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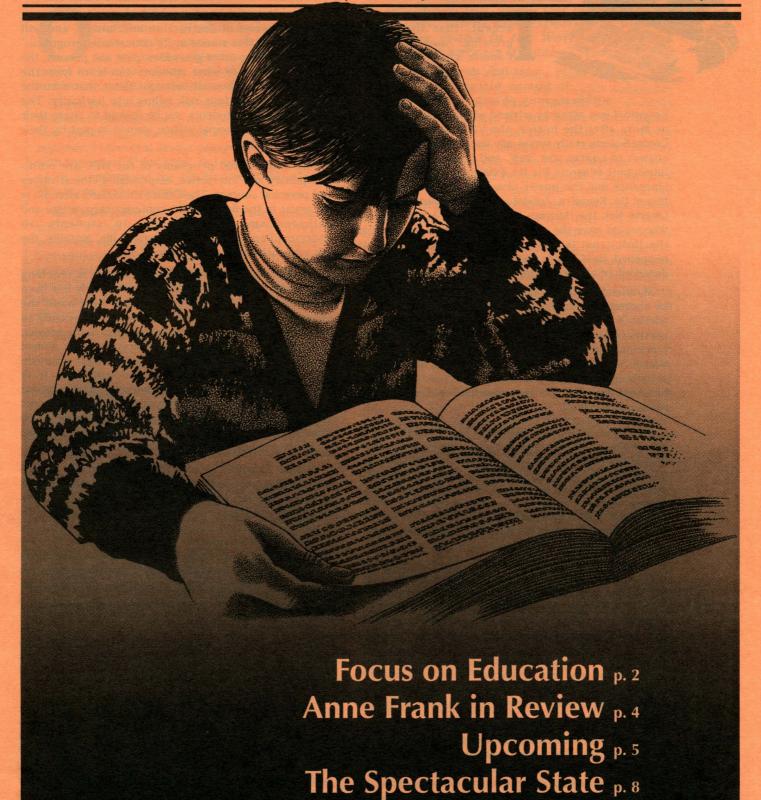


The Newsletter of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society

50 - 950 W 41st Ave., Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7

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February 1995



WHY STUDY THE HOLOCAUST?

By Stanley H. Winfield

t is hard to believe, or accept, that there is a growing movement in Canada which denies the most fully documented atrocity in human history, a catastrophe

within memory of many people still living. Recently I was asked by a friend whether, half a century or more after the horror, the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society really serves any worthwhile purpose. My answer of course was 'yes', and I gave him two very important reasons for its existence: the danger of ignorance and the power of anti-semitism. I reminded him of the Keegstra, Zundel and Collins triumvirate, the Liberty Net, the Heritage Front and the Aryan nations, who would have the young and/or gullible believe that the Holocaust is a hoax, that nothing of the sort happened, or if it did, was much less grave, was really deserved, or was some kind of Jewish provocation.

My friend shrugged off such charlatans and Neo-Nazis by suggesting that they are simply "a lunatic fringe" to whom few pay attention. A disturbing rejoinder, particularly since, as a Jew, he should know better. Unfortunately he is not alone in dismissing these racists, whose "theories" defile the memory of the millions who were murdered. It is intolerable that survivors of the butchery should suffer such anguish because of these revisionists' claims.

Since its incorporation in 1985, the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society for Education and Remembrance (VHCS) has sought to counter the calumny of Holocaust denial by promoting public education against racism and anti-semitism through knowledge of the events and implications of the Holocaust. The Society's Holocaust Education Centre will "interpret and present the events of the Holocaust, its antecedents and its contemporary relevance, as well as the continuity of the Jewish people and the human will to survive. Through its programs, resources and activities, it will assist teachers and students to learn what happened, to try to understand some of the reasons for it, and to develop skills and insights which will ensure that a Holocaust will never recur, to any group, anywhere, any time"*. In this regard, the Holocausat Education Centre (HEC) is an important resource for teachers preparing lessons dealing with human rights, recognizing that the Holocaust is a seminal crystallizing moment in the notion of human rights.

In preparing this article, I spoke with Frieda Miller, the HEC's dedicated Education Coordinator, about what she wants to accomplish. From our conversation, I came away with another answer to my friend's question. Frieda explained that the Holocaust Education Centre, never forgetting the horror of the Holocaust, but not sensationalizing or exploiting it, will ensure that the

Centre acts as a "museum of hope and justice as opposed to one of destruction and horror, and will communicate this stance in its educational programs." While respecting other genocides, past and present, the HEC is devoted to what students can learn from the lessons of the Holocaust, amongst them, that even the most civilized nations risk falling into barbarity. The hope is that the students will be moved to share their new insights into social justice, gained in part by their visit to the Centre.

The educational programs of the HEC are multidisciplinary and interactive, emphasizing ethical values and personal courage. The Centre's mandate, after all, is to "assist in the fight against contemporary racism and anti-semitism by developing in students an understanding and respect for human life, morality, the law, citizenship and social justice"*.

The Survivor Outreach Project, which is reaching thousands of British Columbia students yearly has been operating since 1986. Students hear first hand the experiences of survivors. A teacher wrote recently to David Ehrlich, a survivor who participates in the project, "Every student was deeply moved by your story....almost all asked questions - how is it possible? Your presence shows beyond a shadow of a doubt, that it is possible....Please be the one to keep on getting to our students first." Another teacher wrote, "It is my personal goal to make sure that no student from Fraser Valley Christian High leaves this school without being exposed to stories from people such as yourself."

Thanks to a 1991 grant of \$23,100 from the federal government, audio-visual eyewitness testimonies with teachers' manuals are now in circulation. Over 200 hours of testimonies have been recorded and stored in duplicate at Yale University's Fortunoff Archive of Holocaust Testimonies. In 1994, a grant from VanCity was received to continue taping survivors, liberators and rescuers for the VHCS Audio-Visual Documentation Project. A book of survivor accounts, Keeping the Memory: Fifteen Eyewitness Accounts of Victoria Holocaust Survivors by Rhoda Kaellis (VHCS, 1992), contains an introduction for teachers by West Vancouver high school history teacher, Kit Krieger. This project was funded by grants, donations and Society money and has been purchased by libraries, schools and individuals in Canada, the United States and Israel.

