

# HERALD BICHIK

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## Bankruptcy Rate and Related Issues

Bankruptcies in Canada jumped by 47% in December, 2008, compared to December a year earlier, it was reported by the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy, an agency of Industry Canada.

Personal bankruptcies increased by 50.1% to 7,821 individuals between December 2007 and December, 2008. The expectation is that the rising trend will continue as unemployment continues to rise in coming months.

There were 478 business bankruptcies in December, 2008, an increase of 2.4% compared to December, 2007.

There were 96,774 bank-

ruptcies in Canada in 2008, an increase of 12.3% compared to 2007, with a great increase in the last three months.

Bankruptcy trustees are among the few businesses adding staff.

The housing market is in decline, with lower prices realized in fewer sales across Canada. In addition, Central Mortgage and Housing Corp. reports an 11% drop in housing starts.

Lenders are increasing the cost of borrowing and debt, while critics doubt that the Harper government's effort to regulate credit card lending through its budgetary meas-

ures will have much effect.

Instead of controlling rising interest rates and fees by imposing caps, the Conservatives want to educate consumers about credit while requiring better disclosure by banks which issue credit cards.

While most Canadians pay their credit card balances in full each month, many others have rising unpaid balances on which rates and fees are increasing.

The Retail Council of Canada criticizes the lack of action on controlling fees paid by merchants and others who accept credit cards. The Council says that in Canada these fees are among the highest in the world.

Credit cards are issued by more than 23 companies.

## Canada's Decline Continues

While Canadian Prime Minister Harper was travelling to meetings where he bragged about the state of the Canadian economy and urged governments, to follow our good example, back at home the economy continued to implode.

In addition to rising numbers of bankruptcies and increasing unemployment, Canada rang up a \$3.2 billion trade deficit in December, 2008, the first since March, 1976.

Imports fell by 5.7% to \$38.5 billion, in December, but exports dropped even faster — 97% to \$35.3 billion. Various analysts, like BMO Capital Markets deputy chief economist Douglas Porter, do not see a speedy recovery. Low prices for commodities, especially raw materials, and weak US sales could mean continuing deficits in coming months, and even years.

Canada still had a trade surplus, but a much reduced one, with the United States.

The United States also had a trade deficit, but it was the lowest in almost 6 years at \$US39.9 billion.

Prime Minister Harper hopes that a recent drop in the value of our dollar will increase sales abroad. The poor trade figures, combined with high job loss levels, could lead to a March interest rate cut by the Bank of Canada.

Questions have been raised about the adequacy of the \$US790 billion stimulus plan. It is generally agreed that, unless the US economy recovers, Canadian performance will continue to slump.

## We Win Race to the Bottom

The conservative politicians of all parties have finally accomplished what was long discussed by taking Canada to the bottom of developed countries in provision of day care.

The United Nations Children's Fund, in a report issued in December, 2008, indicated that Canada and Ireland were the worst of 25 countries, behind even the United States, meeting just one of 10 criteria on early childhood services. The USA met three.

Among the items studied by the survey were availability, affordability and quality of day care, parental leave, and overall governmental spending.

There is concern about this poor showing for a number of reasons. One is that lack of child care services is keeping people out of the work force; another is that good quality early childhood services provide a solid foundation for academic success.

UNICEF estimates that every dollar spent on early childhood care and education can return as much as \$8.00 in economic benefits to a country. This includes the productive work of parents who are enabled to get productive work and pay taxes, the economic activity generated by the establishment of the required facilities, the increased long-range productivity of the child, and others.

The conservative mantra, however, is that government can do nothing useful that the private sector can not do better. Therefore, for example, instead of establishing child care facilities, the government of Canada gives parents a \$100.00 monthly taxable cheque. The result is that families can not find the affordable facilities they need.

Again, the conservatives of all parties repeatedly promise to reduce childhood poverty in

Canada, and they repeatedly fail to keep their promises.

Part of the reason for the failure is the unwillingness to commit resources to the task, unwillingness based on hostility to publicly funded programs.

Another part of the reason is the wrong-headed approach of directing anti-poverty measures at the child. This leads to such absurdities as providing resources to children, but taxing them back from the parents.

