999). He points out that while the Holocaust began with Hitler's book, it ends with Anne's. The "beneficient and complicated" voice of the "second most famous child in history" outlasts the "simple and evil" howl of the world's most famous tyrant.

On April 11, 1944 Anne wrote about the "Jewish question" with a philosopher's perspicacity, honesty and insight while admitting the burden of her personal pain:

We've been strongly reminded of the fact that we're Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, but with a thousand obligations ... One day this terrible war will be over. The time will come when we'll be people again and not just Jews! ... Who has inflicted this on us? Who has set us apart from all the rest? Who has put us through such suffering? ... Who knows, maybe our religion will teach the world and all the people in it about goodness, and that's the reason, we have to suffer. We can never be just Dutch, or just English, or whatever, we will always be Jews as well. And we'll have to keep on being Jews, but then, we'll want to be.

About two weeks later, on May 3, 1944, she took her thinking deeper still:

As you can no doubt imagine, we often ask in despair: "What's the point of the war? Why, oh, why, can't people live together peacefully? Why all this destruction?"

The question is very understandable, but up to now no one has come up with a satisfactory answer. Why is England manufacturing bigger and bigger airplanes and bombs and at the same time churning out new houses for reconstruction? Why are millions spent on the war each day, while not a penny is available for medical science, artists or the poor? Why do people have to starve when mountains of food are rotting away in other parts of the world? Oh, why are people so crazy?

I don't believe the war is simply the work of politicians and capitalists. Oh no, the common man is every bit as guilty; otherwise, people and nations would have rebelled long ago! There's a destructive urge in people, the urge to rage, murder and kill. And until all of humanity, without exception, undergoes a metamorphosis, wars will continue to be waged, and everything that has been carefully built up, cultivated and grown will be cut down and destroyed, only to start all over again!

In my view, there has been no more definitive insight into the persistence of evil in our world than Anne's naked call to individual responsibility. This child understands, as most adults apparently still do not, that the 'enemy' is not hiding somewhere out there, but is lodged, a silent time bomb, deep within our own innermost being. Has education even begun to contend with that notion? Anne alerts me to the potential within our students' hearts and minds to lead with conscience, to ask how 'human' nature has changed for the better in the sixty years since Anne
wrote her words, to wonder perhaps why it has not. And further, to consider in what ways the theories of “identity politics” have influenced the persistent reality of racial hatred, war and genocide. Less than three weeks before she was arrested and sent via Westerbork to Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, where she died, Anne wrote on July 15, 1944:

Anyone who claims that the older folks have a more difficult time in the Annex doesn’t realize that the problems have a far greater impact on us. We’re much too young to deal with these problems, but they keep thrusting themselves on us until, finally, we’re forced to think up a solution, though most of the time our solutions crumble when faced with the facts. It’s difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It’s a wonder I haven’t abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.

It’s utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I’ll be able to realize them!

I am confident that your students can use these three brief passages as a springboard for considering adolescent voice and insight and the challenge of maintaining hope through difficult times, but further, and perhaps more importantly, to find the best in themselves, as Anne did, and like her, to ask critical questions of their own.

Dr. Lesley Shore is Assistant Professor in English Education at OISE, University of Toronto. Her research areas include: adolescent girls and reading; media and cultural studies, teacher development; philosophy of literature; and critical thinking through Holocaust literature.

Louise Sorensen

“I was born in Rotterdam in 1929. During 1940 we made several unsuccessful attempts to emigrate. The persecution of the Jews started soon thereafter with the gradual introduction of racist laws. Early in 1943, my parents decided that we should find places to hide because we likely would be arrested any time. This was by no means easy, but eventually all four of us were taken to separate hiding places outside of Amsterdam. My first hiding place was with a family who had five sons aged 9 – 18. The boys were told that I was a distant cousin whose family was victimized by the bombing of Rotterdam. I felt unwelcome and withdrew into a shell. In the course of the first six months I was moved to about six different addresses, always a few steps ahead of the pursuing Nazis. In the fall I ended up in a small farm workers house in the outskirts of Apeldoorn. My parents joined me there. From then on, for over twenty months, I rarely left the attic that was our hiding place. After hiding for a total of thirty months, our liberation came on April 17th, 1945 by way of Canadian army units. Learning to socialize again after liberation was a struggle after such a long period of isolation.”

