

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

# ZACHOR



Wolfe Lejb Bukhsh  
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WINTER 2019

THE NEW  
VHEC WEBSITE

BREAKING THE SILENCE IN  
THE THIRD GENERATION

NEW INSTALLATION ON  
PRE-WAR JEWISH LIFE





604.264.0499 | INFO@VHEC.ORG

**WINTER 2019**

**ZACHOR**

*Remember*

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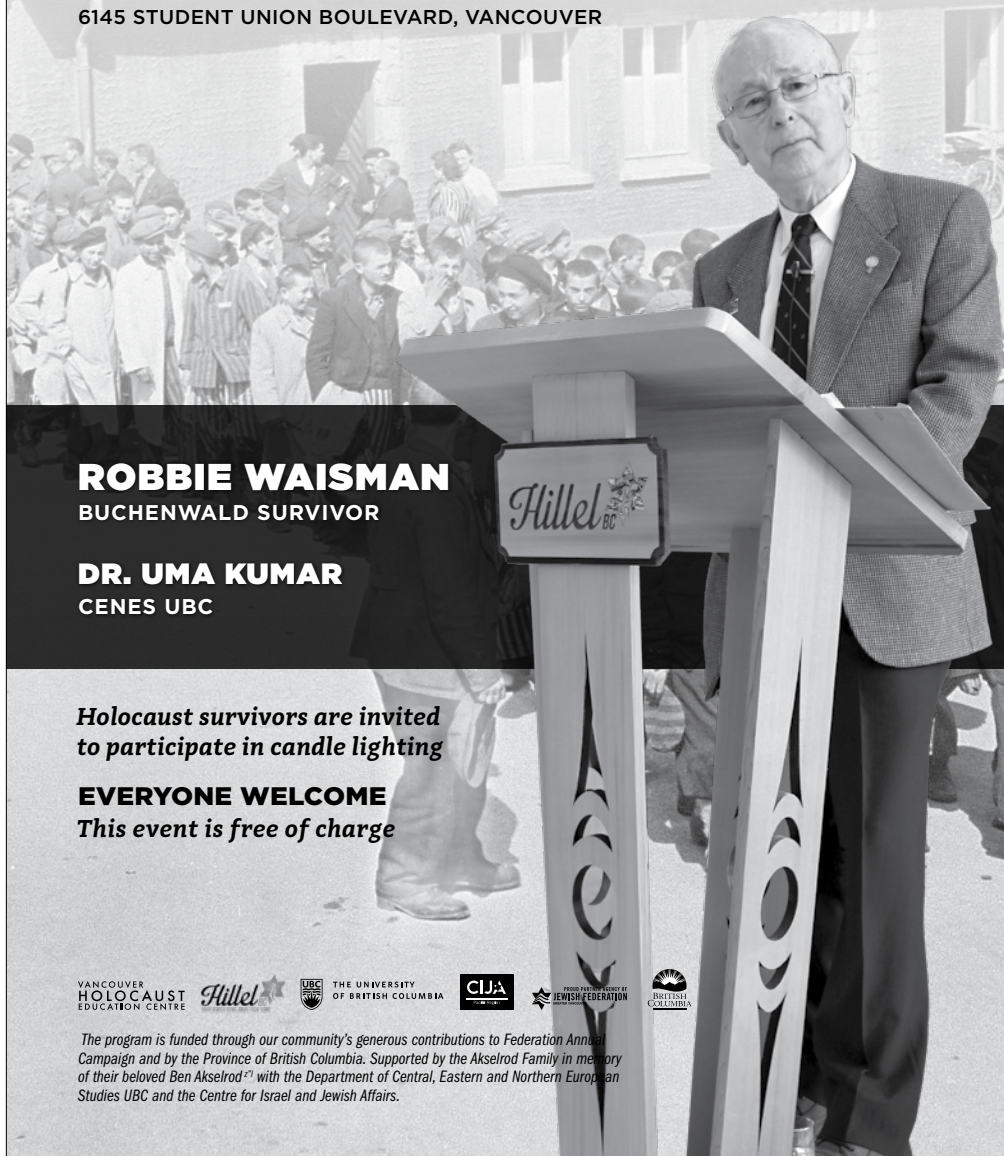
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**THE VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE  
& HILLEL BC PRESENT**

# INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2019 • 1 - 3 PM**

**HILLEL HOUSE, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
6145 STUDENT UNION BOULEVARD, VANCOUVER**



**ROBBIE WAISMAN**  
BUCHENWALD SURVIVOR

**DR. UMA KUMAR**  
CENES UBC

***Holocaust survivors are invited  
to participate in candle lighting***

**EVERYONE WELCOME**  
***This event is free of charge***

VANCOUVER  
HOLOCAUST  
EDUCATION CENTRE



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



The program is funded through our community's generous contributions to Federation Annual Campaign and by the Province of British Columbia. Supported by the Akselrod Family in memory of their beloved Ben Akselrod<sup>†</sup> with the Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies UBC and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

## Honour & Remember: Breaking the Silence in the Third Generation

Claire Sicherman delivered these remarks during the VHEC's High Holidays Cemetery Service on September 16, 2018, at the VHEC Memorial at Schara Tzedek Cemetery.

My name is Claire Sicherman and I am a part of the third generation. For most of my life I've been haunted by the stories of my ancestors, the few stories I knew and the ones I didn't know, and I carried this weight with me, a heaviness which I couldn't name.

I started writing following the death of my grandmother, my Babi. Her name was Marie Lípová and she was a Holocaust survivor. She died at the age of 102. This is after she survived the horrors of Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Neugraben and Bergen-Belsen, the murder of her family in the Holocaust, life under the Communists in Czechoslovakia, an escape from Communist Prague through Austria, life as a refugee in Canada, the suicide of her husband, and two broken hips.

