



Photo by Justin Chin

Djeneba Ballo, 27, poses for a portrait in Belleville on Wednesday. She immigrated to Canada from the Ivory Coast two months ago to be with her husband.

Powerful story of survival

Loyalist College visit part of tour to educate students

By Suzy Willig

Holocaust survivor Max Eisen visited Loyalist College this morning, and shared his powerful story of survival with students in Alumni Hall. This is Eisen's second time visiting Belleville. He previously gave his presentation at the Rotary Club of Belleville.

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies has created the Tour for Humanity - a mobile human rights education centre designed to teach Canadians about diversity, democracy, and Canadian Civic rights. Eisen, 85, has been travelling with them and educating students.

"We are absolutely privileged and proud to welcome Max Eisen to speak with us this morning, and to have the Tour for Humanity bus here for staff and students to visit," said Maureen Piercy, President of Loyalist College.

The hall filled quickly, leaving people standing along the sides of the room to watch Eisen's presentation.

Eisen started off the presentation speaking of his early life, and how he grew up in a very normal household. He gave a chronological account of the devastating events that occurred, beginning with the day that his family heard Adolf Hitler's speech on the radio.

"I was nine years old in 1938. My father bought a crystal radio. They found out that Hitler was making a very im-



Photo by Christopher King

Max Eisen talks to Loyalist College community and justice serves student Leah Twoungmen, at Loyalist College on Thursday. Eisen spoke to students about his life as a Holocaust survivor as part of the Simon Wisenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies' Tour for Humanity. As a Czechoslovakian citizen when Germany took over the country in 1939, Eisen was sent to Birkenau concentration camp in Poland.

portant speech from Berlin, and all his friends came to our house. There were only two radios in town. It was a town of about five thousand people, and amongst them lived 90 Jewish families. We numbered about 400 total, and I remember

this poison pouring out of the radio. I remember a one-liner: 'Werden wir, die Juden auszurotten' - 'we are going to eradicate the Jews from continental Europe.' I was looking at these older people, my father, who was in his late thirties,

and his friends, and I saw the green in their face and in my guts I sort of knew that something was going to change and I didn't know what."

Eisen went on to explain that Czechoslovakia was the first victim of Nazi Ger-

many, and the realization that a world war was going to begin. He then went through the years of his life, including his country losing its title, being forced to speak Hungarian, with the Slovakian teachers, police, and bureaucracy leaving the country, and being replaced with Hungarians.

He explained that Jews had absolutely no rights, and that Jews were no longer allowed to sell alcohol or liquor. His father, who owned a cellar, had his business confiscated.

Eisen remembers receiving a postcard from his extended family, saying that they were doing well and working on a farm. He later realized that was a meticulous lie the Nazis had come up with, forcing families to write these before they were executed. They had to make it big and keep using it, he said.

He went on to tell a story about being thankful for the wooden-board beds that the camp workers were given, after being forced to stand for three days straight.

Eisen's story went into great detail at times, explaining how dirty he was, after working in the camp, and how vividly he remembers it.

"We were so filthy, our skin was like the skin of a snake, lying in the square with dead bodies," he said.

May 6th, 1945 was the day that Eisen learned that white flags were flying.

"All I knew is that I had to crawl out from my bunk, and make it out or I would die there, and that took me a long time."

Eisen's presentation took just over an hour, holding the attention of the audience the entire time. He then answered questions from the audience.

Confections to sweeten love's confusion

By Natalie McMullen

Even Statistics Canada is in the mood this Feb. 14. — well, quantitatively at least.

They recently released a report — 'Valentine's Day ... by the numbers,' which offers, after a few demographic preliminaries, a rundown of annual dollars spent on meals, wine, chocolates, flowers, books and music.

Does the data say something about how Canadians feel towards this day dedicated to romance? Or has StatsCan intentionally, and perhaps wisely, skirted around the less tangible indicators of love?

According to Jessica Ford, a couples therapist based in Trenton, "The topic of love and sex - not so straightforward."

For some, love means a secure, lasting partnership, built on respect, equality and shared interests.

Young local couple, Mackenzie Lasher, 20, and Colin Wells 21, who have been

dating for 18 months, say friendship is the most important thing.

"He's my boyfriend but my best friend. We game together, we play PlayStation," said Lasher.

"We rather just watch movies and play video games," added Wells.

"It's like a friendship-relationship. It's nice to be in love with your best friend," said Lasher, with Colin nodding in agreement.

But for others this kind of companionship is distinct from true love.

Cristina Nehring, author of *A Vindication of Love: Reclaiming Romance for the Twenty-First Century*, considers modern-day romance "a poor and shrunken thing."

"In our embrace of the companionate marriage and our fear of anything that smacks of a power difference," wrote one book reviewer, "Nehring argues, we dismiss the erotic, the mysterious, the myth-

ical elements of love as never before."

Antonina Durham, a Belleville woman who has been with her partner for 15 years, believes compassion, rather than passion, is what helps sustain love, and prevent against pain and suffering.

"Passion is a fire. It burns. It's destructive sometimes. It can destroy you. You come to be an absolutely different person. You act differently. You act in a way you will be ashamed about later on."

She explained that her relationship has evolved over time.

"After 10 years of our life we started to be best friends for each other. ... So now we're not really man and woman. We're friends. ... We're friends with common values. ... We are both strong, we are both independent."

The author of an article published recently in *The New York Times* — 'Good Enough? That's Great,' would support Durham's perspective.

"The appreciatively resigned rise each morning not dwelling on their marital shortfalls but counting their mutual blessings, whatever they may be: a shared sense of humour, an exchange of kind gestures, the enthusiastic pursuit of a mutual interest. Somehow they have managed to grow together rather than apart."

Sharing Nehring's view, Lori Gottlieb sparked debate and fury with her recent piece in *The New York Times* entitled 'Does a More Equal Marriage Mean Less Sex?'

"People aspire to what's known in the social sciences as an egalitarian marriage, meaning that both spouses work and take care of the house and that the relationship is built on equal power, shared interests and friendship. But the very qualities that lead to greater emotional satisfaction in peer marriages, as one sociologist calls them, may be having an unexpectedly negative impact on these couples' sex

lives."

Ford disagrees with this view. "I don't see equality ever harming a relationship. If there's a loss of sexual desire - it more likely has to do with the stress and fatigue of modern life."

She said she does know some couples, "where there is absolute discord and chaos," who claim to be having great sex. "But what does this mean?"

"Healthy sex life varies from couple to couple," she added.

But there does seem to be some common ground between the ardent defenders of passionate love and those who praise the daily tending of long-term partnership.

Ford would likely agree with Nehring's point that modern love needs to be wrestled from "cutting-edge capitalists" and "thrill-seeking convenience shoppers."