Anybody but a conservative understands that, as a rule, children are poor because their parents are poor. Any effort to eliminate poverty among children while leaving

their families in need is bound to fail. The exception would be to remove children from their families, and raise them in institutions (privately operated, of course) — but there is no lack of experience showing how well that works.

And so Canada can bask in the glory of its ideologically won position at the bottom of developed countries when it come to providing for our children and their families.

## And Another Scandal

George "The Torturer" Bush, Prime Minister Harper's soul-mate, left a legacy of which the new administration and most thinking American people are thoroughly ashamed. The new administration of President Obama is attempting to undo some of the damage done by President Bush.

Part of the process is to eliminate such abominations as the prison in Guantanamo, the use of torture on detainees, and other savage excesses in the supposed war on terror.

Prime Minister Harper was proud to stand by George Bush on most issues, and in particular, was happy to allow Bush justice to run its course, regardless of how contrary the course was to international

law, human decency or common sense.

Prime Minister Harper, alone among the leaders of developed nations, allowed a citizen of his country to be victimized by the excesses of George Bush, leaving Omar Khadr as a victim of Bush barbarism. With a new president in place, Mr. Harper persists in following the policies of the former president.

The new president, Barack Obama, wants a new direction, and he will have it. Prime Minister Harper will have no option but to accept the repatriation of Omar Khadr. The Prime Minister can accept the inevitable with good grace, helping the President, or he can be compelled to accept the inevitable, earning the dis-favour of President Obama.

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# Current Eclectic — Long and Short

## Much Hype, Little Benefit

For many people, the discussion which follows will be academic. These are the people who desperately need help. Among them are families who have to decide whether to pay the rent or buy some medication, whether to spend money on food or on some winter clothing, or which overdue bill to pay. To these people, choosing between an RRSP and a TFSA is an abstract exercise, removed from reality.

As unemployment and underemployment grow, the number of people in these circumstances increases. These people, some working full time (perhaps at several jobs), some not, get no benefit from RRSPs or TFSAs or other great savings opportunities.

The programs which would help them, like EI or other income-support programs, if they are addressed at all, are changed, as often as not, to make them less instead of more accessible. After all, we wouldn't want to give them an excuse to slack off.

So the governments tend to concentrate on making the so-called middle class feel better, without making them much better off in reality. That explains why, a little while ago, there suddenly arose a great stir about a great new savings vehicle which would provide amazing tax benefits with a lot more flexibility than an RRSP provides. At least, so we were told about the tax-free savings account.

Of course, people were interested in an opportunity to earn income on savings of up to \$5000.00 annually without paying tax on the interest or dividends or capital gains.

## Economy Hits Car Makers

Bashing American car makers has long been a favourite activity of many follow-the-leader critics. The standard criticism is that the Americans are unresponsive to market trends and that the unionized plants overpay their employees. The car makers respond that the problem is the economy, while the union leaders say that labour compensation rates are a minor part of car prices.

Now that there are production cuts by Japanese car makers, including Toyota in Canada, and others, because of declining sales, one might expect some change in the dialogue, but not much change has been evident.

Maybe it is the economy, but the follow-the-leader critics will continue to union-bash and talk about North American gas guzzlers until the leaders change their rhetoric — which is improbable.

And to withdraw money from the account at any time, without any obligation to make up the withdrawals or pay taxes on the amount withdrawn — sounds much better than an RRSP.

People were asking each other whether this was truly a great savings vehicle.

Most of the writing about TFSA has followed the government's line, treating this new savings vehicle as a marvellous inducement to save, especially among those who usually do not, and especially to save for special things like a trip or a car, for which an RRSP does not work. Some writers have been more balanced, however, and Ellen Roseman in particular, writing in *The Toronto Star*, suggested asking questions about rates, fees, charges.

Now that financial institutions are advertising their offerings for tax-free savings accounts, the questions take on some immediacy.

The short answer to all the questions is that, for the most part and for most people, especially in today's economy, the benefit is little to nothing. This "savings" plan could even cost you money, so make sure you know what you are getting!