My grandmother was a survivor. But she didn't like to talk about her trauma. I knew the story of her Auschwitz tattoo, how she gave away the piece of bread that was supposed to go into her starving belly, in order to make sure the numbers on her tattoo were

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***"My grandmother was a survivor. But she didn't like to talk about her trauma."***

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straight and the ink didn't bleed. She spoke about the importance of washing, how in the concentration camps she'd make the daily trek to a tap that dripped dirty water; how she knew she'd be giving up her life if she stopped. And how she was thankful her father died before the war, so he didn't have to witness the murder of his family. These were the stories I knew, the ones my Babi would repeat over and over again. There are

many stories I don't know. These are buried in mass graves, along with so many of my ancestors.

Silence took up a lot of space in my family. I knew the few stories, the ones I just shared with you, that my Babi would tell again and again. My grandmother was my



Marie and Henry Lipa, my grandparents, on their wedding day, 1936. Courtesy of Claire Sicherman.

personal connection to the Holocaust. But I knew she didn't want to talk about it. To ask her questions would have hurt her. And I didn't want to add to her pain. So, my family remained silent.

In my family, there were so many layers of silence. The first silence came with the Holocaust, and the silencing of the Jews and so many others. This silence came through death. When my grandparents were liberated, both were near death. My grandmother was dying from typhus. She weighed 70 pounds. My grandfather was dying from tuberculosis. My grandmother was sent to Sweden to recover. While they were recovering, my grandparents learned they were the sole surviving members of their respective families. Through the Red Cross, my grandmother found out my grandfather was alive, and they reunited in Prague. But they weren't welcomed



Marie and Richard (my grandmother and my great-uncle). Courtesy of Claire Sicherman.

back. No one knew what to do with the survivors, these walking skeletons, ghosts. In order to keep going, they remained silent. Their trauma — it was too much. Their grief, it turned inwards.

My mother was born after the war and grew up in Communist Czechoslovakia, not knowing she was Jewish and not knowing about the horrors her parents had survived. It wasn't safe to be Jewish under the Communists. Jews were accused of being spies and allies with the West. Many disappeared. Many were killed. My grandparents changed their last name from Bloch to Lípa so it wouldn't sound Jewish and to honour the last name of my grandfather's sister's family who were murdered in the Holocaust.

Thirteen years after my family fled Communist Czechoslovakia and came to Vancouver as refugees, my grandfather took his own life. I was four years old at the time and my mother was three weeks shy of giving birth to my sister. My grandmother didn't want anyone to know. I grew up thinking my grandfather had died of a heart attack.

When my Babi died in 2014, a grief opened up in me so wide I didn't know what to do with it and so I started to write. I didn't want to forget the few stories that I did know. I needed a way to remember my Babi, to remember all my ancestors and to teach Ben, my son, the fourth generation, about the Holocaust.

Through this grieving and sharing with my family, together we were breaking through to the stories that had been kept silent for so long. My writing became a book called "Imprint" and it was published by Caitlin Press in December 2017. I couldn't have written it without my mom's help. She held my hand and bravely walked with me into the dark of the past in order to remember.

It was through this writing, that I was finally able to start processing my grief. I began to research the transgenerational transmission of trauma, about how





LEFT: Klára (my great-grandmother), Vilém (my great-grandfather) and Marie (my grandmother). RIGHT: Klára (my great-grandmother), Vilém (my great-grandfather), Richard (my great-uncle), Marie (my grandmother), Josefa (my great-great grandmother on my grandfather's side). Courtesy of Claire Sicherman.

traumatic experiences are held in the bodies of our great-grandparents, grandparents and parents and are passed down and we hold these experiences in our bodies. I began to explore what I could do about it. I understood that although this trauma was always going to be a part of me, I could learn to carry it in a different way. Collectively, there is an urgency and a responsibility to

***"I didn't want to forget the few stories that I did know. I needed a way to remember my Babi, to remember all my ancestors..."***

remember. We need to keep breaking the silence and look deeply into our family histories.

One of the ways we can remember and honour our survivors and all those who perished in the Holocaust is through ceremony and the act of commemoration. This VHEC's High Holiday Memorial Service is a good example of this honouring and remembering.

We can also remember by sharing our stories with the next generation. Our son, Ben, is now an active participant in our rituals for remembering. We bring him in and we talk and do ceremonies together. We need to break down barriers and tell our stories, so the next generation can hold these and pass them down too.

On Yom HaShoah, my family, the three of us perform a ceremony of remembering. We use photos and we print out lists of names, the few who survived and the many who perished in the Holocaust. A list for my side of the family and one for my husband's side. I buy freshly cut flowers and choose a vibrant colour. The first year I chose red anemones to represent the blood of our ancestors that was spilled. I cut the flowers gently from the stalks and place a large bowl full of water on the table. I say a few words about the importance of remembering. We begin with my great-grandmother. Her name was Klára Lehenhartová. She was murdered in the Holocaust. She was 59 when she died. Her name is on the VHEC's Holocaust Memorial at the Schara Tzedek Cemetery. I say Klára's name out loud. I tell her we love her, and we



Klara Kauffmanova (my great-grandmother). Courtesy of Claire Sicherman.



Claire Sicherman. Courtesy of Claire Sicherman.

will always remember her. Ben places a flower into the water. We watch the red drift. After we finish, there is so much red in the bowl we can't see any water. We carry the bowl outside and find a tree worthy of our ancestors.

One by one, we place the flowers along the base of the trunk. Then we pour the water onto the roots, back into the earth.

