

Holocaust survivor won't be silenced

Eva Olsson speaks to end the hatred and enforce change around the world

By Gail Paquette

When Eva Olsson took the microphone in hand in front of a jammed auditorium at Loyalist College Oct. 16, she was speaking for 11 million people who were silenced by hate.

Olsson recounted everything she can about the Holocaust with resilience and grace, from the eyes of a young woman. In 1944, at the age of 19, she and her family were taken in boxcars to Auschwitz – Birkenau, what we all now know as the Holocaust.

Olsson began her speaking tour 16 years ago at the age of 72. At a time when most would be retired, she conjured the courage to tell her story.

Her gentle grandma-ish nature enraptured the audience. Her message is what hate can do. Never say “I hate,” she said.

At 87, she travels the world and has spoken to over one million people in schools, churches, on armed force bases and at police force conferences. She said it is the audience that gives her strength. “How can I be tired when so many people love me?” she asked.

Her gentle voice that rose at poignant moments of her speech was accompanied by a slide show of images. Her eyes moistened with tears as her mother's photo comes on the screen.

“I never got to say good-bye and I love you,” she said, as she recalled losing sight of her mother when they were marched into Auschwitz. She never knew her mother was being taken to the gas chambers.

“I didn't see her and I didn't know where she was. I wished I could of put my arms around her and tell her I loved her and sorry I disobeyed her.”

“Do it while you can, for me it was too late,” she implored. “My mom was 49 and

I never saw my her again.”

One feels pain in the pit of their stomach but Olsson is not there to garner pity. She speaks to stop hatred and is there to enforce change.

“If all this suffering does not help us to broaden our horizons to attain a greater humanity by shedding all trifle and irrelevant issues, then it will all have been for nothing,” she said.

Olsson said she realizes that hate and genocide still exist in the world and the audience knowingly share her views. Unfortunately, she said hate and intolerance will always be with us.

She ensured the audience that she will continue to speak as long as she can so the voices that the Nazis so cruelly silenced will not be forgotten.

Racism and hatred are learned attitudes and can be prevented with compassion, she said.

“How can one feel good about putting one down? The only thing that lasts is the pain they cause other human beings.”

Olsson and her family were victims of the worst hatred but she never gave up.

“I refused to give up. I said to myself as I sat among the dead, ‘I can not die here, I will not die, who will take care of my sister,’” she said.

Olsson speaks up in hopes others will. “I cannot change the past and the future lies in your hands. What will you leave behind?” she asked.

“You will be the last generation to hear my message. Please tell your children. They need to hear the truth because only the truth will set us free.”

Olsson empowers those who experience hatred to speak up. A bystander is as guilty of hatred as the perpetrator, she explained.

If a less than five-foot tall, 87-year-old woman who has experienced the worse hatred in the world can garner courage, we all can.

“They murdered my family and I need to be here to tell you, never to take your family for granted,” she said. “Thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to keep the spirit of my family alive.”



Photo by Gail Paquette

Holocaust survivor Eva Olsson shares a light moment following a Loyalist presentation Oct. 16.

Election...

Continued from Page 1

“In 2008, when Obama was elected, I was in Grade 12. They took us out of class and we watched as a grade on a mass projector.”

Nonetheless, Canadian interest in the American election makes following the election easier.

“Canadians are extremely well versed in American politics,” Cranin adds. “People care about the election here, but it's not the same kind of passion.”

“People don't really take a stance – there's no real backing behind the stance – more than opinion. There's no drive.”

While Hurricane Sandy forced the

presidential candidates to change their campaign plans, it also complicated plans for one eligible first-time voter.

First-year Loyalist College broadcast engineering student Paul Rocci, 20, was set to vote for the first time in the 57th elections but wasn't able to request an absentee ballot before deadline.

Absentee ballots are governed by state: Rocci's home state of New Jersey required eligible voters to submit voter registration forms by Oct. 16 and mail in absentee ballot applications by Oct. 30.

The Basking Ridge, New Jersey native found himself consumed by preparations for then-imminent Hurricane Sandy when he returned home for fall reading break.

“I was planning on looking into it, over the last two weeks. I was caught up, hearing about the storm coming. The storm

took my mind off [the election].”

The State of New Jersey was among the hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy, and Rocci's family beach home in Seaside Heights – a popular tourist and resort community – is expected to be among the casualties. The family's home in Basking Ridge will not have power for two weeks.

“I would have voted if I had the opportunity to. If I were back in the States I would have 100 per cent been voting. After everything that's happened, it's really the last thing on my mind right now.”

Rocci expects that the hurricane, and the candidates' responses will have implications on their election's outcome. Rocci says he's been impressed by Republican candidate Romney's reaction.

“A lot of people in New Jersey are focusing on it. This is going to be a big elec-

tion changer.”

Despite missing out on the 2012 election, Rocci says he values the significance of being able to vote.

“Turning 18 means I can go to war and I can vote – we take that with pride.”