One thing to look out for is unreal marketing pitches. The Royal Bank of Canada, for example tells you that \$5000.00 contributed annually at the beginning of each year into a TFSA will grow to \$194,964 in 20 years, compared to \$156,258 outside the TFSA. Over a period of 20 years, the difference between the amount accumulated in a regular savings account and a TFSA would be \$38,706, according to this RBC information. Sounds great — an average benefit/advantage of about \$2000.00 yearly is not to be sneezed at.

The finer print tells you that the assumptions are a 6% annual interest rate and a 32% income tax rate. There is no mention of any bank service charges.

If you know of an investment available today that actually offers 6% annually on a \$5000.00 investment, please let me in on it. While running its TFSA information on its web site, with its 6% assumption, the RBC was actually offering 2.6% as its highest rate — on GICs with a 10-year term! Its savings accounts were paying a maximum 2.25%, with most paying less than 1%, and some actually paying 0% — yes, 0 as in zero!

In a large ad in a Toronto daily, the Toronto Dominion Bank was offering a 5-year plan: invest \$5000.00 each year for five years in GICs, and earn 8% in the fifth year — but only 1.5% the first year.

Other banks were offering similar rates.

So, suppose you actually

have \$5000.00 to invest in a GIC or some other asset in a TFSA. And suppose, too, that you buy into the Toronto Dominion plan, which pays a whopping 1.5%. At the end of the year, you would have earned \$75.00 interest on your \$5000.00 investment. For the moment, let us ignore bank fees and charges.

Of course, you could have earned that same amount just investing in a 1.5% GIC or even a savings account. So what is the benefit? The great benefit so highly touted by the government is in the income tax saved with a TFSA. What does that actually mean?

If you are paying income taxes at 32% on your last taxable dollar, then you are making a lot more money than most people do. More probably, like most people, you are paying 25% or less (counting both federal and provincial income taxes) on your marginal taxable dollar.

Even if the banks number is right for you, you would be saving about one third of \$75.00, which is the magnificent sum of — wait for it — \$25.00! For the rest of us, it would range from \$0.00 for those not earning enough to pay taxes (so where do they get money to save?) to about \$19.00 annually. Try not to spend it all in one place!

On the other hand, consider a \$5000.00 contribution into an RRSP. That immediately reduces your taxable income by \$5000.00, so your immediate tax saving is about \$1666.00 if you live in the world of RBC, or about \$1000.00 if you live in Ontario and still have a good job.

Why, then, would someone use a TFSA instead of an RRSP?

Some people actually have too much money, and are reduced to looking for little bits and pieces of savings. The RRSP contributions are maxed out. If your tax rate is truly high, you can make this work.

Some people like the withdraw-anytime-without-tax

Remember: Those who can, do; those who can't, teach; the rest criticize.

feature. Fine, but be careful. Withdrawing early from a GIC may mean losing all the interest, or may incur another penalty. Buying and selling bonds usually involves a commission, and current interest rates are low. Other investments may lose their value, instead of appreciating in today's economy.

Be aware, too, that withdrawals count against your investment limit — you can not put the money back into your account until the following year.

Other than during the initial scramble to draw your investment, when banks may waive their usual fees, as a come-on, it can be expected that over the longer term banks will charge at least their usual fees and charges for whatever type of account and type of investment you choose. If you save \$20.00 in taxes, and spend twice that on fees and charges, the account is costing you money, not saving it for you.

Senior citizens can escape service charges on some accounts at some banks. Under other circumstances, you will find service charges. On one of my accounts, Scotiabank recently added a new fee (a record-keeping fee!) raising the charges from about \$3.00 monthly to about \$5.00 a monthly on that account.

If saving \$5000.00 annually were easy, everyone would retire with an adequate nest egg, with good tax saving through an RRSP. Most people do not have an RRSP and many others have a very small RRSP. The main reason is that most people find it hard to scrape together something to save — and if they save something this month, an emergency may require the money to be spent next month.

All in all, the TFSA may, under some circumstances, actually provide a benefit, but maybe the best idea is to pay a bit more on your mortgage.