I was named after my great-grandmother, my Klára. Being named after the dead is an honour. But for most of my life, being named after someone murdered in the Holocaust was a burden. That is until I spoke with a friend who helped me shift my perspective. I realized that Klára was much more than the horrific way in which she died. All those who perished in the Holocaust *are more* than how they died. My great-grandmother was a victim, but she was also a woman. She was a daughter, a wife, a mother. Klára and my great-grandfather, Vilém, had two children, my Babi and her younger brother, Richard. The family lived in Prague, they had a housekeeper and a cook. They had a summer home and over the summers they'd visit there with extended family. Together with grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, they hunted for mushrooms, swam in the lake and picked fruit from the trees in the garden. My Klára, *she had a good life.*

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 13**

## 11TH BIENNIAL SHAFRAN TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

# Holocaust Education: Current Challenges – New Strategies

BY DR. ILONA SHULMAN SPAAR

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre is pleased to host the 11th Biennial Shafraan Teachers' Conference on February 15, 2019. The conference was launched in 1999 to offer a forum for British Columbian teachers to share best strategies around teaching the Holocaust by learning from scholars and educators at the forefront of Holocaust education.

This year's conference keynote speakers and workshop facilitators speak to current challenges that teachers and educators encounter when teaching the Holocaust. The presenters hope to provide new practices and methodologies that will help their colleagues overcome these challenges.

## NEW BC CURRICULUM: TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST WITHIN THE NEW GENOCIDE STUDIES 12 COURSE

While in the past, the Holocaust most commonly fit into Social Studies 11, History 12, and Social Justice classes, the new BC curriculum has opened new opportunities for teaching the Holocaust across several grade levels and courses. For grade 12 students, there is no History 12 course. They now have the option of choosing between nine different courses, none of which are compulsory. One of these courses is the new Genocide Studies 12 course. As BC schools are in the process of implementing the new curriculum, some teachers have already started to teach the new course whereas others are preparing to teach it in the near future.

Many teachers shared with the VHEC Education Director that they feel overwhelmed by teaching Genocide Studies 12: Where to start? Which genocide to choose? How to bring in the Holocaust as a basis within the course? How to educate youngsters about such a difficult topic? How to

even compete with other courses? As a response to this challenge, the 11th Shafraan Teachers' Conference brings in two keynote speakers who offer some solutions.

Graeme Stacey is a teacher at Kelowna Secondary School. In 2003, having taught History and Social Studies for nine years, he felt that the BC Social Studies curriculum did not provide enough of a specific Holocaust focus for students. Consequently, he took the initiative to propose a stand-alone course: *Holocaust 12: A Blueprint for Modern Societal Tragedies*. The new Genocide Studies 12 course in the new BC curriculum is a natural extension and incorporation of his Board Authorized and Approved (BAA) Holocaust course.



Graeme Stacey from Kelowna Secondary School teaching the Holocaust as part of the *Genocide Studies 12* course of the new BC curriculum. He is one of the keynote speakers at the 11th Biennial Shafraan Teachers' Conference. Courtesy of Graeme Stacey.

Stacey's colleague, Jason Hudson, a teacher at Mount Boucherie Secondary in West Kelowna, assisted in editing the new Genocide Studies 12 course. Both Stacey and Hudson will examine the development of the new Genocide Studies 12 curriculum, discuss the importance and value of teaching the Holocaust, as well as provide two models for implementation in



Jodi Derkson of the organization *Fighting Antisemitism Together* (FAST) will present on the rise of hate, social media and fake news at the Shafran Conference. Courtesy of Jodi Derkson.

their keynote address *Multiple Perspectives in Teaching the Holocaust as the Cornerstone of the New Genocide Studies Curriculum* at the conference. In their workshop following the presentation, participants will learn about practical lessons that can be implemented immediately in a Genocide Studies class.

## **HATE, SOCIAL MEDIA, FAKE NEWS AND RESEARCH ON THE HOLOCAUST**

Two workshops in the afternoon program of the conference address the rise of hate on social media, as well as how teachers can best prepare students for their inquiry based research projects.

Jodi Derkson is a former classroom teacher who now works for the organization *Fighting Antisemitism Together* (FAST). In her capacity as BC Regional Director of Educational Programs, she teaches about topics such as racism, discrimination, and heroism. At the conference, Derkson presents on the timely subject *Hate is on the Rise: Social Media, Fake News, and Combating Intolerance*. In her multi-media based workshop, participants investigate online trends, social media influences, fake news, and develop fact-seeking research competencies.

Dr. Andrea Webb, Instructor in Social Studies Education at the Faculty of Education at University of British Columbia (UBC) titles her workshop *Designing Research on the Holocaust through Authentic Assessment*. The session will help educators bring together many aspects of the day's program as they have the opportunity to discuss teaching the Holocaust in their own contexts, and the design of inquiry-based research projects.

The conference concludes with a Q&A panel moderated by Mark Figuera, a Social Studies teacher at Earl Marriott Secondary Surrey and member of the VHEC Teacher Advisory Committee. ■

**Dr. Ilona Shulman Spaar is the Education Director of the VHEC. She has an international background in museum education.**

## VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

### 11TH BIENNIAL SHAFRAN TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

*Sponsored by the David & Lil Shafran Endowment Fund of the VHEC*

#### **Holocaust Education: Current Challenges – New Strategies**

*Multiple Perspectives in Teaching the Holocaust as the  
Cornerstone of the New BC Genocide Studies Curriculum*

*Hate is on the Rise: Social Media, Fake News, and Combating Intolerance*  
*Designing Research on the Holocaust through Authentic Assessment*

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2019  
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM**

DAYSON BOARDROOM, 2ND FLOOR, JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE  
950 WEST 41ST AVENUE, VANCOUVER

Conference registration is open to teachers of grades 6 to 12.  
**Space is limited, registration closes February 1, 2019.**

For more information or to register, please visit  
<https://www.vhec.org/learn/professional-development/>

*Sponsored by the David & Lil Shafran Endowment Fund of the VHEC,  
with donations by the Azrieli Foundation, Mills Office Productivity  
and the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver.*



# Clarity is Key for the VHEC's New Website

BY PAT JOHNSON

Passionate volunteer Ariane Laird reinvents the organization's face to the world.