Serge Vanry

I was born in June 1931, in Paris, France. When Police came to our home to arrest us during the occupation, my mother forced me to run away and seek shelter with some gentle friends of theirs who lived on a farm in the country. My mother tore off my “Yellow Star” and I walked to the train station, bought a ticket and found my way to the farm. Though they were not expecting my arrival, these friends took me in at great risk to themselves and their children. After about six months with them, my uncle came to get me and smuggled me into Vichy, France. I spent time in several youth homes and boarding homes and other family homes. After the war my father and I returned to Paris. Six months later we were amazed and overwhelmed to learn that my mother had survived Auschwitz, though my broth, had perished there. We applied for Canadian visas, and after being denied twice, we were eventually accepted. We arrived in Canada in December, 1947. We came to Vancouver where I attended King Edward High School, UBC, and finally University of Manitoba Dental School.
The Hidden Life of Otto Frank
By Carol Ann Lee

REVIEWED BY LUCIEN LIEBERMAN

Carol Ann Lee has written a sympathetic biography of Otto Frank, published in 2003. Otto Frank has been the subject of many biographies as he was a very active spokesman for the Anne Frank Foundation until his death at the age of 91 in 1982. This biography deals with issues of interest to those interested in the evolution of The Diary of Anne Frank, the fate of the Frank family and the conflict between Otto Frank and his critics who felt that he was instrumental in downplaying the Jewish aspects of the Anne Frank tragedy in favour of a more universalistic approach. Otto Frank wanted to portray his daughter as a cheerful, optimistic and idealistic young girl who expressed a faith in the goodness of mankind.

This criticism was updated in a provocative essay by Cynthia Ozick in the New Yorker Magazine in 1997 entitled “Who owns Anne Frank?” Ozick argued, since it was first published, “[The Diary] has been bowdlerized, distorted, transmuted, traduced, reduced, infantilized, Americanized, homogenized, sentimentalised, falsified, kitschified, by dramatists, directors, translators and litigators.” Carol Ann Lee’s biography tells Otto Frank’s side of the story and succeeds in minimizing most of the sting of Ozick’s accusations.

If one had to describe Otto Frank’s personality from a reading of the biography, one would say he was Germanic, intensely devoted to his family and very much an intellectual. He was born into an assimilated German Jewish middle class family. His father was a Frankfurt banker. Religion played no part in his early upbringing. He was one of the 60,000 Jews who fought for the Kaiser in that war. He achieved officer rank and survived the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. He was on the Belgian front at the time of the Armistice and it took him two months to walk home to Germany. Following the war Otto took over the banking business from his father who died at an early age. The business failed during the hyperinflation of the 1920’s. He was 36 when he married Edith Hollander. She came with a substantial dowry and it was said to have been a marriage of convenience for Otto. Edith was from a more religious family, the Hollanders were prominent in the Jewish community of Aachen. Their two daughters, Margot and Anneliese Marie (Anne) were born in 1926 and 1929, respectively.

Mr. Frank was to make a number of fateful decisions in the following years. When the Nazis come to power in 1933, he immediately knew that as Jews, he and his extended family had no future in Germany. Both the Frank and Hollander families took refuge in other countries. Some established themselves in Switzerland, Paris, London and the United States, others like Otto Frank took his family to Amsterdam mainly for business reasons. The German Jews swelled the Jewish population of Amsterdam and were relatively well off. They were resented by the Dutch and were warn not to speak German in the streets.

As the war clouds gathered in 1938, Otto’s cousin in London, Millie Stanfield and her husband wrote to the Franks from London and offered to provide refuge for Margot and Anne. It is hard to believe that at a time when desperate Jewish parents were placing their children on Kindertransports and pleading with strangers in England to look after their children, Otto declined the offer, stating he and Edith could not part with their girls, and also Holland was neutral in World War I. As it turned out, Holland had the worst record of Jewish survival amongst the Western European countries during WWII. In Belgium, 60% survived, in France 75%, in the Netherlands, only 25% of the Jews there survived. In the Netherlands there was little room to hide and the Jewish registration, facilitated by IBM technology, was just too efficient to evade.