— Wilfred Szczesny

## About the Budget Bill

Opposition Leader Michael Ignatieff has drawn a fair amount of criticism for his decision to give Prime Minister Harper a free pass on the budget, other than demanding regular reports by the government. Among the critics was Thomas Walkom, writing in *The Toronto Star*.

Mr. Walkom, unlike some of the other critics, addressed specific concerns about Bill C-10, the budget implementation bill. Two major concerns he raises are the attacks on the public sector workers and on women. He also mentions measures to weaken environmental laws and loosening of oversight of foreign investment and restrictions on foreign ownership.

The attack on pay equity for women moves complaints from the federal human rights commission to the collective bargaining process. The courts stopped a similar attack by Ontario's Mike Harris.

While not taking issue with the government's limiting of civil service pay raises to 1.5% annually for the next two years, making the caps retroactive to 2006, adds "injury to insult". This too may lead to a court challenge.

Mr. Walkom concludes, "But it seems that Stephen Harper is still Stephen Harper." And he can get away with it because of the Liberals' helpful support.

## Canadians Lead

It seems that a fair number of Canadians have gone to various countries around the world to take leading roles in government.

The most recent we read about was Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, who holds both Canadian and Somali citizenship. Mr. Sharmarke, the son of an elected president shot to death in 1969 before a military coup, and a graduate of Carleton University with United Nations experience, was nominated as Prime Minister by Somali President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed and approved by legislators in a landslide on February 14.

Mr. Sharmarke indicated an intention to focus on resettling Somalia's one million internal refugees and facilitate international humanitarian aid.

UKRAINIAN CANADIAN

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necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board.

**Its Existence Mattered**

An Editorial by Wilfred Szczesny

With the celebrations of the 90th anniversary of the AUUC coming to an end, it is appropriate to recapitulate the significance of the organization in those 90 years. In March, 1988, *The Ukrainian Canadian* carried an article answering the question "Why should anyone care?" Here are some of the ideas contained in that article:

The decision to build the Ukrainian Labour Temple because the Ukrainian Canadian community in Winnipeg had grown to the point where renting facilities was not enough. The level of support across Canada shows that the need was real and widespread.

The decision to build was made by left-thinking Ukrainian people in Canada, with an interest in politics and culture in both the narrowest and broadest sense of those terms. They had a grand view: to create a "true Temple of Labour for the entire mass of Ukrainian workers in Canada..., propagating words of truth and science which alone can liberate us from the chains of slavery".

Perhaps the first importance of the building of the Ukrainian Labour Temple was its role in unifying multitudes of progressive Ukrainian Canadians across the country.

The Ukrainian Labour Temple Association, and then the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association, set out to raise the ethnic and class consciousness of its members, to educate them, and to give them a new sense of dignity. These militant, class-conscious workers were the gift the ULFTA brought to the struggles of Canadian working people, whether in the trade unions or in other social movements. In the process, the ULFTA, and then the AUUC, kept progressive ideas alive in the Ukrainian Canadian community. At the same time they challenged the view that all Ukrainian Canadians held right-wing views.

The ULFTA and AUUC also kept the doors to Ukraine open during the existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, when the right-wing organizations did all they could to isolate Soviet Ukraine. The AUUC (and very few others) had a program which showed Canadians, including other Ukrainian Canadians, repeatedly that Ukrainian culture continued to live in its homeland. This program created lines of communications between Ukraine and Ukrainian Canadians.

As an organization, primarily, of the first and second waves of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, and their  
(Continued on Page 14.)

**COMMENTARY****Obama and the US Economic Crisis**

Now that Barack Obama has been sworn in as President of the United States and a new Administration has been formed, two challenging issues will need to be addressed: first, whether the Obama Administration will be able to revitalize and sustain the growth of the American economy; and second, whether the Obama Administration has the capacity to give new direction to the discredited American foreign policy.

A number of hypotheses can be put forth in attempting to determine how the new Administration is likely to cope with the two issues mentioned. However, the most plausible one is that the Obama Administration will try to rejuvenate the economy and will sustain a sluggish economy over a period of time, but will not be able to resolve the economic crisis. And it is fairly safe to state that much of the substance of American foreign policy will remain unchanged, except for some minor variations.

