

MHR *Connections*

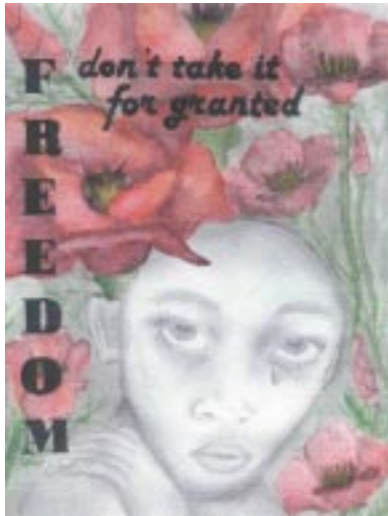
Published by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission

Volume 4 Number 4

April 2004



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Emina Tankovic of Hastings School won First Place in the Law Day Poster Competition.

Over 1700 People Participate in Law Day

Guided tours of the courts and lock up, interactive exhibits, student mock trials and a poster competition were just some of the events taking place on Law Day, at Winnipeg Law Courts on April 18th. A record breaking 1700 people attended the open house.

In April of each year, the anniversary of Parliament's passing the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is commemorated through the celebration of Law Day. Copies of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms were made available to the public.

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission joined forces with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and set up a display featuring a human rights quiz and general information.



Many people stopped by the Commission's booth to take the Human Rights Quiz.

Students from Laura Secord Elementary School, Shafesbury High School, Sisler High School, Grosvenor School, College Louis-Riel and College Regional Gabrielle-Roy took part in the mock trials.

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The Rights Connection

By Janet Baldwin Chairperson

Yom Hashoah

Holocaust Remembrance Day

Last week, I participated in the "Unto Every Person There Is A Name" program in the Manitoba Legislature. Victims of Nazism are remembered as their names are read aloud by Holocaust survivors, family members and other citizens. It is a powerful commemoration and one which always moves me deeply.

This year's memorial comes in the midst of a disturbing resurgence of hate attacks against Jews, including the April 5th firebombing of United Tahmud Torah School in Montreal. B'nai Brith Canada's most recent audit of anti-Semitic incidents indicates that from 2001 to 2003, reported incidents have doubled. The Simon Wiesenthal Centre reports a surge this year in Internet hate sites, and this past weekend in Winnipeg, "Western Canada For Us", a white supremacist group, held a recruitment meeting in Winnipeg.

Last month, the federal government approved a national action plan against racism. Hon. Irwin Cotler, Minister of Justice, said that the government would be putting this plan into effect against hate crimes. Here at The Manitoba Human Rights Commission, we are examining whether amendments to our provisions prohibiting discriminatory signs and statements would assist us in addressing incidents of hate within our jurisdiction.

Efforts on many fronts, both individual and institutional, are required to stem this tide. As The Honourable Irwin Cotler reminded us, the Holocaust began with words.

Upcoming Manitoba Human Rights Workshops

Harassment in the Workplace - June 23, 2004

Reasonable Accommodation June 16, 2004

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. \$50.00 (lunch included)

Employment Seminar - May 5, 2004

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. \$75.00 (lunch included)

For more information: 945-3007

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There was also a Celebrate Your Freedom poster contest. The winning poster by Emina Tankovic was called "Freedom - Don't Take it for Granted". She wrote a brief description of her poster. "As Canadian citizens we don't realize that freedom is a privilege. In this poster this child, who is a victim in a war, is crying, where no freedom or happiness is around. The poppies represent the many Canadian soldiers who died fighting for one thing, freedom. We, as a nation and people, should be grateful and celebrate the fact that we have freedom in our lives."

Second place winner was a poster titled "Celebrate the Freedom" by Marie Hart of Minitonas Middle School. The poster depicts a young woman letting a dove fly free. She says it represents immigrants coming to Canada.



Both children and parents took part in experiencing the effects of alcohol at one of the many interactive booths on Law Day.

Coming Events - Next Month is Asian Heritage Month

In 2002 the Government of Canada officially recognized May as the Asian Heritage Month. According to then Minister of Canadian Heritage the Honourable Sheila Copps, this recognition acknowledges the long and rich history of Asian Canadians and their contributions to Canada and the world. "In Canada, our cultural diversity enriches all of socially, politically, and economically in innumerable ways. Asian Heritage Month is an ideal occasion for all Canadians to celebrate the beauty and wisdom of various Asian Cultures. It affords an opportunity to acknowledge the many and varied contributions of Asian Canadians to our communities and our country."

Opening Ceremony

Saturday, May 1 at 7:30 p.m., Burton Cummings Theatre - \$5

Asian Cooking Demonstrations - Saturday from May 1 - May 29
from 1-2 p.m., 4th floor - The Bay, Downtown - Free

Asian Canadian Festival

Sunday (from 1:30-10 p.m.) & Monday (from 1-5 p.m.) May 23rd & 24th at the Forks Market.

Showcase of Asian Canadian Writer and Reading with Hiromi Goto

Thursday, May 26 at 7:30 p.m., McNally Robinson Booksellers, Grant Park - Free

"Pathways to Stardom" Asian Idol Contest

Saturday, May 29 at 7:30 p.m., Tec-Voc Auditorium, 1577 Wall Street - \$5

Showcase of Asian Culture and Arts

Saturday, May 29 from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Polo Park Mall - Centre Court - Free

Settlements

Theatre Responds Promptly to Complaint

While shopping in a mall, an older woman, who uses a cane for mobility, decided to take in a movie. She purchased her ticket and proceeded to the concessions stand for popcorn and a drink. Since she saw no staff available, other than the concession worker to assist her to her seat, she asked if she could have her medium popcorn put in a large bag to make it easier for her to carry. The concession worker declined. The woman then suggested that the worker not fill the medium bag to the top. The worker reluctantly did so.

The incident came to the attention of the Commission and, with the woman's permission, the theatre management was contacted. According to management, staff is available to patrons who need assistance, but this help was not offered at the time.

The head office became involved and agreed to post signs stating: *Staff is available to assist you. Please let us know how we may help.* These signs will be in all their theatres, countrywide. The complainant also received movie passes and was pleased with the outcome.

Job Application Form Revised

A young woman applied for seasonal work at a Garden Centre. As she was filling out the application form, she felt some of the questions might contravene the *Human Rights Code*. She contacted the Commission.

The application form was reviewed and some questions were flagged to the owner. For example, one question requested that the applicant list any prescription drugs or medication taken at the time. Another question required the applicant to reply yes or no to any back or leg problems. These questions could reveal a physical or mental disability and possibly result in a human rights complaint. The owner agreed to the suggested changes. He also received a copy of the Commission's "Pre-Employment Inquiries" booklet, which is also available on the Commission's website.

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Inco Manitoba- Lunch
City of Thompson's Race
Relations Committee - Lifestyle
Break

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