Following the occupation, anti-Jewish laws came into effect. Otto Frank transferred his business assets to his trusted gentile friends, Kugler, Kleiman and Miep Gies. On July 5”, 1942, Margot Frank, aged 16, received her deportation notice and the Frank family went into hiding the following day in the annex at 232 Prinsengracht. They were joined by the Pfeffer family and a Jewish dentist. As Otto Frank describes: “Boredom would be the great problem. The children would need books to occupy themselves and to learn.” Otto read from his favourites, Heine, Goethe and Schiller. Religion became a part of their lives in hiding. On Friday evenings they observed the Sabbath led by Edith and Fritz Pfeffer. They honoured the High Holy Days as well as Christmas. Otto Frank was the one in charge. A veneer of total control took over. There was a feeling of safety and calm in the tight living space. Margot was self-sufficient but Anne needed constant morale building. She was plagued by insecurities, depression and jealousies. She was closer to her father than her mother.

Carol Ann Lee’s account of the Frank family experience in captivity is sketchy except for Otto Frank’s experience, as he was the lone survivor. In Auschwitz, Otto becomes separated from Edith and the girls. Otto’s World War I experience holds him in good stead during this trying period. In the last weeks of Auschwitz, January 1945, Otto Frank was in a hospital ward, weak and filthy. He was rescued by the Russian army.
Otto returned to Amsterdam in the spring of 1945 and moved into a small apartment with Miep and Jan Gies. He attempted to revive the business and resumed contact with his family, including his elderly mother, who survived the war in Basel, Switzerland. He did not know the fate of his daughters. A fateful meeting with Lin Brilleslper in July 1945 crushed any faint hopes. Lin was the last person to see the Frank girls alive in Bergen-Belson, where they perished. Shortly thereafter Otto started reading his daughter Anne’s diary, which had been rescued from the annex by Miep Gies. He was astounded by her maturity and clarity. Despite a lack of encouragement from others, Otto was determined to have the diary notes published. The mood in the Netherlands towards returning German Jewish refugees was not friendly. The Dutch had themselves suffered severely during the last winter of hunger. They were in a surly mood and not particularly interested in other people’s suffering.

There were two versions in Anne’s handwriting, the original version and a revised version. The second version was done after Anne had heard a plea on Dutch radio for citizens to preserve their wartime experiences. Otto, at the time of the early discovery removed five pages from the diary and passed them on to a friend, Cor Suijk, for safekeeping. These he deemed too personal to make public.

The first edition of the diaries appeared in Dutch in 1947, 1500 copies under the title The Back House. Otto Frank wrote “It is a meaningful document about humanity to pay homage to Anne who he knew would have wanted it published. After all, she did revisions as if she was seeking perfection for publication.” Carol Ann Lee defends the editing of Anne’s two versions reinstating some of the first version material. She notes that it was Otto Frank, under pressure from the early German publisher, who softened Anne’s references to Germans as bad people and the Jews and Germans as the greatest of enemies. Carol Ann Lee, however, joins Cynthia Ozick in her criticism of the latter deletions stating, “Perhaps Otto Frank would have been less keen to allow alterations to the diary if he had known the results of polls conducted in Germany”. In 1948, 41% of Germans approved of the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. In 1952, 37% felt it was better for Germany to have no Jews, 88% felt that they had no responsibility for the mass exterminations.

In mid 1952 the English translations were published in Britain and the United States. In the following year he married Fritzi Geringer, a survivor who had lost her husband and a son. Fritzi brought renewed stability to Otto’s life and they moved to Basel, distancing him from the painful memories of Amsterdam. She was a strong influence in his life and his true love in marriage.

After Otto Frank’s death in 1981, his friend Cor Suijk stepped forward with the five missing pages. They were removed by Otto because they contained references to Otto’s first marriage. There were made public only after Fritzi had died. Otto’s critics have suggested the omissions were made to protect Otto’s reputation, but Otto had the Hollanders in mind. They had lost their sister Edith in Auschwitz. Were the diaries to convey her forever as a less than successful wife and mother? Otto wanted to protect her memory.