In examining the American domestic situation, it is clear that President Obama and his newly installed team are inheriting an economy in shambles, with a high rate of home foreclosures, increasing financial bankruptcies, spiralling unemployment approaching double digits, and a national debt close to \$US 10 trillion. While the Bush presidency injected some \$US 350 billion to bail out Wall Street financial institutions, it has been clearly revealed that the money merely flowed to bail out CEO's, who received hefty bonus payments, and buttress lucrative dividends that went to shareholders. Little money, if any, was directed to help resuscitate the ailing economy.

Robert Reich, a senior economist and advisor to President Obama, recently stated that the solution to the American economic crisis must involve massive infusion of capital into infrastructure, health, and social programs in an effort to generate the necessary immediate income and

spending power of wage earners and consumers. It remains to be seen in the months ahead how effective the Obama team will be in implementing the Keynesian economic strategy of massive priming of the economy.

However, sustaining economic growth and maintaining momentum of development in the economy is another matter.

While rejuvenation of the economy is critical, sustaining the growth of the economy and focusing on the inherent contradictions of the economy are equally crucial in the context of a global slow-down. The fundamental contradiction of the American economy is that, in the decades following World War II, enormous wealth, particularly in the form of capital, concentrated in a relatively small section of the population. This development ultimately and inevitably undermined and diminished the essential purchasing power of American wage earners. The Bush Administration was incapable of isolating the main contradiction of the economy, and thus, was unable to identify the root cause of the crisis. The contentious issue of "purchasing power" remained unresolved, which finally brought the American economy to a crisis point.

Failure of federal authorities under the Bush Administration to monitor activity and enforce regulations governing lending practices of real estate, banking and financial institutions precipitated a severe housing and financial crisis which triggered the downward deflationary spiral of the American economy.

Currently, American corporations are experiencing great difficulty in disposing of their surplus production. The protectionist economic policies of

other competitive capitalistic market economies are being closely guarded, and trade rivalry appears to loom on the horizon. One can safely state that the sector of American corporate industry that is closely associated with armaments production will continue to engage lobbyists to pressure the Obama team for the continuation and expansion of the war in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Wars are extremely profitable, and American corporate industry benefited enormously from previous wars in the post-World War II period. The escalating war in Afghanistan opens up new market opportunities for American industry and is likely to help sustain a rejuvenated economy, albeit a struggling and sluggish one.

Barack Obama and his close associates have assembled a powerful and extraordinary team to cope with the American crisis. There is ample evidence to suggest that the Obama team, basing its stimulus package on 5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), will most likely succeed in "kick-starting", rejuvenating and sustaining a sluggish economy. It is interesting to note that the entrenched "American Power Structure", the "Military-Industrial Complex" as referred to by President Eisenhower, is prepared and willing to make some concessions to Congress, and is encouraging Obama to implement an effective stimulus package to revive the economy. It is no accident that Warren Buffet, an American economic tycoon, is an advisor to the Obama team, and it is no accident that Pat Robertson, of the Evangelical Right, and closely connected with corporate America, recently extolled the virtue of Barack Obama.

Because of the catastrophic implications of a global economic melt-down, there is reason to believe that corporate America is willing to make concessions and cooperate with the Obama Administration in efforts to avert a  
(Continued on Page 14.)

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[www.infoukes.com/shevchenkomuseum](http://www.infoukes.com/shevchenkomuseum)

**From Our Readers**

I wish that I could take part in all the things that are going on in the cities, Calgary especially.

Keep up the good work.  
— Kay (Wusyk) Wintonyk  
Medicine Hat, Alta.

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## Ukrainian News Briefs Selected by George Borusiewich

### Most Popular Children's Names

Nazar and Anastasia were the most popular children's names in Ukraine in 2008.

According to the press-service of the Justice Ministry of Ukraine, around 30 names have been most popular in Ukraine last year.

The most popular female names were: Anastasia, Angelina, Alina, Daria (Daryna), Diana, Kateryna, Maria, Natalia, Sophia, Yulia, Victoria, Yelyzaveta, Anna, Veronica, Ulyana, Oleksandra, and Christina.