There are many well meaning people who ask if the VHCS and similar organizations simply re-nourish a terrible but futile anger towards Germans. I submit that the answer is a firm 'no.' As I grow more and more familiar with the VHCS, I see an organization committed to fighting and overcoming racism, not only as a memorial to the many millions of innocent people who perished, but as a

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OBJECT-BASED LEARNING: AN EXPLANATION

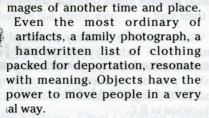
By Frieda Miller Holocaust Education Centre Education Coordinator

bject-based learning is a type of learning experience typical of museums. The Holocaust Education Centre is embarking on producing object-based resource trunks for loan to schools, centred on this concept and incorporating classroom lesson goals.

There are many different kinds of knowing. As I read about the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935, I learn how Jewish rights as citizens were systematically removed. I learn that Jewish passports were marked with the letter "J" for Jude. As I continue to read, I come to understand the significance of these laws. This is one kind of knowing.

As I take a yellow star of David with the word Jude written across it from its place in the archives, I notice the small black stitches around its perimeter. I imagine a mother threading a needle. I try to picture her features, her dress. I contemplate how I would feel if I were in her place, sewing this star to the coat of one of my own children. This is another kind of knowing.

The yellow star is an artifact, an object. Objects have a special power. They evoke



Object-based learning capitalizes on the power of ordinary artifacts to capture students' imaginations and engage their thoughts and feelings. For this to occur, students must be given the opportunity to experience the object by themselves. Our role, as educators, is to structure and extend students' experiences without interfering with them. This can be done in a variety of ways. including games and role playing, in which students are actively engaged in constructing meaning and scenarios. "Discovery kits", containing copies or facsimiles of real artifacts, can be developed for loan to schools. Students can hold and examine these facsimiles, in a way not possible with the delicate originals.

Because so many of the artifacts pertaining to Jewish life before and during the Holocaust were destroyed, those that remain seem all the more poignant and precious. The aim of the Holocaust Education Centre is to both conserve these artifacts and to use them for their expressive meaning in object-based learning.



A "big thank you" to all our volunteers for your time, talent and expertise in making the Anne Frank in the World exhibit the memorable success it was!

Jana Abramson, Claire Abramson, Philip Alderman, Rita Akselrod, Helen Alko, Karen Alko, Valerie Asmoucha, Jacques Barth, Nance Bass, Sharilyn Bell, Frances Belzberg, Susan Bluman, Barbara Bluman, Beth Bogner, Alex Buckman, Cecilia Burgart, Galia Chud, Perry Cloete, Charlotte Cohen, Shirley Cohn, Dorothy Cole, Fay Davis, Claudette Dayan, Anne Derek, Myriam Dinim, Betty Divinsky, Heather Dooks, Rhonda Douglas, Carol Downes, Irene Sophie Dual, June Earnshaw, Grace Ehrlich, Myra Elson, Brandi Epstein, Nina Feltz, Louise Foran, Klara Forrai, Graham Forst, Priscilla Fratkin, Leonore Freiman, Cathy Goldon, Effie Gordon, Kathy Gordon, Bea Goslin, Michelle Gumprich, Harper Haddon, Sharon Harowitz, Kitty Heller, Andrew Henry, Hannah Hirt, Margot Holmes, Judi Howitt, Evelyn Huberman, Bianca Jackson, Carol Jackson, Andrea Jordan, Lisa Kafka, Howard Kallner, Amir Kalman, Angela Kan, Ida Kaplan, Odie Kaplan, Jeff Ketchen, Rowena Kleinman, Luba Klot, Ethel Kofsky, Heather Korbin, Kit Krieger, Jacqui Larsen, Lucy Laufer, Danny Laufer, Lani Levine, Ketty Magil, Peppa Martin, Karen Micner, Sheila Milstein, Navah Mizrachi, Laureen Moe, Evelyn Neaman, Audrey Neumann, Dena Parker, Marianne Rev, Paul Richman, Liz Roelants, Susan Rome, Stuart Sandelson, Dahlia Scheindlin, Lil Shafran, Andrea Shalinsky, Freda Sher, Harriet Shine, Barbara Silber, Barbara Smith, Barbara Spencer, Stacey Offman, Helen Stewart, Wendy Stryer, Francis Switzer, Gwen Tessler, Lyliane Thal, Walter Uegama, Karina Wei, Stanley Winfield, Eve Wolochow, Ruth Wolochow.

A special thanks to the following survivors, who participated in the Survivor/Winess Program for the exhibit:

Agi Bergida, Tibor Bergida. Andre Blitz, Marion Cassirer, Mariette Doduck, Bill Gluck, Rene Goldman, Frances Hoyd, Batia Karton, Robert Krell, Celina Lieberman, Inge Manes, Michel Mielnicki, Lillian Boraks Nemetz, Peter Parker, Rubin Pinsky, Malka Pischanitskaya, Adam Policzer, Susan Quastel, Bronia Sonnenschein, Louise Stein Sorensen, Ruth Sigal, Peter Suedfeld, Serge Vanry, Robbie Waisman, Irene Kirstein Watts.

Some exhibit trivia...

Statistics: There were seven mother and daughter teams, one mother/son team, and several sister acts amongst our volunteers. Countries of origin represented by the survivor/witnesses: Hungary, Romania, France, Belgium, Poland, Germany, Ukraine, Holland and Austria. Number of child survivor participants: 20 witnesses, three docents.

THE ANNE FRANK EXHIBIT IN REVIEW



anuary 1995—it's hard to imagine that less than five weeks ago, the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society completed its first major educational program, "Anne Frank in the World: 1929 to 1945". Held in the new Holocaust Education Centre, the exhibit brought in 4,382 teachers and students in five weeks, some from as far away as the Okanagan and Vancouver Island. We were amazed at the number of schools (39 in all) who remained on the waiting list throughout the entire five weeks! Watching the daily busloads of children and teenagers entering the exhibit site was both exciting and rewarding for all of us. Their presence represented the fruits of our labour after the eight months of preparation, planning and anxieties that precede a project this large.

A great deal of thought and consultation went into the planning of the schools program. Our prime objective was to deliver a multi-dimensional approach to Anne Frank and the Holocaust within a one hour visit. We knew that, as wonderful as the actual exhibit photographs would be, many people might walk through the 500 photographs and remain untouched by the lessons of Anne Frank's life. We needed to engage students within a very limited amount of time. Judging from the feedback we have received, we were successful in creating a rich learning experience for educators and their students. So how did we do it?

