

Greater Toronto Area

Baby Boom generation on display at Baycrest

By FRANCES KRAFT

Staff Reporter

The Baby Boom generation has arrived at Toronto's Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care – as the subject of a new exhibit that opened Sept. 18.

“Get Back: The Boomer Experience,” which runs for a year on the centre's main floor Baycrest Heritage Museum, is subtitled “Growing up Jewish in the '50s, '60s and '70s.” It evolved from an idea proposed by local artist Ian Leventhal, 54, the exhibit's designer and planning consultant. He contributed some of the items on display, including his childhood Minibrix set, adjacent to a Shabbat dinner vignette based on an early 1950s photograph taken at his wife's grandparents' house.

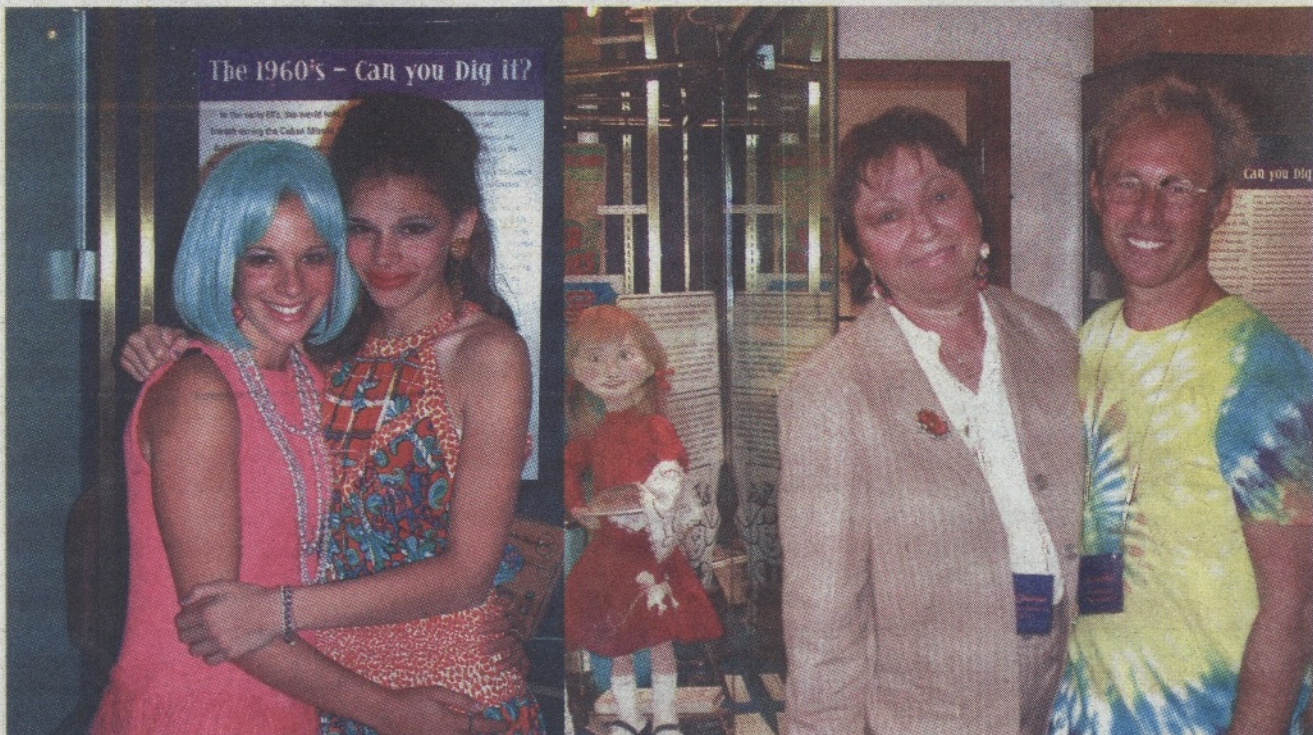
Leventhal painted the backdrop for the scene, and Elaine Glassman created papier-mâché figures. The display is included in the 1950s part of the exhibit, which represents childhood and innocence, Leventhal said. The '60s “Youthquake” part is devoted to adolescence, and the '70s represents maturity in the form of romance, love and marriage.

Leventhal pointed out the fun, garish colours in typical wedding gifts of the era, like pink and orange towels, and an orange fondue pot. “Our first kitchen was bright orange,” he recalls. “One thing about the '70s – it was bright.”

Toronto foodies will appreciate the carefully reproduced bar mitzvah cake made by pastry maestro Dufflet Rosenberg. Above it is a picture of her as a child with her brother at his bar mitzvah – and, of course, the cake.

Other contributors of memorabilia include magazine editor Bonnie Fuller, actor Rick Moranis and Jeanne Beker of Fashion Television.

There were also contributions from elderly Baycrest clients, noted museum co-ordinator Pat Dickinson in a news release. “One of them was a professional knitter and we have on



On left: Emma Krause, left, and Sydney Torgov, both 14, get in the spirit of Baycrest Heritage Museum's new boomer exhibit at its launch. In right photo: Elaine Glassman, left, and Ian Leventhal, joined artistic forces to create the 1950s Shabbat dinner scene. [Frances Kraft photos]

display the hand-knitted dress that she wore to her son's wedding in the 1970s.”

It's a “curious feeling” to see Hebrew-school report cards, camp pictures and Carnaby Street platform shoes on display as artifacts, Leventhal – who wore a tie-dyed T-shirt for the occasion – said in a speech at the opening. “Yes we actually

wore those funny clothes, and when we had hair, it was way out there.”

The museum, with 900 items in its permanent Judaica collection, is believed to be the only one in Canada located in a geriatric facility. The boomer display is its 17th special exhibit.