The most popular male names were: Nazar, Danylo, Maksym, Vladyslav, Mykyta, Artem, Kyrylo, Yegor, Ilyia, Andriy, Bohdan, Denys, Dmytro, Yaroslav, Oleksander, and Volodymyr.

According to the Justice Minister, some Ukrainians preferred extraordinary names. Thus, lately in Ukraine, boy's names such as Khrystofor, Adam, Franko, Atos, and Spartak have been registered.

Unusual girl's names that have been registered recently include Vesna, Krasunya, Madonna, Danaya, Sara, Malka, Zinaida, and Maya.

### The Great Chess Doping Scandal

Steroids build muscles, right? Are there chemicals available that improve brain activity?

Ukrainian Grandmaster Vassily Ivanchuk refused to submit a urine sample for a drug test at the recent Chess Olympiad in Dresden (Germany) and is now considered guilty of doping.

Professional chess player Ivanchuk, born in Berezhany, Ukraine, in 1969, has been a grandmaster for the past 20 years. He is currently ranked third in the world.

The man with the black hair and "bedroom eyes" is known as "Big Chucky" by his fellow chess players. Why? Because, after losing a game, he goes into the forest at night and howls at the moon to drive out the demons; because he likes to sit in dark rooms; because he usually looks at the ceiling instead of the chess board during a match.

After the last match in the Chess Olympiad (which he lost), he was asked by a judge to submit to a drug test. Instead, he stormed out of the room, kicked a concrete pillar in the lobby, pounded a counter top in the cafeteria with his fists, and then vanished into a cloakroom.

Throughout this performance, he was followed by a handful of officials.

No one could convince Ivanchuk to provide a small amount of urine for the test.

The incident in Dresden, and the possibility of a professional ban for Ivanchuk has caused outrage in the chess world.

Drug tests were introduced at international chess tournaments in 2001. The World Anti-Doping Agency classifies chess as a "low risk sport", and so far no one has been convicted of doping.

Ivanchuk was in Spain last month, where he played and won a tournament in the resort town of Benidorm.

"What happened in Dresden is total insanity, but these kinds of dramas happen in our world," he said. "I simply left after the match. I didn't listen to the man who was speaking to me. I had never seen him before. In fact, to this day I don't know who he is."

The chess world waits, with bated breath.

### Ukrainian Arms Ship Freed

The Ukrainian ship MV Faina has finally been freed. After having been hijacked for 134 days by Somali pirates off the coast of Africa, the ship and its crew of mainly Ukrainian sailors has been released. The initial ransom demand of \$35 million was reduced, after much haggling, to \$3.2 million.

The cargo consisted of 33 Soviet battle tanks, grenade launchers, anti-aircraft missile launchers, and 14,000 rounds of ammunition.

The destination of the ship and its cargo was mired in controversy. Officially, the cargo was destined for Kenya, but sources later confirmed that the deadly shipment was in fact financed by the United States and headed for the civil war in South Sudan.

To add insult to injury, the ship owner, Israeli-Ukrainian businessman Vadim Alperin, deducted \$200 from the salary of each sailor to pay for telephone conversations they had during their four-month captivity.

The indignant sailors described that deduction as "a cynical attempt to save money at the expense of the captured crew."

### Ukrainian Black Tomatoes

For many years, a California-based garden retailer, TomatoFest Garden Seeds, has predicted what will be the

year's most popular heirloom tomato varieties. (Heirloom tomato seeds are those which have been passed down by farmers through the generations and are 50 years, or more, old.)

Black tomatoes are high on the list again this year because they are popular among growers and chefs and continue to be best-sellers at product markets, said TomatoFest founder Gary Ibsen. He said that these tomatoes trace back to the southern Ukraine during the early 19th century.

"They originally existed in only a small region of the Crimean Peninsula. Soon they were showing up as new varieties in many shapes and sizes and began to appear throughout the territories of the former Soviet Union.

"Then they began turning up in the former Yugoslavia, Germany, and the United States."

Shall we try them?

### Sneaking Into NATO

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry is planning to prepare the first one-year national program for Ukraine's integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (a military alliance led by the United States).

