

# Life and Times at the JHCWC

## A Word from Mark Kantor



As President of the Board of Directors, Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada (JHCWC), I am honoured to bring greetings. I became involved with the JHCWC in 2010 as it is my strong belief that this organization is integral to the development and maintenance of our strong and vibrant Jewish community.

Founded in 1999, the JHCWC consists of the Marion and Ed Vickar Jewish Museum of Western Canada, the Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre and the Jewish Historical Society.

The archives are an essential element in the daily activities of the JHCWC. With over 8000 photographs, 65,000 documents, 1300 audio and video tapes, and copies of local Jewish newspapers dating back to the early 1900's, the archives are the principal repository of local Jewish community history, as well as the history of Jewish settlements in northwest Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and BC. It is a leading destination for both academics and the general public and its resources are used for publications, school projects, exhibits, lectures and conferences.

The JHCWC plays a pivotal role in preserving and promoting a Western Canadian Jewish identity. It helps foster awareness and appreciation of how our past shapes our current reality, and our individual and collective identities. Understanding and preserving the past allows us to better grasp the present and address the future with confidence and resolve.

As Passover approaches, I'd like to wish all of you a peaceful and joyous holiday season.

### Mark Your Calendar

- May 16th 7:30 PM—11th Annual Kanee Lecture. "Seventy Years Since Nuremberg: Proof of Nazi Crimes, The Birth of Modern Human Rights Law" See next page for further details.
- May 24th Noon—Manitoba Day Program with Gray Academy Intern Anna Zaifman, Holocaust Education Centre
- June 9th 7 PM "House Calls to Modern Medicine: A 100 Year History of Jewish Physicians of Manitoba"

## A Word from Ilana Abrams

As General Manager, I am excited about our new direction as we open our doors to the community, both locally and abroad through our redesigned website. The website is only one part of our overall marketing initiative designed to engage those who value

their Jewish pasts and futures. Our archives are irreplaceable collections that give history a contemporary audience and a context for society today. Our varied exhibits and programs are exemplary and showcase the wealth of information and the vast

knowledge of our experienced staff. As custodians of our community's past, JHCWC will continue to require the community's assistance in continuing what we have already accomplished and developing what we see for the future.

**With Thanks to Tova and Larry Vickar  
Come visit us at [www.jhcwc.org](http://www.jhcwc.org)**

The JHC is heading in a new digital direction, thanks in part to Tova and Larry Vickar. Our archives are the keys to this organization, preserving history and providing the foundation for our community. The fact that the archives were only accessible in person and not to a broader community did not resonate well with the Vickars. A traditional archive has the musty smell of documents

going back over centuries in some cases. What became clear was that we had to go digital before our holdings completely disintegrate.

The Vickars' generous donation helped support the design of our new website and putting our database online. Their exemplary vision both honours and celebrates those who came before and laid the cornerstone for our community, allowing the

stories of these past generations to be a permanent record available to the world.

We are in a new era where everything is available instantly through the Internet. Thanks to Larry and Tova's financial and ongoing community support, we are able to embrace this challenge and be part of this new global outreach.

*Please join the Jewish Heritage Centre as John Q. Barrett presents:*

# **Seventy Years Since Nuremberg: Proof of Nazi Crimes, The Birth of Modern Human Rights Law**

*2016 Sol and Florence Kanee Distinguished Speaker Series*

**MAY 16, 2016 | 7:30 PM**

**Shaarey Zedek Synagogue**

561 Wellington Crescent

**Event Co-Chairs: Mel Myers and Michael Weinstein**

**Honourary Chair: Arthur Mauro, O.C., O.M., Q.C.**

**John Q. Barrett** is an internationally renowned law professor, writer, public commentator and lecturer. He is currently writing the biography of Robert H. Jackson, U.S. Supreme Court justice and Nuremberg Trial chief prosecutor.

For more information on JHCWC or sponsorship opportunities, please contact:  
Ilana Abrams (204) 478-8590 or [jewishheritage@jhcwc.org](mailto:jewishheritage@jhcwc.org)



## **The Local Archive that Could: Making the Seemingly Impossible Possible**

It was the spring of 2013. I was working towards my Masters Degree in Jewish Professional Service and found myself in an intensive 4-day course on the history of the Jewish community of Canada taught by renowned professor and historian, Irving Abella.

So, when Professor Abella announced that the course required a written paper of approximately 20 pages in length on a topic of our choice, my fascination turned to dread. My classmates who represented Jewish communities in Montreal and Toronto had unlimited access to countless materials in their large libraries and databases. Living in Winnipeg would make sourcing out materials next to impossible.

Or would it?

I returned to the chapters we had covered on the hardships and achievements of the earliest Jewish prairie settlers and began to take an interest in the non-traditional roles that women played in these farming colonies from Winnipeg to

Saskatoon - Narcisse, Bender Hamlet, Hirsch and Edenbridge. Life on the farm in Western Canada was rife with adversity yet rich with Jewish tradition. Socially isolated, left to care for the children, they took on physically demanding roles – stoking wheat, digging potatoes, cutting wood and ploughing with oxen. While their husbands and grown sons sought work in neighbouring communities, it was women who ensured that the ritual and communal nature of Jewish life was kept alive. A barrel could be transformed into a communal Mikveh while many farms had two kitchens, one where the meals for farmhands were prepared with non-kosher meat, while a separate dairy kitchen was kept for themselves.

After thirteen years of Jewish communal work, I knew that the JHC was home to the stories of Western Canadian Jewry, but I never really appreciated how extensive and precious these materials were. I was amazed and inspired by the richness of material in the

archives. There was an abundance of letters, transcribed interviews and newspaper clippings that I had no idea existed. It wasn't until I began to delve into the archives that these stories so full of joy and hope, frustration and anguish, came to life. There was spectacular beauty in their yellowed and fraying pages.

The renowned British statesman, Benjamin Disraeli once said: “To be conscious that you are ignorant of the facts is a great step to knowledge”. The weeks that I spent doing research in the Jewish Heritage Centre archives were enlightening and incredibly humbling. My generation is a busy one, inundated with rapid messages and Google searches that will instantly feed to us the information we seek in one simple click. I'm so grateful that the JHC archives enabled me to slow down, explore and reconnect with my Jewish past in this unique way.

**Judi Price-Rosen**

**If you would like to support the JHC archives as well as our programs and services, please contact Ilana Abrams in the JHC office at (204)478-8590 or [jewishheritage@jhcwc.org](mailto:jewishheritage@jhcwc.org).**



*Cherishing Our Place in Time*

- The Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada
- Marion & Ed Vickar Jewish Museum of Western Canada
- Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre
- Genealogical Institute
- Jewish Historical Society Archives

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**OFFICE HOURS:**

Monday to Thursday  
9 AM to 4 PM

***Mission Statement***

The Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada is dedicated to advancing and promoting knowledge, understanding and preservation of the cultural and religious life of the Jewish people. The Centre also serves as an advocate for tolerance and anti-racism.

***Vision***

To have a strong presence in Winnipeg and Jewish communities throughout western Canada as a dynamic organization, attracting a broad and diverse audience through its programs.

**J H C W C Staff and Board of Directors**

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***Executive Committee***

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