First, we strived to ensure that the exhibit would not be a "crash course" on the Holocaust. Supporting teachers in their desire to use Anne Frank and other Holocaust resources in the classroom was one way of encouraging more in-depth study than a one-hour visit could provide. Frieda Miller, the VHCS Education Coordinator, in conjunction with the education subcommittee and the coordinators, developed a teachers' guide that could be used before and after the visit. It is a guide that can be adapted, without the exhibit, and re-used in years to come. It provided activities, resource sheets and discussion questions that teachers could easily integrate into their regular lesson plans and would adequately prepare students for their visit. It also suggested activities and "debriefing" discussions after the visit was completed.

In addition to the guide, a professional development workshop for teachers was organized to familiarize educators with the program they would be seeing and to answer any questions regarding the materials. The lasting value of field trips to exhibits such as "Anne Frank in the World" depends on the relevance and examination that the topics receive within the classroom.

We were also conscious of how easy it is to become overwhelmed—either by the horrors or by the vast amount of information available—when studying the Holocaust. For this reason, docents (volunteer educators) were very important to the school program. Their role was to engage the students and provide entry points to the exhibit. They introduced the exhibit, summarized and drew visitors' attention to key photos, answered a multitude of questions related to the exhibit and facilitated group discussion - all within 30 minutes! Each docent added their own personal touch to their presentations, making the exhibit cohesive and understandable to all students.

Third, we wanted students to leave with an understanding of the impact of the Holocaust and their own personal responsibility in helping to eliminate discrimination and prejudice. The Survivor/Witness Program was designed to illustrate that Anne Frank was one story of how Jews were discriminated against; there are millions of stories that remain unknown. Through the Witness Program, students and teachers met with survivors and heard other stories. We believe that personal testimony has the power, not only to illustrate the cruelty of discrimination, but also to inspire students to empathize and to examine their own role in preventing it from happening again. For most schools, the 30 minutes spent with the survivor was the highlight of their visit.

While we are extremely proud of the fact that the Anne Frank exhibit was so well-received by the education community, the schools program represents only a part of our success in reaching new audiences and furthering Holocaust awareness and anti-racism education in B.C.

Some say that the best way to learn something is to try and teach it. One of the achievements arising from this exhibit was the training of a new, dedicated and committed group of volunteers in Holocaust and antiracism education. A group of thirty docents led 215 separate groups in five weeks. This group of individuals, both Jewish and non-Jewish, transformed an interest in the Holocaust to a commitment to educate themselves and others on the repercussions of racism and discrimination. These individuals attended five mandatory training sessions and dedicated countless hours of reading and preparing their programs in addition to a minimum four hour-a-week commitment to act as front-line educators for the exhibit. A number of the docents have already testified as to how the experience of teaching others has changed their own lives and perspectives.

Another accomplishment facilitated by the exhibit was the renewal of our pool of Holocaust survivors willing to share their experiences with the next generation. While the VHCS is fortunate to have had an established contingent of survivors who regularly donate their time to speak to groups throughout B.C., it is clear that the numbers are dwindling as the demand

for their time is increasing. The Anne Frank Exhibit presented us with an opportunity to involve more survivors, child survivors and children of survivors in Holocaust education. This is a step that many survivors struggle with. It was awkward enough to ask these individuals to go through the difficult process of reliving and recounting hurtful memories; it was almost impossible to ask them to do it twice every hour for every shift they signed up for. Although painful and highly emotional, sharing this process with the survivors added profound depth to the entire exhibit.

Lastly, through the Exhibit's work in supporting adjunct community programs, the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society increased the steps it has traditionally taken towards reaching out to the broader community. Educators are always challenged to find new vehicles for introducing Holocaust themes. The Anne Frank Exhibit was proud to have collaborated with Living Voices Society of Seattle, Carousel Theatre, the Vancouver Symphony Society, the British Columbia Boys' Choir, the Vancouver and Surrey Public Libraries, Outspoken, UBC and UVIC Faculties of Law, UBC History Department, and the World Sikh Organization. Through concerts, lectures, discussion groups, public displays and dramatic presentations, more and more people are being drawn into exploration of racism, discrimination, genocide and the importance of defending human rights wherever and whenever they are diminished.

Years from now, a five week exhibit may seem a minor achievement. For now, all the 156 volunteers and the staff of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society can feel proud of having played a central role in placing antiracism objectives before the public eye.

UPCOMING

VHCS 1985 - 1995—10th Anniversary year

March 5 and 6: VHCS Casino, Great Canadian Casino, Richmond.

To volunteer and help keep the Society in the BLACK, call the office at 264-0499. WE NEED YOU! Our last casino netted over \$21,000. Please come out and help us repeat this success!

Sunday, March 12: Teachers' Workshop and Public Reading by Lillian Boraks Nemetz.

Lillian Boraks Nemetz will read from her new book, *The Old Brown Suitcase*, a fictionalized autobiography published by Ben Simon this past fall. In conjunction with Scott Bailey, a Burnaby literature teacher, she will give a reading and workshop at 11 am on using the book in the classroom. A Teachers' Manual accompanies this volume. At 2 PM, a public reading and question period will be held in the VHCS gallery. Admission is by donation. Boraks Nemetz, a child survivor from the Warsaw Ghetto who survived in hiding in the Polish countryside, has writen a book describing the adaptation of a child of the Holocaust to life as a young teen in Canada. Boraks Nemetz, an eloquent writer and reader, is presently touring under the Canada Council



Students from Moberley School

Authors' Program. For further information, contact VHCS Education Coordinator, Frieda Miller, or Elissa Checov, at 264-0499.

Sunday, March 26: Opening of "Thanks To Scandinavia."

Watch the JWB and the next issue of Zachor for further details on this photographic exhibit detailing the rescue of Denmark's Jewish population during the Nazi occupation. The grassroots rescue effort is told in the words of the survivors and rescuers. Docent tours and visits with survivor/witnesses and community programs will be part of this co-operative project with the Jewish Festival of the Arts Society and the Scandinavian community. Chairman is Norman Gladstone, who initiated the project.