The VHEC has undergone a great deal of change in the past year, with a completely reinvented exhibition space among other developments. Now, the organization has an entirely new face to the world.

A new VHEC website was launched in December, presenting easily navigable access to online resources. It is also far more visually engaging.

In addition to appearance and the ease of access to materials, the site's backend streamlines the processing of donations and the booking of school programs. The new site is also seamlessly compatible with any online device.

The project was accomplished through the dedicated volunteerism of Ariane Laird, CEO and founder of ConnectsUs, a Vancouver-based firm that offers human resources solutions to small businesses and consultants. Among the products her company offers, Laird said, are

turnkey websites to clients. "We create it with them, we design it with them and we launch it with them," she said. "So I understand websites."

Laird heard about the VHEC from a friend who was doing some work for the organization and she went online to learn more.

As a website maven, Laird was disappointed. "I just don't think they were showing off what they were doing," she said. "There was not a lot of clarity there," she said of the old website. "They do really good stuff, but when you take a look at their website, it just doesn't really tell you what they're doing, why they do it and why anybody would care."

Answering those three questions — What do you do? Why do you do it? Why should people care? — became the basis for Laird's vision for a new website. "Yes, you do all these programs, but so what?" she said. "If you're teaching anti-racism and more compassion, then what? You want people to do something with that. You want them to take action."



TOP LEFT: Ariane Laird. Courtesy of Ariane Laird. BOTTOM: The Home page (left) and the Museum page (right) of the renewed VHEC website.

The message that greets all who arrive at the new VHEC website captures the vision of the work the VHEC does: “Holocaust education teaches important lessons from the past and inspires students to stand up for human rights and social justice.”

From there, visitors can move easily across the site following clearly defined section headers to find an event, book a program, learn about upcoming events, make a donation or access services. Throughout the new site, visuals are accentuated to help illustrate the work the Centre does across its varied programs and services.

“Even the banners in the front tell the whole story,” she said. “That’s what I was trying to do in simple words with images.”

Under the “About” menu, readers get an overview of the Centre’s educational programs, museum collections and events, as well as numbers that help quantify the impacts of these components.

Along the top is a navigation bar to help visitors find the information they seek, each representing a key segment of the Centre’s work. From there, users can easily find specific information, plan a visit, access research materials, hear what young people say about programs they have experienced and much more, all organized in a more coherent manner than the previous website, which had grown in an ad hoc manner over many years.

Laird was drawn to volunteer for the project for two main reasons: “Any time I see an outdated website, I say ‘I’m just going to do that for you,’” she said, laughing. More seriously, Laird is a German-Canadian who was born in Germany and immigrated at the age of two. Advancing education about the Holocaust as a means to both commemorate the past and educate successive generations to cherish and promote social justice and human rights resonated with her as a meaningful cause to support.

“It was quite compelling for me,” she said, “so I put a lot of effort into it because I feel strongly about the organization.” She admits she had a very clear vision for the project. “I was actually quite pushy on a lot of issues,” she said, insisting on one quality above all: “Clarity.”

She credits the professional team with having a precise idea of the impacts of the work they do. “They were open to new ideas and were really easy to work with. I’m sure they wouldn’t say the same about me,” she said, laughing again.

Acting executive director Rome Fox refutes Laird’s assertion. “Ariane was a remarkable partner to work with on this very substantial project,” said Fox. “She definitely brought her own vision, and she also understood intuitively the importance of our work and really helped us share that story with the world through this stunning new portal.”

Like most non-profit organizations, the VHEC has a vast number of urgent initiatives always waiting for attention and resources, she said.

“So much has happened in the past few years with our redevelopment, new exhibitions, the expansion of programs for students, teachers and the public ... There has never been a shortage of needs to be addressed,” said Fox. “This need, creating a website that really reflects the excellence we strive for in every area of our program and service delivery, emerged as a priority for the VHEC. To have a person like Ariane not only take the project on, but to do so as a gift to the organization and the community was pretty close to a wish come true. She really deserves a great deal of thanks from everyone who values the work we do, because she has created a new face to the world for the VHEC. Anyone, anywhere, can come to our website now and quickly appreciate the quality and importance of the work we do.” ■

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Pat Johnson is, among other things, a writer and communications consultant.

# Life That Once Was: Pre-War Photographs from the VHEC Collection

Dr. Ilona Shulman Spaar, Education Director and Curator of *Life That Once Was: Pre-War Photographs From the VHEC Collection* delivered remarks on November 21, 2018 at the launch of the exhibition.



Dr. Ilona Shulman Spaar giving remarks at the *Life That Once Was* installation. Courtesy of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

The pre-war installation, located in the rotunda of the Jewish Community Centre outside the doors of the VHEC, is an important component of our current exhibition *In Focus: The Holocaust Through the VHEC Collection*.

The visual concept of the exhibition — framed photos in the hallway — supports the idea of portrait arrangements commonly found in family homes, evoking connotations of the Jewish people as one large family or community. This sense of community also corresponds with the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver, who partnered with the VHEC for this project..

As students and teachers from Vancouver and the Lower Mainland enter the museum to participate in the

education program led by our volunteer docents, they first stop here at this exhibition and are asked to have a close look at the photographs. Later in their tour, they discuss what they discovered in the photographs as they learn more about pre-war Jewish life in Europe. General visitors too may stop here and examine the photos before they enter the gallery space.