"We hope to have the first one-year national program approved in March-April and will actually start implementing it," Foreign Minister Volodymyr Ohryzko told reporters in Kyiv last month.

A group of experts from the NATO Secretariat will arrive shortly, marking the beginning of a Ukrainian-NATO "rap-prochement," he said.

"Today we have a target plan for 2009 and we are planning to transform it into a one-year national program," the minister explained. "The program will consist 95% of the target plan, hence it is safe to say that its *implementation has already started.*" (my emphasis — GB)

Thus, without prior approval by Parliament and in direct opposition to the frequently and clearly-stated wishes of the Ukrainian people, President Viktor Yushchenko is slipping Ukraine into NATO by the back door.

So much for "Orange" democracy.

### Flight of Passion

Ukrainian circus artists won a gold medal at the recent Monte Carlo Circus Festival.

Olesia Shula is a former athlete, Dmytro Hryhorov is a professional trapeze artist, and together they make a

team that won the Golden Clown Award, the highest award of the most prestigious festival of circus art, with their number called "Flight of Passion."

This is the second time in Ukraine's history that the circus counterpart of the cinematographic Oscar prize went to Ukrainian artists (equilibrist Anatoli Zalevsky was the first to win it).

Princess Stephanie of Monaco presented the winners with the award, while the world's elite, members of royal families, Hollywood stars, and other honoured guests of the festival gave them a standing ovation.

After their return to Ukraine, Olesia and Dmytro were given a reception in Kyiv that was fit for triumphant victors.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism awarded Olesia and Dmytro with the title of Merited Artists of Ukraine.

Said Dmytro, "We still cannot believe in our victory, for this award is the highest recognition we could ever dream about. But when we were pronounced winners, our joy was boundless."

### No Russian Poetry

In Ukraine's capital city of Kyiv, the senior pupils in School #22 were holding a contest, in time for St. Valentine's Day, for which the participants were to prepare a song, a dance, and a short performance.

A girl and a boy — Lilya Mikhailova and Sasha Pushka — prepared to perform an extract from *Yevgeny Onegin* by the famous Russian poet Aleksandr Pushkin.

Their presentation was stopped by the jury, and the boy was told to translate, on the spot, Pushkin's Russian words into Ukrainian. Sasha tried to do so, but was soon stopped again.

The jury then told Lilya to perform her part, which, of course, was also in Russian.

After the contest was over, the two that were reciting in "the wrong language" were told that they were disqualified because they performed in Russian.

(If the students in Kyiv recited Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in English, would they still be banned for reciting in "the wrong language?" If a student in Canada recited Taras Shevchenko's poetry in Ukrainian, would he be banned for reciting in "the wrong language?")

### Rivals Battle

Ukraine's prime minister survived a no-confidence vote in parliament several week's ago, but a deepening economic

slump and savage political infighting spell trouble for the country's two American-leaning leaders.

With the approach of presidential elections in the next year, President Viktor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko have been spending increasing time blazing guns at each other rather than in "minding the store". Each is blaming the other for a botched response to the economic crisis.

(Millions of layoffs are expected in Ukraine's heavy industries in the coming months, and unemployment is expected to hit levels unseen since the installation of capitalism.)

Diplomats say that President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Tymoshenko have all but given up governing, and their rivalry is jeopardizing Ukraine's ability to meet the requirements of the International Monetary Fund (an American "World Bank"), which extended to Ukraine a \$16.5 billion rescue package last fall.

Ukraine's industrial production fell by 26% in 2008, and its currency has lost a third of its value since last summer.

Yushchenko and Tymoshenko have often fought since the so-called Orange Revolution that swept them to power in 2004, but the upcoming presidential elections have served only to turn their nasty spats into open, all-out warfare, with concern for the people of Ukraine apparently coming second.

### Economic Tsunami

Ukraine has appealed for emergency loans from six of the world's richest countries to help support its economy, which has been battered by the global financial crisis.

Yulia Tymoshenko, Prime Minister of Ukraine, said her government had sent letters to the United States, Russia, China, Japan, and the European Union asking for loans to fill a shortfall in budget revenues for this year.