Thursday, April 27: Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The annual memorial service, chaired by Leo Lowy, will be held at the monument in Schara Tzedeck cemetery at 11:00 AM. followed at 8PM by the annual community commemoration at the Beth Israel synagogue, sponsored for the first time this year by the Society. Co-chairs are Cathy Golden and Ethel Kofsky. These occasions will mark the fiftieth year since the liberation of Nazi Europe. Further details will be provided closer to the date.

May 3 and 4: Twentieth Annual Symposium on the Holocaust.

The Standing Committe on the Holocaust, co-chaired by Drs. Graham Forst and Robert Krell, is now doing its work from the offices of the Holocaust Edcuation Centre. This event will once again be held at UBC on May 3 and 4.

Special Interest Groups: We are updating our lists for both these groups, who would appreciate any changes to your address or phone number. New members are always welcome.

Child Survivor Group, chair Dr. Serge Vanry. For further information on monthly meetings and conferences, please call 264-0499.

Second Generation Group, co-chairs Max Pinsky and Alina Wydra. For further information on bi-monthly meetings, annual family picnic and annual conference, call 264-0499.

ERADICATING RACISM THROUGH EDUCATION:

STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND THE ANNE FRANK EXHIBIT



by Anne LeBlanc, Anne Frank School Programs Coordinator

nne Frank in the World: 1929-1945" was an overwhelming success with the teachers and students who attended the ositive evaluations, letters, class projects and

exhibit. Positive evaluations, letters, class projects and thank you cards have poured in over the past few weeks.

Fifty-three schools were able to send one or more classes to the exhibit. There were 39 schools representing approximately 1600 students on our waiting list. In all, more than 4300 students and teachers were able to learn more about Anne Frank and hear a Holocaust survivor's story. (Due to the waiting list, a further 4,000 were addressed by a survivor at their schools, from Abbottsford to West Vancouver.)

The students who wrote us seemed very touched and had gained a wealth of new knowledge about the Holocaust and racism in general. These students showed an incredible sensitivity on both these subjects. Judging from their comments and letters, and those of their teachers, the students found their encounter with a Holocaust survivor to be the most moving and interesting part of their visit. They recognized the courage it took for the survivors to tell their stories. Often shocked and horrified by what they heard, at the same time many were awed and encouraged that a human being could overcome such impossible circumstances. Many teachers commented that these survivor talks were invaluable in that they brought history to life... books and movies aside, these people were there.

Here is a sample of what some students and teachers had to say about survivor talks:

- "I thought that it was good to bring the witness because she could answer our questions better because she was there to experience what happened during the Holocaust."—Andrew (elementary student)
- "The witness was a very good speaker. I saw that it was very hard for her to talk about what happened to her and her family. She talked very well about racism. Racism is a very important part to the Holocaust. It was what started everything."—Marissa (grade 8 student)
- "It made the history more real to the children." Nurit (elementary teacher)
- "[The survivor talk was] essential. It provided the immediacy and reality otherwise difficult to convey to young students." (a grade 7 teacher)

The docent tours of the exhibit were also much appreciated. Most teachers felt that there was a lot of information contained in the seventy-three panels that made up the photo exhibit. These teachers also felt that the docents (the volunteer educator/tour gour guides) did an excellent job of sorting through the wealth of information and picking out the most relevant, most interesting photographs for the students. Many teachers

of younger students, and ESL teachers, were impressed at the docents' abilities to adapt their presentations to the age and language levels of their students. Other teachers and parents felt that the docents related well to the students and were quite skillful at getting across the important messages of fighting racism and accepting oneanother's differences.

Some comments on the docent tours:

- "The docent was well-informed and had a friendly demeanor; She also made good use of limited time by focusing on key events." (a grade 7 teacher)
- "The docent was very good with our students He approached the material on a level that they could understand and deal with." (a grade 9 teacher)
- "The docent did a superb job and related superbly with the students." (an elementary teacher)

The message and purpose of the exhibit was not lost on the teachers or students. Anne Frank wrote in her diary in May, 1944: "What is done cannot be undone, but one can prevent it happening again." That message was echoed in the letters and responses we received. One grade 8 student, Celine, wrote us: "I think the pictures helped a lot. They were giving us a message that if we are not careful, all of this could happen again. It's still going on in this world (not as much) but it's still going on." Many of the responding teachers wrote about how they had been telling their students that racism and genocide still exist today. One junior high teacher wrote, "I think the focus in the exhibit on the gradual, systematic exploitation of and change in government policies that led to Hitler's Third Reich and the Holocaust is precisely the message that students need. Their first response, usually following a kind of disbelief, is 'How could such a thing happen?' or 'It could never happen here.' Thank you for supporting my teaching." (a grade 7 teacher).

Many teachers see the importance of educating their students on social issues but may not always get the support they need. Exhibits like "Anne Frank in the World: 1929-1945" serve to reinforce and bring to life the valuable lessons many teachers are trying to get across to their students. One high school teacher wrote: "An excellent presentation dealing with survival in the midst of the wickedness of mankind. We need to be reminded of the Holocaust and discrimination in order to prevent it from recurring. Thank you!". Another teacher wrote these words of praise: "A very valid and valuable teaching experience. The students came away with a real sense of the magnitude of the Holocaust and the horror of institutionalized racism. Thank you! You're doing an important job!"

Inscribed on the front door of the Holocaust Education Centre is, "Dedicated to the memory of those who perished. Committed to eradicating racism through education." Projects like the Anne Frank in the World:

Continued on p. 9

ANNE FRANK IN THE WORLD: A DOCENT'S LIFE

by Perry Cloete

Perry recently resigned from his position with an airline to "work" as a docent and pursue ESL training, his goal being to train airline staff in English skills.

t was an overwhelming task in the beginning-to learn about the 500+ pictures in the exhibit and try to put them into a logical sequence to be presented to the public. I had to change words and phrases etc., to meet the needs of the various age groups and language skills (i.e., ESL) of my audience. We docents had excellent training provided by various teachers to educate us in aspects of racism, history, Nazism etc.

I found a great deal of satisfaction in dealing with the various school groups I took through the exhibit. They were always attentive, interested, and asked questions at the appropriate times. The photo exhibit was interesting to them.

The interaction between the students and the members of the Survivor Witness Program was fascinating. The student's were mesmerized by the stories. Often uncomfortable with what was being presented, they were nevertheless appreciative of the speaker's time. I would try to tie in the photo exhibit with each survivor's story and introduce these people as "living history", which made the issues of racism and the Holocaust alive and personal.