But why is it so important for students and the general public to learn about pre-war Jewish life in Europe when learning about the Shoah? Most students who visit our Centre are not Jewish. Often, for them, the Holocaust is a distant event, something that happened to a culture they might not have heard of, more than 70 years ago on a continent they are not familiar with.





Visitors viewing the pre-war Jewish life installation in the rotunda of the JCC. Courtesy of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Therefore, pre-war Jewish life is a crucial starting point when teaching about the Holocaust.

Part of my curatorial goal for this installation has been to choose photographs from our collection that speak to the diversity and abundance of pre-war Jewish life. For instance, it felt important to show families in both Western and Eastern Europe, as well as religious and more assimilated members of the Jewish community.

Pre-war Jewish life and culture that had existed in Europe for 2000 years is a crucial chapter within the history of the Holocaust. Only when learning about the richness, abundance, and diversity of pre-war Jewish life do people understand the immense loss and tragedy that came with the Holocaust.

This exhibition commemorates and honours both those who survived the Holocaust and those who lost

their lives. The majority of people depicted in the photographs perished during the Shoah. Studying these photographs helps students and the general public understand that every person who was affected by the Holocaust had a “normal” life prior to the Shoah, that they had a family, a loving mother and a kind father, a dear sister or a beloved brother. That they were part of a precious community, a school class, perhaps owned a business, or had a religious practice, held family garden parties, skied with friends in the mountains, or enjoyed leisure time on a rowboat — not very different from what we do in our spare time today.

Nothing is more effective than learning about the Holocaust through personal stories, which is precisely what these photographs provide. Let me give you two examples:

## LIFSCHITZ FAMILY

This is a studio portrait of the Lifschitz family, of Liepaja, Latvia, circa 1920. From left to right: this is Zlate, Fruma and Moshe Lifschitz with an unknown young woman. Moshe and Zlate both died before the Second World War started. Their youngest daughter, Fruma, was murdered in the Stutthof concentration camp. Moshe and Zlate were the paternal great-grandparents of Rachel and Michael Mines. Their mother, Jennie Lifschitz, the granddaughter of Zlate and Moshe, was most likely the only known Canadian-born Holocaust survivor. Jennie was born in Montreal, Canada. After her parents divorced, her mother moved back to Liepaja in 1924 with her three children, among them Jennie. Jennie’s two siblings eventually moved back to Canada to live with their father, while Jennie remained in Latvia with her mother. Her Latvian relatives were murdered in the massacre of Liepaja. Jennie survived the Liepaja ghetto and several concentration camps. By then, her Canadian birth certificate was confiscated. After recovering from typhus and living in the Neustadt Displaced Persons camp in Holstein, Germany, Jennie decided to return to Canada. Jennie passed away in Vancouver in 2005.



Michael Mines, great-grandson of Moshe and Zlate Lifschitz depicted in the photograph on the right. Courtesy of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

### REGINA FELDMAN FAMILY

This photograph shows a Jewish Kindergarten class in Bedzin, Poland. We assume that all the children and adults depicted in this photo perished during the Holocaust with the exception of one person, Regina Feldman, seated last on the right in the front row. Regina's maiden name was Bulwik and she was born in 1931. Her Polish home city, Bedzin, consisted of a thriving Jewish community. Following the German invasion, Regina's family lived in the Bedzin ghetto until they were separated by the German soldiers near the end of 1941. All of Regina's immediate family members perished during the Holocaust and only by sheer luck did Regina survive. She was transferred to many concentration camps and Displaced Persons camp until 1948, when Regina was sent to Canada to be adopted under the Canadian Jewish War Orphan Project alongside more than a thousand Jewish war orphans. Regina eventually met and married David Feldman, a Holocaust survivor from Poland who came to Canada under the Tailor Project.

Regina told her survivor story to audiences including church groups and high school students, and participated in video productions such as Steven

Spielberg's *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History* Foundation. She also gave testimony to the VHEC. Parts of her testimony are currently featured in the Centre's online testimony resource, *Primary Voices: Teaching Through Survivor Testimony*. Not only by telling her powerful story did Regina touch the hearts of many, but also through her good deeds. Regina and her friend Lola Apfelbaum raised over \$45,000 for charitable organizations by selling aprons. Regina passed away in Vancouver in 2002.

There are seven photographs in the rotunda that represent a very small number of the hundreds of pre-war photographs that currently exist within the VHEC Collections. More of the VHEC's pre-war photograph collection can be accessed online through our new Collections website ([collections.vhec.org](http://collections.vhec.org)). Cataloguing and digitizing of more photographs is still in process.

By drawing attention to our pre-war photograph collection in this public space, the VHEC invites other members of the Jewish community in Greater Vancouver to donate their pre-war photographs. By doing so, they add to the growth of our collections and archives, helping us to enhance Holocaust education. ■



Sam Heller, Regina Feldman's grandson, standing in front of his grandmother's photograph. Courtesy of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

## My Life After the War

BY JANOS BENISZ

One of the happiest days of my life occurred on a cold December morning in 1948 when I stepped onto Canadian soil at a port in Halifax.

I may have been cold, hungry and scared but when I saw the baskets filled with sandwiches, fruits and chocolates on tables for me and 15 other Hungarian Jewish war orphans, my fears vanished. The new clothes and delicious foods I ate there, gave me a warm feeling about my new country — Canada.

We survivors said our goodbyes and we were on our way to a new beginning. Most of the group were resettled in Montreal and Toronto. I ended up in Winnipeg where I experienced sorrow, heartache and cruelty for the next seven years. I call that period of my life ‘the lost years’.

I'd like to forget the eight foster homes, the orphanage and the reform school in which I was placed. But it stays with me like a bad dream. I certainly did not belong in a reformatory, nor did the 45 or more First Nations boys with me. I was alone, sad and so angry. I didn't receive love there, nor from any of the families with which I was placed by the Jewish Family Service.