In 1995 the “Definitive Edition” of the diaries was published and was on the New York Times best sellers list for many weeks. Otto’s editing could be clearly seen and judged, thus compelling Cynthia Ozick to write her essay.

Many who met Otto Frank felt he was a spiritual man. He would say that the Nazis restored his Jewish identity for him. He was deeply concerned about Israel, where many of his survivor friends resided, even though he was not a Zionist. He felt Anne has become a symbol for the 1,500,000 Jewish children who were murdered.
Kristallnacht Commemorative Lecture
Sunday, November 7, 2004, 7:30 pm
Beth Israel Synagogue

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Prof. David Zimmerman (University of Victoria)

TITLE OF LECTURE:
‘Lest They Will Be Heard Of No More’:
The Rescue of Jewish-German Scholars, 1933 to 1941

This year’s Kristallnacht commemoration in the Vancouver community will feature a keynote address by Professor David Zimmerman of the University of Victoria about the heroic effort to rescue Jewish scientists and other scholars from Hitler’s Germany and enable them to carry out their research in freedom.

The Kristallnacht program will take place at 7:30 PM on Sunday, November 7 at Beth Israel Synagogue. The event is free and open to all members of the public.

The keynote address will be entitled “‘Lest They Will Be Heard Of No More’: The Rescue of Jewish-German Scholars, 1933 to 1941.” The address will focus on the little-known work of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, a British organization that struggled to overcome indifference and anti-Semitism in order to rescue over 1,000 Jewish scientists from Nazi Germany and find new opportunities for them in Great Britain, the United States and other free countries.

Professor Zimmerman, a member of the University of Victoria Department of History since 1989, is a noted expert on the role of science and technology in the Second World War. He is the author of Britain’s Shield: Radar and the Defeat of the Luftwaffe as well as other books and articles on science and modern war.

While researching the development of radar in pre-war Britain, Professor Zimmerman came across so many references to the effort to rescue Jewish scientists from Nazi Germany that he decided to make that topic his next research project. His Kristallnacht address will draw largely on material from the book he is now writing on the role of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning in bringing scientists out of Germany and other Nazi-dominated countries and resettling them in countries where they could resume their research careers. Many of these scientists subsequently contributed to the Allied war effort by participating in military research which helped to defeat the Axis powers.

The annual Kristallnacht program commemorates the “Night of Broken Glass” of November 9, 1938, when synagogues and Jewish places of business all over Germany and Austria were destroyed by Nazi hoodlums – an event which is generally regarded as a major escalation of the Nazis’ anti-Jewish program which eventually culminated in the Holocaust. Each year’s Kristallnacht lecture deals with some aspect of the Holocaust or its meaning for the world today. While many recent lectures have focused on the genocidal program of the Nazis or the experiences of those they killed or tried to kill, some – like this year’s address – have focused instead on the activities of the small number of non-Jews who tried to protect or rescue the Nazis’ intended victims.

The keynote address will be preceded by the traditional candle-lighting ceremony in memory of the six million Jews killed by the Nazis.

The Kristallnacht commemorative program is sponsored jointly by the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society and by Congregation Beth Israel, with funding from the Combined Jewish Appeal of the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver and from Congregation Beth Israel.

For more information, call the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre at 604.264.0499.
The Vrba-Wetzler Report and the Politics of Holocaust Memory

A Talk by Professor Ruth Linn on her recent publication: Escaping Auschwitz: A Culture of Forgetting

In Honour of Dr. Rudolph Vrba
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH, 7 P.M. AT THE VHEC

Professor Ruth Linn’s latest book, Escaping Auschwitz: A Culture of Forgetting (2004), Cornell University Press, focuses on Dr. Rudolf Vrba, a former UBC professor, who along with Alfred Wetzler escaped from Auschwitz-Birkenau in April 1944. As block registrars in Auschwitz, both men were allowed relative freedom of movement in the camp and thus had been able to observe the massive preparations underway at Birkenau of the entire killing machine for the eradication of Europe’s last remaining Jewish community, the 800,000 Jews of Hungary. The two men made their way back to Slovakia where they sought out the Jewish Council (Judenrat) to warn them of the impending disaster. The Vrba-Wetzler report was the first detailed documentation concerning the Auschwitz death camp to reach the free world and to be accepted as credible. Its authenticity broke the barrier of skepticism and apathy that had existed up to that point. However it is doubtful that the information it contained reached more than just a small part of the prospective victims. During May and June 1944, about 437,000 Hungarian Jews boarded, in good faith, the “resettlement” trains that were to carry them off to Auschwitz, where most of them were gassed on arrival.