One class, I remember well. As they listened to a witness, a hidden child, recount how she was terrified that another child in the convent might expose her as a Jew, I could see their faces and looks of apprehension. When I asked if they had questions, the majority of the questions were about the girl who could have betrayed her. Why didn't she? Was her father a Nazi? Did the survivor ever see her again? How did the survivor feel toward her? I then realized that they were around the same age as that potential betrayer and were relating their feelings, as children, toward a child, regardless if the witness in front of them was now an adult. The speaker and myself were surprised at the level of interest directed toward this unknown child.

My time as a docent was very stimulating and enjoyable. I continued to rework and incorporate more information as the exhibit continued. I learned a great deal from a group of Dutch senior citizens who all lived through the invasion, occupation and horrors of the "hunger winter". Their personal accounts added another dimension to the photos. From the witnesses I felt the emotion of their ordeals and tried to impart this to visitors in dealing with the whys and hows of the Holocaust and racism.

I felt privileged and fortunate to have been a part of this exhibit, and to have met the courageous members of the witness program who were so giving of themselves. Also, as a Christian, I have gained a greater appreciation of the strength and conviction of the Jewish people.



Anne Frank bookstore Committee members

PLANNED GIVING—A WAY TO EDUCATE OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS!

The VHCS would like you to consider making a planned gift to the Society. A planned gift can take many forms. The simplest way to leave a planned or deferred gift to the VHCS is to leave a bequest in your will or a gift of life insurance. Yes, I have made provision for a Planned Gift to the VHCS

Yes, I would like to make a Planned Gift to the VHCS and would like more information about:

Bequest in my Will

☐ Life Insurnace

■ Wording for my Will

Other options available

I would like to talk to a VHCS representative about Planned Giving.

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Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society, 50 - 950 West 41st Ave. Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7

THE SPECTACULAR STATE: FASCISM AND THE MODERN IMAGINATION

by Barbara Duncan, Sourayan Mookerjea, Richard Pinet & Derek Simons, with assistance from Debleka Guin

What is the Spectacular State?

The Spectacular State: Fascism and the Modern Imagination is a public forum which brings together artists, activists and scholars to generate critical discussion about historical and contemporary manifestations of fascism including film and video screenings, art exhibits, lectures, panels and discussion groups in a range of venues.

Why look at Fascism now?

There are numerous reasons why a public forum dedicated to the critical examination of fascism is especially urgent.

The most immediate and obvious reason is the resurgence of neo-nazism and the extreme right and the resultant need to understand how these movements operate so that they can be more effectively resisted.

Nineteen ninety-five marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the European Holocaust and the beginning of international recognition of its crimes and atrocities. Although this part of history has had a pivotal role in contemporary understanding of fascism, we are still far from acknowledging its full significance and consequences and no less immune to ethically and racially motivated violence.

The contemporary political climate is characterized by increasing economic and cultural globalization, scarcity of resources, and fractious micro-politics. The subsequent environment of uncertainty, friction and fear could provide fertile breeding grounds for (a resurgence of) fascism.

Finally, the word 'fascism' is used more frequently in the media, popular vocabulary and political analysis in order to describe and condemn a variety of situations and behaviours. Does the wide use of the word threaten to drain its meaning, or does it indicate the need to consider the wide variety of contexts in which fascistic sensibilities can flourish?



Students look at ancient Haggadahs

How is the Spectacular State looking at Fascism?

The ways in which fascism effects memory and history, the manner in which fascism is configured in the popular imagination and the ways in which it is inscribed upon the body are the three themes around which this project is organized.

Memory: What we understand as 'history' is often the site of struggle between competing understandings of the present. This becomes particularly apparent in the often acrimonious debates surrounding the history of the Third Reich. This area will address such questions as: Who decides what is remembered? Why do some perspectives gain historical authority while others do not? What are the relationships between memory, mourning and justice?

Imagination: Although the accuracy of the claim is debatable, democracy is often understood as everything which fascism is not. Among other issues, this section will address how representations of fascism in popular culture both form and restrict popular understandings of political culture and how people use their knowledge of fascism to name and comprehend their everyday private and public experiences.

Body: This thematic area investigates the rhetoric of "health" and "disease" as they become a means of dominating individual bodies and providing political metaphors for control over the body politic.

When undertaking a project of this kind, there is a danger of giving the impression that fascism is inexorable or unconquerable. Consequently, the presentations which fall within these thematic areas will also include discussion of active struggles which are taking place to resist fascist practise and ideology. We also hope to offset the risk of viewing fascism as a solely European phenomenon by focusing on a variety of geo-political contexts.

What are the aims of the Spectacular State?

The most crucial aim of the Spectacular State is to provide a forum for a wide variety of critical perspectives on fascism. We recognize, however, that despite the range of issues and voices that are featured in this project, what is presented here is not a complete picture, or the last word, on fascism.

The absences, gaps and silences in the programming also reveal the difficulties of creating public spaces where diverse individuals can participate and engage in dialogue about issues of mutual concern. While we do not want to perpetuate the claim that all differences need to be reconciled, the general aim of this project indicates our hope that some of the difficulties of working with diverse social and political communities can be overcome. When dealing with a topic as pressing as the revival of fascism, doing so may be part of our survival.

We look forward to enlightening discussion of these and other issues during the seven weeks of the Spectacular State. We invite you to join us.

THE SPECTACULAR STATE: ART SECTION

by curator - Anne Rosenberg

Anne Rosenberg is a curator, critic, educator and proprietor of Foto*Base gallery. She taught art history at Capilano College for 17 years and was art reviewer for the Vancouver Sun from 1990-93.

Many of the works included in the art exhibits of the Spectacular State allude directly to the degradation and destruction of the Jews and other minority groups under the Nazi regime. Several were created by Nomi Kaplan, Angela Grossmann, Burrell Swartz and Ronald Zisman, Canadians of Jewish ancestry who were motivated by a desire to present circumstances that were in danger of being forgotten in a decade when synagogues and cemeteries were being vandalized and Neo-Nazi hooligans were terrorizing foreigners. Some pieces eulogize the victims of the Holocaust. Others refer to now forsaken graveyards where European forbears were buried; still others depict patches which identified the many classifications of beings who were labelled, then systematically destroyed in the crematoria of the Third Reich.

