

# Museums play important role

BY SCOTT J. BRADLEY

THE Thunder Bay Museum in April of 2022 began hosting the travelling exhibit, "And In 1948, I Came To Canada": The Holocaust In Six Dates. It came from the Montreal Holocaust Museum, which developed the exhibit with funding support from the government of Canada.

You may be wondering why is a museum in Northwestern Ontario hosting an exhibit about events in Europe from before, during, and after the Second World War. Museums are not and cannot be neutral. We must take stands on social and political issues while advocating for a more inclusive and equitable society. For otherwise, our silences create a permissive culture for those who would institutionalize racism and bigotry.

It is quite clear that, from time to time, our Thunder Bay Museum team has an ethical responsibility as public historians to work with experts, institutions and organizations dedicated to ensuring that the deliberate and deplorable acts of the Holocaust, as well as other acts of evil, are never forgotten, nor repeated.

A museum's best tools for this are programming and exhibits to educate the public on what took place and why. In an ideal situation, the content from exhibits such as this has its biggest impact on community leaders and youth. They are the greatest agents of change in the present and the guardians of a just and equitable future. For we must ensure that we as a society never forget what happened so we can end the genocides happening now and ensure that they never happen again. This is why bringing

*Remembering humanity's horrors drives us to oppose hate, violence*



ONE CITY,  
MANY VOICES

**The Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Advisory Committee and Diversity Thunder Bay produce this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.**

travelling exhibits to your Thunder Bay Museum such as this one is so vital to these efforts.

The exhibit "And In 1948, I Came To Canada": The Holocaust In Six Dates offers a Canadian perspective commemorating the victims of the Holocaust and honours the survivors who made Canada their new home. It does this by exploring six key themes: the 1933 Nazi rise to power and anti-Jewish laws, the 1939 beginning of the war and creation of ghettos, the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union and mass murders by mobile killing units, the 1942 deportation to the death camps, the 1943 resistance, and the 1945 liberation and the post-war period.

The Thunder Bay Museum also worked in partnership with the Shaarey Shomayim Congregation of Thunder Bay to develop locally relevant content about the Jewish community in the area. Several artifacts that are on loan

to the museum are included with historical interpretation alongside the travelling exhibition.

It is well known that ignorance and fear of the unknown are the greatest causes of hate that eventually leads to genocides. This exhibit and many that the Thunder Bay Museum will be hosting in the future will bring knowledge to those who need and desire it.

We plan on hosting travelling exhibits in the future that address residential schools, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQ. These are topics which have impacted peoples in Canada and Northwestern Ontario.

Join us in learning about the Holocaust, its causes and impacts. And actively oppose ignorance, fear, hate, violence, and genocide. If we can change just a few hearts and minds, our efforts will be successful.

The exhibit, available in both English and French, is included with admission and will be at the Thunder Bay Museum until July 24.

*Scott Bradley has been the executive director of the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society since January of 2020. He holds a masters of arts degree in public history from Wright State University and previously worked for the National Museum of the United States Air Force for more than 16 years. The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.*