In Escaping Auschwitz Ruth Linn establishes the chronology of Vrba’s disappearance not only from Auschwitz, but also from the Israeli Holocaust narrative, exposing how the official Israeli historiography of the Holocaust has sought to suppress the story. Vrba, who emigrated to Canada at war’s end, published his autobiography in England nearly forty years ago. Yet his and Wetzler’s story has been carefully kept from Israel’s Hebrew-reading public and appears nowhere in any of the history texts that are part of the official curriculum. As Ruth Linn writes, “Israeli Holocaust historiography was to follow the spirit of the court’s policy at the Eichmann trial: silencing and removing challenging survivors from the gallery, and muting questions about the role of the Jewish Council in the deportations”. In 1998 Linn arranged for publication of the first Hebrew edition of Vrba’s memoirs.

Ruth Linn is Dean of the Faculty of Education at Haifa University, Israel. She is the author of Not Shooting and Not Crying: A Psychological Inquiry into Moral Disobedience (1989), Conscience at War: The Israeli Soldier as a Moral Critic (1996), & Mature Unwed Mothers: Narratives of Moral Resistance (2002). In June 1998 Linn arranged for an honorary doctorate for Vrba from the Haifa University in recognition of his heroic escape from Auschwitz and his contribution to Holocaust education.

Special Thank You to Our Generous Book Donors

Thanks to your generosity, we will be giving 3,500 students a copy of Anne Frank: The Diary of A Young Girl.

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Art Toft
**Donation**

Ben Akselrod, to the Book In Every Hand Project. Rita Akselrod

Carol Givton, A gift membership at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has been purchased for you by Myra R. Elson

**Get Well**

Sid Doduck, We wish you a speedy recovery. The VHEC Board & Staff, The Child Survivor’s Group, Lola Apfelbaum, Josef & Shoshana Brandt, Gloria & Robbie Waisman, Ida Kaplan, Sheryl Davis-Kahn & Saul Kahn, David & Grace Ehrlich, Sala Zimmerman, Barbara & Herb Silber, Jody & Harvey Dales, Norman & Sheila Archeck, Geoffrey Drucker & Rozanne Kipnes, Ben & Rita Akselrod

David Feldman, Wishing you a speedy & healthy recovery. Art, Sam, & Al Szajman

Rose Folk, Have a full & complete recovery. David & Cathy Golden & Family, Irv Wolak & Susan & Joe Stein

Kathy Herman, Wishing you a speedy recovery. Daniel & Vera Wollner

Billie Laskin, Best wishes for a speedy recovery. Shoshana & Moshe Fidelman

Sam Mandelbaum, Get Well Soon. Art Szajman & Family

Rosa Marel, Best wishes for a speedy recovery. The Seniors at the Survivor Drop-In, Gloria Waisman & Gerri London

Herman Schwartz, Best wishes for a speedy recovery. Izzy Fraeme

Peter Seixas, thinking of you at this time. Frieda Miller & Daniel Shapiro, the Teacher’s Advisory Committee of the VHEC.