In view of the numerous recent instances of racially and politically-motivated genocides and acts of terror promulgated by fanatical groups, it is more important than ever to be reminded of this Holocaust. It is critical at this time to recognize and redress the instances of racism and abuses of power that have occurred all too often in our short history. Sadly, however, prejudice, xenophobia and general intolerance are on the increase in our so-called democratic state.

Two works by Mark Grady and Jon Baturin are based on visual strategies the Third Reich found useful. Gary Ouimet's recently-produced photo documentaries of graffiti in Gastown alleys contain evidence of the kind of racial slurs and stereotyping that fuel violence in the streets. These words are as inflammatory as those printed in ultra right-wing pamphlets that are also part of the Spectacular State exhibits.

Unpleasant facts about Canadian treatment of minority groups are revealed through other artworks on display in the various Spectacular State gallery sites. Dorrie Williams' image of a priest, fondling himself as he fingers a rosary comprised of the faces of Native children, alludes to the deprivation of culture and abuse young people have endured in government-sanctioned educational institutions. The paper jackets in Sharyn Yuen's 'John Chinaman' are imprinted with reference to the Exclusion Act laws which, between 1923 -1947, made it impossible for Chinese Canadian citizens to bring their spouses and children to this country. Haruko Okano's 'White Rice", which leavens bitterness with humour, is a sculpture that triggers recollections of the mistreatment of Japanese Canadians who, during WW II, were deprived of property and confined to camps.

In the face of these objects, which demonstrate that Canadian society is by no means free of prejudice, it is perhaps less difficult to admit that, as Mark Grady suggests, "there is a little bit of Hitler in all of us."

For a list of galleries and dates, please look in the Sun, Georgia Straight, Preview, and the Spectacular State flier



available at the VHCS Holocaust Education Centre gallery.

Participating Artists: Janet Altshool; Jon Baturin; Persimmon Blackridge, Lizard Jones and Susan Stewart; Susan Edelstein; Dianna Frid; Jeremy Galpin; Jochen Gerz; Mark Grady; Anthony Griffin; Johann Groebner; Angela Grossmann; Nomi Kaplan; Michael Christopher Lawlor; Faith Moosang; my name is scot; Haruko Okano; Irwin Oostindie; Gary Ouimet; Davide Pan; Paul Perchal; Jayce Salloum; Burrell Swartz; Dorrie Williams; Jin-me Yoon; Sharyn Yuen; Ronald Zisman.

Why Study the Holocaust Continued from p. 2

means of healing—by using the negative experiences of the Holocaust towards positive ends.

Stan Winfield, a retired lawyer, and a member of Zachor's editorial board and the VHCS Archive Committee, was in Bergen Belsen with the Royal Canadian Air Force following liberation.

*VHCS Education Policy document

Eradicating Racism Continued from p. 6

1929 - 1945 exhibit help fulfill this mandate.

A grade five pupil, responding to her teacher's concern about the class being too young to hear of a survivor's experience, asks: "If you don't tell us the stories, how do you expect us ever to understand the problems?"

THE SPECTACULAR STATE ARTISTS OPENING

8:00 PM, Tuesday, February 14, VHCS Holocaust Education Centre, 50 - 950 West 41st Avenue. For further information call 264-0499

Exhibit Dates & Times are 9 - 5 weekdays February 14 - March 15



THE SPECTACULAR STATE: Holocaust Education Centre Events

Tuesday, February 22, 8:00 PM

ART EXHIBIT OPENING

Exhibit open 9 – 5 weekdays from February 14 through March 15.

Wednesday, February 22, 8:00 PM

FILM

Silent Witness (Harriet Wichin, Canada, 1993, 97 minutes)

Speaker: David Paperny

An eloquent portrait of Dachau and Auschwitz as they exist today, threatened by both the erosion of time and by renewed efforts to erase the past. A mediation on commemoration and preservation through interviews with people who live and work on these sites today. "An impeccably crafted and poetic evocation of the losses and struggles of the Holocaust, Silent Witness is an enlightening encounter with the past as it continues to play itself out on the landscape of what remains of the concentration camps." (David McIntosh/Cinema Libre).

David Paperny, a Vancouver-based documentary film maker, is presently completing *Prisoner 88*, a one hour documentary about Sigmund Sobolewski, a Roman Catholic survivor of Auschwitz.

Monday, February 27, 7:30 PM

PANEL: Part 1

Memory, Mastery and Monumentality: How Societies Forget, Recall and Promise to Remember

Richard Pinet: moderator

Richard Wolin: "About Forgetting: Left Fascism in France in the Thirties"

Rita De Grandis: "Le fait divers: Collective Memory and the Fate of the Disappeared in Argentina"

Jery Zaslove: "The Totems and Taboos of Remembering: The Grotesque Phantasmagoria and the Problems of Remembering Fascism at the End of the Century of Total War".

Richard Pinet teaches and is a graduate student at SFU School of Communications. His research involves media and culture and the social impact of new communications technologies.

Richard Wolin teaches Intellectual History at Rice University, Houston Texas. He is the author of several books on German philosophers Walter Benjamin and Martin Heidegger, and other works.

Rita De Grandis teaches in the Department of Latin American Studies at Simon Fraser University.

Jery Zaslove teaches literature and humanities at Simon Fraser University and is Director of its Institute for the Humanities.

Part 2 takes place the following evening at SFU downtown. For details call **291-9095**.

Thursday, March 2, 7:30 PM

LECTURE

Vesna A. Bonac: "The Law of the Herd: A Psychoanalytic Discussion of Madness in Groups" (7:30 PM)

James Lindfield: "Facing Fascism: The Search for the Roots" (9:00 PM)

This multi-media presentation examines the search for understanding the causes of authoritarianism. Subjects will include Adorno's post WW II concept of F(ascist) Personality, Milgram's experiments with Obedience in the Vietnam era and the contemporary ideas of Alice Miller and Philip Greven. There will a be screening of "Obedience."

Vesna Bonac practises communicative psychotherapy and psychoanalysis with adults and children. She studied at the University of Ljubliana, Vassar, UBC and PCCE in New York.

James Lindfield is an artist whose work is in part concerned with institutionalized violence. He is currently teaching at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver.