I was in my fifth or sixth foster home when I underwent a dreadful and painful experience. I broke my right leg playing baseball. As the ambulance made its way to the hospital, the thought of failing my grades again was as upsetting as the severe pain in my leg. While in medical care, my spirits lifted when I learned the JFS had hired a teacher to tutor me. She spent six days and many long hours a week teaching me everything from A to Z. Oh, how I thrived under her guidance.

This wonderful teacher gave my ego a big boost by praising my eagerness for knowledge. I recall her telling me, “They said you were difficult. I find it just the

opposite. You are a bright young man.” I skipped a grade that fall. I owed it all to her.

I got a summer job at Ozetskys Department Store when I turned 15. The store was known to hire Jewish boys from Winnipeg's North End. I had a “lofty” goal of becoming a shoe salesman. Instead, I swept floors and cleaned washrooms.

Midway through my last year of school, a teacher made it known to our class that there was an opening for a copy boy at the Winnipeg Free Press, one of Canada's most prominent newspapers at the time. I decided to apply in person. I entered the huge newsroom and I was instantly hooked on the world of news. I impressed the magazine editor enough that he hired me on the spot. He made me promise I would continue my education, which I did for the next four years.

My career as a journalist began as a sports writer with the Moose Jaw Times-Herald. I was green as grass but somehow, I managed to survive. I honed my craft at other papers like the Kirkland Lake Northern Daily News, Regina Leader-Post and the Calgary Herald. But the lure of Winnipeg and its Free Press drew me back like a magnet. I spent seven productive years there as a sports writer and news reporters.



Moose Jaw Times Herald, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1955. Courtesy of the Moose Jaw Public Library, Archives Department.





Janos Benisz speaking to students at a VHEC Symposium on the Holocaust. Courtesy of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

I interviewed many famous athletes, politicians and people of all walks of life. If there was a good story to be had, I was on it. Two Canadians who impressed me the most were professional hockey player, Gordie Howe, and T.C. Douglas, the Premier of Saskatchewan at the time, who later became the national leader of the NDP.

My newspaper career ended in the early 70s when the two major papers in Vancouver went on a lengthy strike. I was hired, prior to the strike, as a make-up editor in the Sports section of the Vancouver Sun. I never got to work for that paper. What began as a highly stressful year, as I had a growing family to support, ended with a sales job at Vancouver Cablevision.

I spent ten productive years with that company before going out on my own. It turned out to be the best move I ever made. The next 25 years were profitable and most satisfying. I retired at age 73, proud of what I had achieved.

Actually, I'm not quite retired. For the last 17 years I have been an active speaker for the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's Holocaust Survivor Outreach Program. Educating high school students about the Shoah is in my DNA. Their eagerness to learn about this unprecedented tragedy and their many hugs keep me involved. I will continue to speak against racism until I draw my last breath. ■

Janos Benisz is a survivor of Strashoff concentration camp. He was seven years old when he was liberated.

#### HONOUR & REMEMBER: BREAKING THE SILENCE IN THE THIRD GENERATION, FROM PAGE 4

I list the things I know about Klára, my beloved great-grandmother, my namesake, so I don't get caught up in the horrific way she died, and so I can keep remembering she lived a life before her death.

Today I take ownership of my narrative. I learn that my past is not something I need to feel ashamed of, to hide from, it's not a weakness. I have the right to be here, the right to take up space. I have the right to exist. Yes, there is a lot of death in my family's history but ultimately, our narrative is one of survival and the continuity of life. I am thankful that I'm here and I'm here because of them.

I will not let Klára's death be what defines her. Today, I choose to carry the weight of my ancestors in a different way, in a way that doesn't haunt me. I say their names out loud. I tell them I love them. Now they are a source of support.

There's a strength in this remembering, this sharing, in this breaking down walls and silences. This is vulnerability, this is where we are the strongest and bravest. It's through living and remembering and grieving together that we share our stories.

*It's in the telling that we remember.*

Each day I make a choice to keep creating new narratives for myself and to live my life in the honour of my ancestors, in the honour of all survivors, and in honour of all those who perished in the Holocaust. ■

Claire Sicherman's keynote address includes excerpts from *Imprint: A Memoir of Trauma in the Third Generation*, published by Caitlin Press, December 2017



## HELP US GROW OUR COLLECTION AND EDUCATE FUTURE GENERATIONS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

Many survivors and people in the Vancouver community have Holocaust-related artefacts, even the smallest of which can tell an important story. Original artefacts individualize the loss and destruction of the Holocaust and a range of materials speak to the diversity of experiences. Documentation is vital for combatting Holocaust denial and will play an increasingly prominent role in the future of Holocaust education.

Materials in our collection reach a broad audience through the online catalogue [collections.vhec.org](http://collections.vhec.org) and the Centre's exhibitions and programs.

### HOW DO I MAKE A DONATION?

Please call **604.264.0499** or email [collections@vhec.org](mailto:collections@vhec.org) to schedule an appointment with VHEC Collections staff. Unsolicited in person drop-offs and mailed items are not accepted.

Potential donors to the Library are encouraged to give through the VHEC Library Wish List ([amzn.to/vheclibrary-wishlist](http://amzn.to/vheclibrary-wishlist)), which highlights pre-selected items desired for the library collection.

### WE COLLECT MATERIALS THAT ARE:

- Evidence of the rich pre-war Jewish life in Europe;
- Related to the experience of antisemitism and efforts to leave Europe as the result of the rise of Nazism and increased persecution;
- Related to the Holocaust and the experience of Holocaust survivors;
- Related to the experience of liberation, and the immediate post-war period including the experience of refugees in Displaced Persons camps;
- Related to post-war immigration of Holocaust survivors to Canada;
- Related to the experience of Enemy Alien refugees interned in Canada;
- Nazi-produced propaganda and other documentary evidence of antisemitism;
- Anti-Nazi propaganda produced during the prewar, wartime, and immediate post-war period.