Bert Smollan, Wishing you a speedy recovery. Art, Sam & Al Szajman

Carol Young, Wishing you a speedy recovery. Ida Kaplan

**Mazel Tov**

Rita Akselrod, On becoming president of the VHEC Board. Susan Quastel

Dr. Jack & Lynn Albukerk, Happy 40th Anniversary. Helen & Karen Alko

Melissa Appleton, On your Graduation. Miri, Larry, Oren & Kayla Garaway

Miriam Benisky, On your Graduation. Miri, Larry, Oren & Kayla Garaway

Leon & Beth Bogner, On becoming Grandparents. Sheryl Davis-Kahn & Saul Kahn

Jackie & Joel Buller, Congratulations on your Anniversary. Gloria & Robbie Waisman

Lilian Boraks-Nemetz, on your Honour from Jewish Women International of Canada. The VHEC Board & Staff, Lois & Marvin Stark

Morris & Doris Bronstein, Happy Rosh Hoshana. You have received a Gift Membership to the VHEC. Philip Swartz

John Robert Columbo, on being asked to join the Order of Canada. Lillian Boraks-Nemetz

Andrew Davidson, on your B’nai Mitzvah! Myra Michaelson & Mary MacDonald

Sara Davidson, on your B’Nai Mitzvah. Myra Michaelson & Mary MacDonald

Ben Dayson, Congratulations on your award. Lillian Boraks Nemetz

Ben Dayson, Happy Birthday. Izzy Tischler & Reva Puterman

Aron & Ida Eichler, on your 50th Wedding Anniversary! Bev & Jeff Davis & Family

Alan Farber & Felicia Folk. On the occasion of your daughter’s wedding. The Mendelson Family

Revital Fidelman & Michael Ross, In honour of your marriage, a donation has been made to the Book in Every Hand Project. Jody & Harvey Dales

Shoshana & Moshe Fidelman, on the wedding of Revital to Michael. The Vancouver Child Survivor Group

Rose Folk, Happy Birthday. David Feldman, Susan Bluman, Margaret & Jack Fraeme

Rome & Hymie Fox, on Your Special Anniversary. Sandy Shuler & Doug Foulkes & Family, The Board & Staff of the VHEC

Mr. Kevin Freedman, on your High School Graduation. Miri, Larry, Oren & Kayla Garaway

S Fuller, on Receiving the Thomas Leonard Coaching Award. Frieda & Rome & The Board & Staff of the VHEC

Solly & Doreen Globman, Happy 50th Anniversary. Irv Wolak, Susan & Joe Stein

Gloria Harris, Happy Belated Birthday. Susan Bluman

Janos & Noni Mate, on the arrival of your newest Granddaughter. Frieda Miller & Daniel Shapiro

Miriam Matoff, Happy Birthday. Izak & Lili Folk

Dr. Robert & Elke Mermelstein, 40th Wedding Anniversary. Elfride Fuchs

Revital Fidelman & Michael Ross, In honour of your Simcha. Donna, Yoram & Ruthanne Levi

Chaim & Susy Micner, Happy Anniversary. Jack & Margaret Fraeme, Sala Zimmerman, Rachel Wosk, Esther Brandt, Gail & Richard Wenner


Liz Morantz, on the Completion of your Editor’s Certificate. Miri, Larry, Oren & Kayla Garaway
Mr. Leonard Polsky, Happy Birthday. Miri, Larry, Oren & Kayla Garaway

Heather Angel & Ronda Ashcroft, on your Wedding. Larry & Miri Garaway

Mrs. Robyn Segal, on your Graduation. Miri, Larry, Oren, & Kayla Garaway

Anita Shafran, Happy Special Birthday. Perry & Marilyn Ehrlich, Hymie, Rome, Aylee, Danya, & Aiden Fox

Karen Simkin, on your retirement. Larry & Miri Garaway

Dr. Avrum Soudack, Happy Birthday. Larry & Miri Garaway

Louise & Ike Stein-Sorensen, Happy Birthday to both of you. Frances Hoyd


Shlomo Wasserman, on the occasion of your Bar Mitzvah. Gail & Richard Wenner & Family

Richard & Gail Wenner, Happy 25th Anniversary. Anita Shafran

Arthur Wolak, on the publication of your book. Irv Wolak & Susan & Joe Stein

Tatyana Wolfman, on Your Bat Mitzvah. Myra Michaelson

Rahel Wosk, on a wonderful Simcha. Danny Shapiro, Frieda Miller & Rebecca Shapiro

**SYMPATHY**

Betty Averbach, Sorry about Louis’ passing. Esther Brandt

Len & Pauline Babins, on the loss of your Mother. Les & Karen Cohen & Family

Yolanda & Mark Babins & Family, on the loss of your Grandmother & Great-grandmother. Karen & Les Cohen