Thank you to our January volunteers: Susan Bluman, Marilyn Krell, Linda Tennenbaum, Karen Micner

Best wishes to the Holocaust Education Centre now and in the future—Andre Blitz

Todah Rabah to the Holocaust Education Centre and the Anne Frank exhibit committee for a wonderful experience—**Dr. Jacques Barth**, *docent*

TRIBUTE CARDS

The VHCS gratefully acknowledges contributions through Tribute cards. To order a card for any occasion, please call **Grace Ehrlich** (327-8064), **Regina Feldman** (327-3358), or **Elissa** at the office (734-5325).

For your convenience, the VHCS now takes Mastercard and Visa.

TO DONATE ARTIFACTS OR BOOKS

call collections chairman Rubin Pinsky, 873-9842

UPDATES

Outreach Report: Chair, Rita Akselrod

(July/94 - January/95; 3,915 students addressed) Camp Hatikvah, Oyama, B.C.-Lola Apfelbaum, Bronia Sonnenschein; Vancouver Art Gallery Facing History and Ourselves-Bronia Sonnenschein; Adult Education Centre, New Westminster-Robbie Waisman; Fraser Valley Christian High, Abbotsford—David Ehrlich; Hillel, UBC-Rene Goldman, Bronia Sonnenschein, David Ehrlich; Mennonite Education Institute, Clearbrook— Robbie Waisman; Johnston Heights Secondary, Surrey— David Ehrlich; Norquay Elementary-Bronia Sonnenschein; London Senior Secondary-Bronia Sonnenschein; Vancouver Multiculural Society—Peter Parker; Bear Creek Elementary, Surrey-Peter Parker; Fleetwood Park Elementary—Peter Parker; Kitsilano Secondary-Louise Stein Sorensen; Queen Mary Middle School—Celina Lieberman; Corpus Christi—Louise Stein Sorensen; Hillside Middle School, West Vancouver-Mariette Doduck; Roberts Creek Elementary-Marion Cassirer; The Door Works Women's Group-Bronia Sonnenschein; Burnsview Junior Secondary, Coquitlam—Bill Gluck; Vancouver College—Bill Gluck;

Centennial Secondary—Peter Parker; Old Yale Secondary, Surrey—Serge Vanry; Citadel Middle School—Robbie Waisman.

Thank you to each of you for a difficult job doing double duty this fall.

To arrange for a survivor/witness to speak to your school or group, please call the Society office at 264-0499. A program can also be planned to take place at the Holocaust Education Centre.

Special Kudos

VHCS board member, Outreach chair and Anne Frank exhibit co-chair **Rita Akselrod** was surprised with the Pola Lenga award at the Jewish Family Service Agency Annual General Meeting in December. The award recognizes "the special quality of unreserved commitment" as exemplified by the late Pola Lenga. A supporter of many volunteer organizations in Vancouver, Rita co-founded the JFSA Grief Support Group in 1987.

SYMPATHY

Irene Abramson - in memory of Helen Weiss, from Ben & Rose Folk; Esther Kaufman

Irene Bettinger - In memory of your husband, from Sophie Waldman

Sylvia Bricker & Family - in memory of husband, from Pearl Adilman

Lola Donnermann - in memory of your husband, Rudolf, from Edmond & Pnina Granirer

Christopher Friedrichs - in memory of your mother, from the VHCS Board

Max Fugman & Michael Fugman & Families - in memory of Granny Mallek, from David & Cathy Golden.

Leon & Leyla Getz - in memory of mother, from Paul & Edwina Heller.

Irving & Noreen Glassner & Family - in memory of Eugenia, from Sam & Lola Haber; the VHCS board.

Shirley Gluck - in memory of brother, from Izzy & Bertha Fraeme

The Hardin Family - in memory of mother, from David & Grace Ehrlich

Sella Heller & Family- in memory of your husband, Samuel Heller, from the VHCS board; Sharon Harowitz & Bob Willmot; Yale & Carole Malkin; Leon & Evelyn Kahn; Paul & Edwina Heller; Richard Saper; Irene, Lori & Dana Bettinger

Paul & Edwina Heller - in memory of son-in-law, from the VHCS Board; Sophie Waldman

Paul & Edwina Heller - in memory of brother, Sam, from the VHCS Board; Ronnie Tessler; Liliana & Carol Abraham; Susan Bluman

Michael & Vicky Heller - in memory of father, Sam,

from Harry & Elaine Lipetz

Oscar Jason - in memory of your dear friend Gita Kron from Ronnie Tessler

Sandi Karmel - in memory of your father, from Susan Bluman

Ethel Karmel - in memory of husband, Johnny, from Henry & Pola Nutkiewicz; David & Regina Feldman; Harvey & Jody Dales.

Mrs. J. Karmelov & Family - in memory of your husband & father, from Grace & David Ehrlich

Myrna Koffman - in memory of your father, from Sam & Lola Haber

The family of Gita Kron - in memory of mother and grandmother, from Naomi, Jack & Myles Wolfe.

Dr. Lyall Levy & Family - in memory of father, from David & Grace Ehrlich

Mrs. Joe Lewin - in memory of your sister, Helen Weiss, from Ida Kaplan; Ben & Rose Folk; Esther Kaufamnn.

Mickey & Sandy Magid & Son - in memory of Mickey's sister, from Harry & Ruth Dashevsky

Michael Northy - in memory of mother, from Henry & Pola Nutkiewicz; the VHCS education committee

Dorothy Pelzman - in memory of your husband, Jack, from David & Lil Shafran; Leo & Jocy Lowy

Jennie Pinsky & Family - in memory of your brother, from the VHCS Board

Cynthia & David Prasow - in memory of your father, Ben Maerov, from Joanne & Steve

Eeta Rolingher - in memory of mother, from Lee &

Milt Freiman; Susan Bluman

Tammy Rosenblatt - in memory of your sister, Sharon, from Larry & Lyliane Thal

Esther Seidelman - in memory of sister, from Harry & Rachel Wosk.