### THE TYPES OF MATERIALS IN THE VHEC COLLECTIONS INCLUDE:

- Albums, diaries and scrapbooks; jewelry, clothing and textiles; correspondence and stamps; currency; medals and insignia; daily life, household and recreational belongings; education and research materials; identity documents; travel documents; maps and plans; propaganda; photographs; publications including rare books; ephemera; religious belongings; and audio-video recordings.
- The VHEC Library accepts Holocaust-related material such as memoirs, memorial books, works of non-fiction, novels, publications for children and young adults, education resources, rare books and audio-visual recordings.

### WE CANNOT ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS:

- Nazi or Allied military weapons, including (but not limited to) firearms, hand guns, and daggers. VHEC Collections staff can make recommendations about donating these types of materials to appropriate institutions and/or their safe disposal.
- Duplicates of items already held in the collection;
- Photocopies or scans of original documents and photographs;
- Materials with suspicious provenance or authenticity that cannot be verified through additional research.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN APPOINTMENT?

- Staff will assess whether the item supports the VHEC's mission and its potential for education use. Unfortunately, not all material offered to the VHEC can be accepted. If this is the case, staff will be pleased to provide a list of organizations that may be more suitable.
- Any information or records related to the material may be useful during this meeting and may help to understand its provenance. Staff may ask for photographs of the item or an inventory list to help assess the material.
- Donors to the Archives and Museum are asked to sign a formal Deed of Gift. The signing of a Deed of Gift constitutes the legal transfer of ownership to the VHEC. Please think carefully and consult with family members before donating.

### WHEN WILL MY DONATION BE CATALOGUED, DIGITIZED OR DISPLAYED?

- We are continually adding catalogue records and digitized items to the online catalogue to make them available. However, not all records in the collection are suitable for digitization. Processing and digitization workflow is done at the discretion of VHEC Collections staff based on availability of resources and to meet needs of researchers and exhibitions.
- We are happy to share digital copies with donors and their families in a timely manner once the material has been processed through our digitized queue.
- While the VHEC Collections staff makes every effort to include a diversity of items in exhibitions, they cannot guarantee if and when materials will be exhibited. As a courtesy to donors, the VHEC endeavors to contact families when the material they donated is on display.

### CAN I LOAN MATERIALS INSTEAD OF MAKING A DONATION?

- We understand that the decision to donate personal belongings and records is a difficult one.
- The Archives and Museum frequently accepts the short-term loan of materials for use in VHEC exhibitions. Loaned materials are treated with the same care and subject to the same policies as the permanent collection.
- Long-term loans to the collection are evaluated on a case-by-case basis during an appointment with the archivist.

### CAN I DONATE ANONYMOUSLY?

- Yes. The VHEC will ensure that personal donor information is kept private and not acknowledged publicly. However, VHEC Collections staff do require proof of title, where possible, before an item is accepted into the collection. Documenting the provenance of an object or document is essential to the authenticity and historical value of the item. As an active member of the professional community, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre supports the codes of the ethics of the Canadian Museums Association and Association of Canadian Archivists.

### CAN I SUPPORT THE VHEC COLLECTIONS IN WAYS OTHER THAN DONATING MATERIALS?

Processing, describing, properly housing and preserving archival records, artefacts and library materials involves significant staff time, space and specialized resources. Donors who wish to support Collections work at the VHEC can donate directly to the Collections through CanadaHelps <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/15211>.

Current funding opportunities include:

- Conservation treatment for artefacts selected for exhibition and to ensure on-going preservation of holdings;
- Development support for the online catalogue and web content;
- Additional staffing hours required for cataloguing, research and digitization of existing holdings.





## SHANA TOVA

Avi Dolgin, Shana tova. Ron & Estarisa Laye  
Chris Friedrichs, Shana tova. Ron & Estarisa Laye  
Larry & Paula Goldenberg, Shana tova. Marilyn Moss  
Ralph Hoffman, Shana Tova. Dennis Hoffman

## GET WELL

Barbara Cohen, A very speedy recovery.  
Nancy Benyaer  
Ed Lewin, A speedy and full recovery. Jack & Karen  
Micner, Ida & Odie Kaplan, The Szajman Family  
Mariette Doduck, Hope you recover soon.  
Gary Averbach, Gerri & Mark London  
Harvey Silverstone, Refuah Shlemah. Hymie &  
Rome Fox

## SYMPATHY

Herb Loomer, On the passing of your wife Evelynne.  
Rob & Marilyn Krell, Robbie & Gloria Waisman,  
Lillian Boraks-Nemetz  
Janice & Simon Margolis & Family, On the loss  
of your Mother, Evelynne. Peter & Marla Gropper,  
Aron, Sam & Al Szajman  
Sam & Betty Weisenthal-Singer, On the loss of your  
Mother. Betty Singer  
Maggie Yonash, On the loss of your Mother.  
Evelyn Kahn

Anita Schnier, In memory of Max. Mendy & Lana Landa  
Barbara & Roy Izen, On the loss of your Son. Robbie &  
Gloria Waisman

Christine Walden & Eric Walden, On the loss of  
your husband and father, Pat. Deborah & Henry  
Ross-Grayman

Isabelle Diamond, On the loss of your husband,  
Charles Diamond. Lillian Boraks-Nemetz

Rob & Marilyn Krell, Peter & Marla Gropper, Hymie &  
Rome Fox

Craig & Carrie Diamond & Family, On the passing of  
your father, father-in-law, grandfather & great-  
grandfather, Charles Diamond. Rob & Marilyn Krell,  
Hymie & Rome Fox