Pearl Bader & Family, on the loss of your beloved Mother. Jack & Margaret Fraeme & Frida & Family

Linda Clode, on the loss of your dear Mother. Frieda Miller, The Board & Staff of the vHec

Naomi Gropper & Daniel Steiner (also: Larry, Allison, George, Norma, Robert & Amanda), in memory of Mary Steiner. Wendy Oberlander

Michael Geller, on the passing of your Father. Rob & Marilyn Krell & Family

Robert Hector, on the passing of Lorna Balinsky. Gary & Tamar Lowy & Family, Richard & Joy Lowy

Arlene & Solly Kaplinski, in memory of Adolf Leon. Rosa & Elie Ferera

Ila Kramer, on the passing of your brother Aladar Grosz. Izzy Fraeme, Margaret & Jack Fraeme

Robert & Marilyn Krell & Family, to the Memorial Monument Repair Fund, in Honour of Emmy Krell. Josef Wosk

Robert & Marilyn Krell & Family, on the loss of your Mother. Gina Dimant

Sylvia Kruger, on the loss of your husband, father & grandfather. Jack & Henia Perel & Family

Sandy, Mickie & Shawn Magid, on the loss of your beloved Mother & Grandmother. Ida Kaplan, Izak & Lili Folk

Anna Markus, in memory of Alex Markus. Judith Nagy

Linda Rennert & Family, on the loss of your Mother. Jack & Margaret Fraeme & Frida & Family

Mrs. Riese, on the loss of your husband. The Board & Staff of the vHec

Mark & Eleanor Tischler, on the loss of your Mother, Clara Tischler. Harold & Bella Silverman

Aron Tischler, in memory of Dr. Isaac Tischler. Simon, Janice, Oren, & Corey Margolis

Dr. Bluma Tischler, on the passing of Isaac Tischler. Vulf & Maya Sternin

Annette Wasel & Family, on the passing of your beloved Mother & Grandmother. The Szajman Family

Sandie Yasin, in memory of Lucy Lacterman. Susan & Joe Stein

**THANK YOU**

Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, for your inspiring presentation. White Rock/South Surrey Jewish Community Centre

Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, for your help with translations. Rita & Marvin Weintraub

Alex Buckman, for speaking at our school. Panorama Park Elementary School

Alex Buckman, copies of *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank have been donated in your honour through the Book in Every Hand Project. The Board & Staff of the vHec

Patricia & Peter Chipman, for donating to the Book In Every Hand Program in honour of Pepi Dolberg.

Sheryl Davis-Kahn, for the kind gift. Cedar Morton & Sarah Ruediger

Sheryl Davis-Kahn, for helping us out with your artistic talent. Marilyn Krell, Phyllis, Marla, Page, & Marla

Dr. Chris Friedrichs, copies of *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank have been donated in your honour through the Book in Every Hand Project. The Board & Staff of the vHec

Gerri London & Gloria Waisman, copies of *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank have been donated in your honour through the Book in Every Hand Project. The Board & Staff of the vHec

Ida Kaplan, for all your baking & sandwiches. Gloria Waisman, Gerri London, & The Survivor Drop-in Group.

The Vancouver Jewish Mens’ Choir, copies of *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank have been donated in your honour through the Book in Every Hand Project. The Board & Staff of the vHec

Janos Mate, for the video. Shirley, Sol, Leyla & Abe Sacks

Danny Shapiro & Frieda Miller, for all your help. Art Hister & Phyllis Simon

Phyllis Simon & Art Hister, Thanks. Danny Shapiro & Frieda Miller

Peter Seixas, copies of *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank have been donated in your honour through the Book in Every Hand Project. The Board & Staff of the vHec

Stan Taviss, for your dedicated work on behalf of those who need your services, David Rubin

Robbie Waisman, for coming to speak at the Calgary Holocaust Symposium. The Calgary Jewish Centre

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MAY 29TH, 2005
Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre
10th Anniversary Gala Dinner
Vancouver Four Seasons Hotel

1994 – 2004

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Keynote Speaker
The Honourable Minister of Justice
Irwin Cotler

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