Ruth & Cecil Sigal & Family - in memory of mother, grandmother & great grandmother, Gita Kron, from the VHCS board; Patricia & Roberto Schwartz; Odie Kaplan; Evelyn & Tom Goldman; Lillian Nemetz; Ruth & Bud Wolochow; Mark, Alana, & Jonathan James, Susie & Sven Johansen & Gail & Mickey James; Eve Zilberman; Estelle & Jerry, Michelle, Shawn & Tami Bleet; Cynthia & Lyall Levy; Marie Hardin & Emma Moscovitz; Joanne & Steve Emerman; Michla & Samuel Kornfeld; Anna Rosenberg & Family; Dr. Yale & Carole Malkin; Jeanette & Harry Greenhut & Family; Debbie Archeck; Sheila & Norman Archeck; Heather Wolfe; Esther & Martin Glotman; Jack & Karen Micner & Family; Vicki Arlen; Jessica & Leigh Rothstein; Diane & Sonny Friedman; Myra, Tami & Dena Michaelson; Sharon Harowitz & Bob Willmot; Claire Sutton; Helen & Bob Coleman; Myra Saslaff; Barry & Ronnie Tessler; Frances Huberman; Rowena & David Huberman; Rosalee & Earl Hardin; Sophie Waldman; Susan Curtis; the Rosenfeld Family; Bluma & Isaak Tischler

Marilee Sigal & Family - in memory of your grandmother, Gita Kron, from the J.F.S.A. board; Barry, Karen, Sarah & Daniel Corrin

Ronnie Tessler- in memory of your father, Manny Bricker, from Odie Kaplan; Barry Dunner & Su T. Fitterman; Norman Gladstone & Birgit Westergaard; Bette-Jane & Richard Israels; Rae & Leon Tessler

The Toban Family - in memory of Howard Toban, from Leo & Jocy Lowy; Izzy & Cookie Mackoff

GIFTS & DONATIONS

(October 22, 1994 - January 15, 1995)

Gifts

Lillian Boraks Nemetz - shelf of books

Eva Miller - gift for "continued success"

Susan Quastel - gift to Library & Video Fund

Isaac & Helen Parker - donation to Library & Video Fund

Stanley H. Winfield - donation of 2 video's per year to Library

Susan Bluman - one year subscription for Library

Gerry, Mark, Dana & David London - book in honour of Mariette & Sid Doduck's 40th anniversary

Marion Cassirer - in memory of her father Walter Bruno Kaufman

Delia van Haren - in memory of her husband Albert van Haren

Peggy Shmid - NFB video on liberation

Susan Ouastel - vase

Klara Forrai - liberation & post liberation photos

Paul Meyer - translations, photos, 1932 commemorative book

Ray & Grace McCarthy - flowers for opening

Pamela Schneider - donation in honour of Bronia Sonnenschein

Ronnie Tessler - books

Donations

Rabbi Philip Bregman

Sofia Lutovich

Andre Blitz

Ben & Rose Folk

Lawrie & Barbara Halparin

William & Hilary Nicholls

Sara Rozenberg-Warm

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Karen Mason

Dr. Robin & Beverley Friedlander

Michael & Sally Geller

William Harrison

Sidney Field

Eliane Klein & Glenn Laufer

P. Daniel Majewski (to Anne Frank exhibit)

Rae Doduck (to Anne Frank exhibit)

Pamela Schneider (to Anne Frank exhibit)

Cindy E. Charkow (to Anne Frank exhibit)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Your gift to the VHCS Holocaust Education Centre and its Endowment Fund and Planned Giving Program assist us in delivering Holocaust education to B.C. students and teachers. Please consider becoming a partner in these efforts. To learn more about planned giving or deferred gifts, please call Judy Daughney in the Society office. Your gift will help to ensure a perpetual legacy of Holocaust-based anti-racism education in British Columbia.

NewDonors-

October 22, 1994 - January 15, 1995

Honourable John A. Fraser

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Arthur & Nadine Lipetz

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Jeremy & Sheila Bowman

Sylvia Bricker

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New Founder

Marion Cassirer

Thank you to the following for increasing their pledges

Sidney & Mariette Doduck

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Robert & Marilyn Krell

Leo Krell Book Fund

Lillian Boraks Nemetz

Ben and Rose Folk

Irene Kirstein Watts

Thank you to the following for their gifts to the VHCS Planned Giving Program

Paul Meyer Jacques Kneller

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Faye & Kelly Belogus - from Leo & Jocy Lowy

Harvey Bernbaum - from David & Regina Feldman

Dick Couleander - from Rosa & Elie Ferara

Sylviane Feder - Second Generation Committee, thinking of you and wishing your mother well

Lili Folk - from Rita & Ben Akselrod; Bernice Neuwirth; Saul & Rosalie Dimant; Aaron and Terry Szajman; Helen Berger

Jenny Klein - from Izzy & Bertha Fraeme

Rosemarie Mammon - from Sam & Lola Haber; Rose & Ben Folk; Joe & Rose Lewin; Esther Kaufman

Dr. Gary Romalis - from Joe, Esther, Jacob & Jedidiah Blumes; Esther Kaufman, Lyliane, Larry, Todd & Ricki Thal; Harvey & Jody Dales; Emmy Krell; Patricia & Roberto Schwartz

Ruth Toban - from Susan Bluman

MAZEL TOV

Rita Akselrod - on winning JFSA's Pola Lenga Award, from the VHCS Board

Rabbi & Elana Benarroch - on the birth of your child, from Odie Kaplan

Arthur and Rose Chinkis - in honour of your golden anniversary, from Syd & Nina Narvey; Leo & Jocy Lowy

Isadore & Valerie Diamond - On your 40th anniversary, from David & Lil Shafran

Sid & Mariette Doduck - On your 40th anniversary, from Gerri & Mark London; Hedy & Barney Vinegar

Caitlin Johnston - on the birth of your son, Jose Gabriel from the Anne Frank staff and volunteers

Robert & Marilyn Krell - on the opening of the new Holocaust Education Centre, from Len & Brenda Wall

Gerri London - special birthday, from Charna Plottel; Sid & Marie Doduck

Perry Maerov - special birthday, from Frieda Miller & Danny Shapiro

Edie Meyer - happy birthday, from Paul Meyer

Teresa Pryce & Mario Baff - on the birth of your son, from the VHCS Board

Olga & Eugene Schwartz - happy special birthdays, from Helen Berger; Inge Manes; Agi & Tibor Bergida; VHCS board

Patricia & Roberto Schwartz - for all your mazels, from Carol & Terry Kline

Ronnie Tessler - on the opening of the Holocaust Education Centre, from Cindy Mayberger

Marvin Weintraub - special birthday, from Lee & Milt

Leo Lowy - in honour of your liberation, from Ronnie & Barry Tessler

THANK YOU

Victor Liff - From Leo & Jocy Lowy

"Remember. For there is, there must be, hope in remembering" — Elie Wiesel