Fran Goldberg, On the loss of your brother  
Ben Rosenbaum. Pauline Babins

Marlene Franken & Family, On the loss of your father,  
grandfather & great-grandfather, Louis Sholzberg.  
Rome & Hymie Fox & Family

Monica Milne, In memory of your Mother. Brenda Young

Sylvia Langmann, In memory of Grandma Ruth.  
Claralana Langmann

Tree of Life Synagogue, Pittsburgh, In memory of  
the 11 people murdered and the injured. Marie &  
Peter Welton

## MAZEL TOV

Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, Happy 85th Birthday. Anita  
Cohen, Al and Elinor Hornstein, Donna Moscovitz,  
Pat Bruser Rogers, Evelyn Kahn, Irene & Mort Dodek

Lyliane Thal, On your special birthday, books have  
been donated to the VHEC library in memory of  
your parents, Esther & Leon Kaufman z"l. Barb &  
Herb Silber

Cathy Golden, On your 60th Birthday. Richard &  
Darlene Ames

Ramona Josephson, On your special birthday.  
Cathy Golden

Chad Beron, On becoming a Bar Mitzvah. Roy, Katia,  
Liam, Eliya, Daniella, and Talia Hessel

Ella Levitt, On your 80th Birthday. Herb &  
Binny Goldman

Leonard Schein & Barb Small, Mazel tov. Art Hister &  
Phyllis Simon

Michaela & Matt Singerman, Mazel tov. Katia &  
Roy Hessel

Reva Adler, On your new home and job. Bev Spring &  
Alan Morinis

Ruth Wolochow, Happy Birthday, Ida & Odie Kaplan

Shelley Morris, Happy Birthday. Mendy & Lana Landa

Stan Taviss, Happy Birthday. Anonymous

Rabbi Adam Stein, Happy 40th Birthday. Peter &  
Paul Karasz

## THANK YOU

Roberta Kremer, In appreciation of your great  
contribution to the development of the Vancouver  
Holocaust Education Centre. Chris Friedrichs  
Rabbi Jeremy Parnes, Thank you. Meda Lerner

# THANK YOU VHEC VOLUNTEERS!

## OUTREACH SPEAKERS

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

## TEACHER ADVISORY

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

## DOCENTS

Julia Bernhardt, Anna Bruder, Reva Dexter, Sylvie Epstein, Kieran Forry,  
Patricia Friedman, Sandra Gilmour, Belinda Gutman, Helen Heacock Rivers,  
Dodie Katzenstein, Vivian Kerenyi, Lise Kirchner, David Kirkpatrick, Ethel Kofsky,  
Uma Kumar, Lucien Lieberman, Ellen Millman, Herb Mills, Cathy Paperny, Sara  
Shafraan, Gita Silver, Caitlyn Spence, Debbie Rozenberg, Rina Vizer, Anita Willson.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

Alex Buckman, Bonnie Elster, Chris Friedrichs, Kathy He, Kit Krieger, Ariane Laird,  
Ella Levitt, Yaelle Ritch, Agnieszka Stadnik, Stan Taviss, Peter Zetler.

OUR SINCERE APOLOGIES FOR ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS

## In Focus

*The Holocaust Through  
the VHEC Collection*



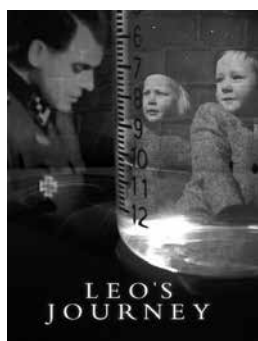
## FACES OF SURVIVAL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARISSA ROTH



### PLEASE JOIN US FOR VHEC 2019 SUNDAY PROGRAMS

We invite you to come explore the new exhibitions in the renewed VHEC. The Centre will now be open several Sundays throughout the year, from 1-4 PM. The Sunday programs will include docent-led tours and guest speakers.



#### JANUARY 27, 2019 • 1 - 4 PM INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

- 1:00 - 2:00 PM** Docent-led tour through the exhibitions *In Focus: The Holocaust Through the VHEC Collection* and *Faces of Survival: Photographs by Marissa Roth*.
- 2:15 - 3:30 PM** Richard Lowy introduces the film, *Leo's Journey*, about his father Leo Lowy<sup>z</sup><sup>1</sup>, a Mengele twin. The film, *Leo's Journey: The Story of the Mengele Twins* chronicles the first-hand story of Nazi Doctor, Joseph Mengele, and his medical experiments on Jewish twins in Auschwitz during World War II.



#### FEBRUARY 24, 2019 • 1 - 4 PM

- 1:30 - 2:30 PM** Dr. Helga Thorson, Chair of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria, and student Julianna Nielsen, present on the special Holocaust Studies program, the 2018 I-witness Holocaust Field School.
- 2:30 - 3:30 PM** David Ehrlich, a survivor of Auschwitz concentration camp, shares his eyewitness testimony of the Holocaust with the audience.



#### MARCH 17, 2019 • 1 - 4 PM

- 1:30 - 2:30 PM** Docent-led tour through the exhibitions *In Focus: The Holocaust Through the VHEC Collection* and *Faces of Survival: Photographs by Marissa Roth*
- 2:30 - 3:30 PM** Jannushka Jakoubovitch, child survivor and VHEC Holocaust Survivor Speaker, talks about her artefacts currently on display in the VHEC.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLOCAUST:  
WHY IT MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

Dr. Chris Friedrichs

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

# YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

**THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS WILL LEARN ABOUT  
THE HOLOCAUST, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
THIS YEAR BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT.**

**RENEW  
OR JOIN  
THE VHEC  
TODAY!**

**WWW.VHEC.ORG  
604.264.0499**

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