Voting in the American election for the first time is significant to Cranin as well, who has voted in Canadian federal and provincial elections in the past.

“The importance of voting is democracy: it is being able to express your view in a manner that will actually make a difference.

“Of course democracy doesn't exist globally so by having the opportunity to cast a vote, you're participating in something that is much more broad and important than anything you can comprehend.”

Priest...

Continued from Page 1

Right after I had finished setting up, Father Shea walked in from the back of the church put out his hand and introduced himself then followed up with, “So, how do I look?”

In return, I shook his hand and introduced myself and assured him that he looked more than presentable for the photograph. In between adjusting my lights and positions, I tried to think of a way to dig beneath the surface of the seemingly relaxed, nonchalant Father Shea.

I started by asking him what it was that drew him towards the priesthood and what it was that made him decide to dedicate his life to Catholicism. This, after all, was the main prerogative of me being there.

“Well, during high school, I really wanted to become a teacher,” replied Father Shea, “but that never worked out, so I decided to become a priest.”

Baffled by his response, that gave me more questions than answers. I struggled to come up with another way to phrase the question that I knew he did not want to get into.

Father Shea was not like any of the Catholic priests that I had dealt with from my past. He was cool, comical, relaxed and extremely patient with me, allowing me to have full range of creativity, even to the point of instructing him what to wear.

The priests that I had grown up around were strict, old and crabby. So I decided to take advantage of Father Shea's willingness to work with me, rather than trying to pry out some kind of truly open comment that would explain why it is he became a priest.

While we were moving to the confessional, another question popped into my head.

“What is the most stressful part of being a priest?” I asked.

Father Shea was surprised by my question and replied contemplatively, “Knowing whether I am saying the right things.”

I was very taken aback by his honest response, especially after his previous nonchalant answer. There it was – the most straightforward response I had gotten from Father Shea.

I asked him to explain more about what he meant. He said a lot of people come to him when they are in a time of crisis and they depend on him to give them an answer or a sign that will make them feel better.

This was the first time I realized the burden that a priest can carry could be very big as well as stressful.

After my meeting with Father Shea, I have found a new respect for priests and people who are able to fully dedicate themselves to something that in the end is of service to others.

I don't think it will have me running back to the church as a parishioner, but I feel that I have a better understanding of why it is they do what they do.

Men becoming hairy for cancer

Moustasche growing part of month's fundraising for prostate cancer research

By Kayleen Preston

Normally during the three o'clock break, the co-workers of Three-H Furniture Manufacturing in Haileybury, Ont., rush to take a moment from work. But things were different on Oct. 25.

Workers gathered around as they watched five of their co-workers who are participating in Movember, shave off the moustache of Norm Villneff. Villneff was encouraged by the co-workers in the Three-H plant, to participate with them for Movember.

Instead of being part of the group, he suggested to help raise more money. If they had raised \$500, he would shave off his moustache.

Many of the co-workers had never seen Villneff without a moustache.

“Ninety per cent of them haven't seen me without a moustache. The other ten percent don't remember what it looks like,” explained Villneff.

Even Andrew Willard, one of the men participating in Movember and Villneff's nephew, couldn't remember what he looked like without a moustache.

With the incentive to raise \$500, the five men went around both the plant and the office, explaining the situation and asking co-workers for donations. Within two days, they had raised \$585. Therefore, that day the men agreed that during their three o'clock break, the moustache would be shaved off.

As Villneff sat nervously in the chair, the five men from the “My Furry Friend” Movember group took turns shaving off the memorable moustache. They began with an electric razor to get off the thicker, longer hairs, with Villneff trying not to laugh the whole time.

As the men brought out an actual ra-



Photo by Kayleen Preston

After \$585 were raised by the staff of Three-H Furniture manufacturing within two days, Norm Villneff agreed to have his moustache shaved off on Oct. 25 by his co-worker and friend Jim Johnston.

zor to get the finer hairs, Villneff's lip wouldn't stop quivering.

After the shave had been completed, many of the co-workers offered congratulations, stating he “looked 25 years younger” and “I wonder if your wife will recognize you when you get home.”

Villneff later admitted to being a little worried, but said it was all in fun, and he wanted to help the men raise more money. The inspiration behind Villneff's idea of shaving off his moustache for fun was because in the past, his own father battled

prostate cancer and survived. He believes the Movember Foundation is a terrific idea.

The five men of “My Furry Friend” (Andrew Willard, Kevin Lendt, Jim Johnston, Cory Garreau, and Andy Ethier) shaved everything off Oct. 31 and will grow their facial hair for the entire month of November with no trimming or shaving.

Movember started in 2004 in Australia, but has now become known worldwide. As proven by the men of Three-H Furni-

ture, this is not only an event for students in high school, or college, but also men of all ages.

Every November, people register to be a part of Movember online, and raise money towards prostate cancer research. In turn, the men do not shave their moustaches for the entire month. Last year, the foundation raised \$125.7 million.

For more information on Movember or to register, visit the website <http://ca.movember.com>.