

Canada

NEWS IN BRIEF

Holocaust survivor donates rare Auschwitz jacket to museum

MONTREAL (CP) — A Holocaust survivor has donated to a Montreal museum a jacket she was forced to wear while imprisoned, over six decades ago, at the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Imy (Irma) Nemenoff-Gellert donated the rare item on Monday, her 97th birthday.

“It was time,” Nemenoff-Gellert said in a telephone interview.

“It’s good for people who come to visit the museum to know what happened during the Holocaust—youngsters, especially.”

The article of clothing most closely resembles a thick shirt, but she refers to it as her jacket. It is striped grey and blue, with dark buttons, no pockets and it has a tag marked U-609 on the front— the U signifying that she was Hungarian.

Nemenoff-Gellert and her husband were sent to the camp in 1944. Her husband was immediately killed while she was selected to work.

After the war, she came to Canada and has lived most of her post-war life in Montreal.

Julie Guinard, curator at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, says the article of clothing is a rare find because most survivors destroyed their prison garb.

Guinard says that parting with the jacket was emotional for the family. She says it was the only tangible item she has from her time incarcerated at the camp in German Nazi-occupied Poland.

She has told relatives that she believes she survived for two reasons.

First, she spoke several languages and was used as a translator at the camp. Also, she had no children at the time.

She tells relatives that young mothers were quickly killed off upon arriving at the camp.

Man found guilty of first-degree murder, killed Edmonton prostitute

EDMONTON (CP) — A judge has found a man guilty of first-degree murder in the death of an Edmonton prostitute.

Joseph Laboucan, 26, called no evidence at his trial but did not dispute any of the Crown’s evidence.

Justice Sterling Sanderman of Court of Queen’s Bench handed down the guilty verdict just 45 minutes into the first day of the trial that was set to run six weeks.

The body of Ellie May Meyer, 33, was found May 6, 2005, in a farmer’s field northeast of Edmonton.

Part of the Crown’s evidence was from Laboucan’s preliminary hearing where young people testified he showed off a portion of a finger, saying it was a souvenir from one of his victims.

In delivering his decision, Sanderman said he believed the testimony of one youth who said Laboucan got an adrenaline rush from killing Meyer, and wanted to kill again.

Laboucan, 26, is already serving a life sentence for first-degree murder for his role in the sex slaying of 13-year-old Nina Courtepatte.

Tories call CBC onto the carpet to explain lengthy access-to-info battle

OTTAWA (CP) — The Conservatives are hauling the CBC onto the carpet this fall to explain why the public broadcaster is fighting the access-to-information law in the courts.

The move is part of the new majority government’s increased scrutiny of the CBC’s spending and practices.

At the same time, the Conservative party is surveying members on whether CBC funding is good or bad value for taxpayers.

The opposition New Democrats say this is just the beginning of a full-scale attack the Conservatives are planning against the CBC.

The CBC is scheduled to argue before the Federal Court of Appeals next month that the information commissioner does not have the right to look at records that touch on its journalistic, creative or programming activities.

A Conservative MP on the House of Commons committee that will study the issue says MPs will have to determine whether the case means that the legislation needs to be fixed.

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Political pit bull Baird bares teeth in offering Canada’s defence of Israel at UN

Mike BLANCHFIELD
The Canadian Press

OTTAWA — Canada used its United Nations speaking slot Monday to lambaste opponents of Israel as no better than the appeasers who allowed fascism and communism to flourish before the Second World War.

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird delivered Canada’s views to the General Assembly in a speech that put meat on the bones of the Harper government’s unflinching support of Israel.

“Just as fascism and communism were the great struggles of previous generations, terrorism is the great struggle of ours. And far too often, the Jewish state is on the front line of our struggle and its people the victims of terror,” says a prepared text of Baird’s remarks.

“Canada will not accept or stay silent while the Jewish state is attacked for defending its territory and its citizens. The Second World War taught us all the tragic price of ‘going along’ just to ‘get along.’”

Baird made no direct mention of the Holocaust in which six million Jews died at the hands of Nazi Germany. But he evoked the era when he quoted Winston Churchill as saying “an appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last.”

Baird reiterated Canada’s opposition to the recent Palestinian bid to secure UN recognition as a state.

The UN Security Council became seized with the matter on Monday for the first time after Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas delivered his own forceful speech advocating the move.

“We supported the aspirations of those peoples who sought for themselves and



Foreign Minister John Baird addresses the General Assembly during the 66th UN General Assembly at UN Headquarters Monday.

their countries brighter futures during the Arab Spring that just passed,” said Baird.

“But we will not go along with the unilateral actions of the Palestinian Authority.”

Baird repeated Canada’s call for a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians.

The no-holds-barred address also took aim at the UN itself, for allowing despotic regimes to hold memberships on, or occupy the chair of, major committees.

“The greatest enemies of the United Nations are not those who publicly repudiate its actions,” said Baird.

“The greatest enemies of the United Nations are those who quietly undermine

its principles and, even worse, by those who sit idly, watching its slow decline.”

Baird backed that argument by citing North Korea’s recent rotating presidency of the UN conference on disarmament, which Canada boycotted, along with Iran’s vice-presidency of the General Assembly and its seat on the commission on population and development.

Baird’s unflinching defence of Israel was another reminder to the Jewish state that it has a friend in Canada.

Last week in New York, Prime Minister Stephen Harper affirmed his support for Israel in a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Teen gets close to max youth sentence for killing abusive dad

Scott EDMONDS
The Canadian Press

WINNIPEG — Despite his remorse and confession, a now 19-year-old who killed his abusive father in 2009, cut up his body, put it in garbage bags and then disposed of it in a rural area, has received close to the maximum sentence allowed by law.

“The nature of the offence calls for a severe penalty,” Associate Chief Judge Janice LeMaistre said Monday as she sentenced him to 64 months in secure custody and another four years of conditional supervision.

LeMaistre deducted only eight months for part of the time he has spent in custody since he turned himself in about a month after the June 2009 slaying, then pleaded guilty to first-degree murder. The maximum under the Youth Criminal Justice Act is six years in custody.

Defence lawyer Saul Simmonds had asked for two years.

The husky young man with

close-cropped dark hair sat quietly in a corner of the courtroom as the judge read her sentence.

LeMaistre noted that, since the slaying, the young man’s mother and her other two children are no longer being terrorized by the man who was killed.

She also read from pre-sentence reports that stressed the progress the young man has made at the Manitoba Youth Centre and Agassiz Youth Centre in Winnipeg, where he has received treatment.

A psychiatrist’s report said he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder as well as autism spectrum disorder.

Until 2002, when his parents separated, most of the abuse had been directed at the young man’s mother. He went to live with his father and then became a target.

That stopped June 25, 2009, when the then-17-year-old struck his 49-year-old father in the head with a hammer. His father managed to get the hammer away from him but the young man then

stabbed him to death. He cut up the body, loaded it into garbage bags and dumped them in a rural area.

About a month later he confessed the crime to his mother and went to police.

LeMaistre read a report by Dr. Keith Hildahl, a psychiatrist at the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre. He suggested the teen needed only another 18 to 24 months of custody and treatment.

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