"We have already received a positive response from some countries, including Russia," Tymoshenko said. "Russia is ready to sign such loan agreements."

Reports have suggested that Russia was prepared to lend Ukraine as much as \$5 billion. The United States is still studying Ukraine's request.

The urgent need for immediate funds was precipitated by the apparent reluctance of the International Monetary Fund to release the second portion of the \$16.5 billion emergency loan that Ukraine

(Continued on Page 16.)

**Ukrainian  
Page  
Submitted  
Separately**

**Ukrainian  
Page  
Submitted  
Separately**



Shown above are some of the celebrants at the successful *Malanka* celebration in Edmonton on Saturday, January 10.

## A Successful Malanka in Edmonton

On Saturday, January 10, the Edmonton Branch of the AUUC celebrated yet another successful Malanka.

Due to the extremely cold weather for the past month and a half, our Malanka Committee was worried that it would be quite difficult to entice people to leave their warm cosy homes to attend this year's event. But through perseverance and hard work, entice them we did. As the people were leaving for home, some commented that this was one of the best Malankas in years.

Bill and Shirley Uhryn, our *hospodar* and *hospodynia* (host and hostess), met the people at the entrance and greeting them, in Ukrainian, with "*Shchaslyvoho novoho roku*" (Happy New Year)!

The guests proceeded upstairs to find their reserved seats and to enjoy some pre-supper special Ukrainian elixir — including Slavutych *pyvo* (beer) imported from Ukraine. (Slavutych is the ancient name for the Dnipro River which flows through the capital, Kyiv.) Our guests were then invited down to the banquet room, where they enjoyed a scrumptious supper prepared by the staff from Elegant Affairs, our long-time caterers.

The concert program began with MC Shirley Uhryn giving a short narrative on the history of the Malanka holiday. This was followed by Branch President Eugene

Plawiuk's New Year's greeting on behalf of the membership, in which he expressed the need for world peace. Mr. Plawiuk said that the AUUC is the longest-existing ethnic organization in Canada, having celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2008.

The Trembita Male Chorus, accompanied on piano by Cultural Director Blyth Nuttall, opened the concert program with three songs — "*Po sadochku khodzu*", a lovely Ukrainian folk song; "*Katusha*", the famous Russian folk song; and finally, "*Those Were The Days*", with soloist Sasha Uhryn.

It was a beautiful sight indeed to witness the youthful exuberance and excellence of invited dancers from the Yatran Dance Academy. The dancers, under the tutelage of esteemed instructors from Ukraine Vasil Konovets and his wife Anna, performed two dances spectacularly and with precision, endearing themselves to the audience which reacted with prolonged ap-

plause.

Our newly created Trembita Quintet, comprised of Bill Uhryn, Paul Greene, and new members from the Ukraine Orest Hrechukh (who is teaching Ukrainian language in the hall), his wife Tatiana, and Gafia Kalimoullina, entertained the public with two Ukrainian carols: "*Oy novyna v nas novyna*", and "*Dobray vechir tobi pany hospodaryu*".

Next, we were entertained by Discount Dan, a comedian and friend of our members, with comical anecdotes that were received with much laughter.

The Trembita Male Chorus concluded the program with the well known Ukrainian folk song "*Bandura*" — a song about the blind minstrel (bandura player) and his love for the beautiful maiden. He promised that he would give her his heart, if she would give him hers.

The Chorus finished the program with the popular Ukrainian song "*Perohy*"



The Trembita Male Chorus, accompanied by Blyth Nuttall, sang two sets. Singing (left to right) are: Bill Uhryn, Victor Uhryn, Orest Hrechukh, Paul Greene, Sasha Uhryn, Jay Smith and Mike Uhryn.

— Story photos: Victor Horon



The Trembita Quintet, composed of Bill Uhryn, Paul Greene and new members Orest Hrechukh, Tatiana Hrechukh, and Gafia Kalimoullina, accompanied by Blyth Nuttall, sang two Ukrainian carols.



The Hammertones provided the music for dancing. Above, Martin Kloppers is shown playing the "cellator", which he invented.

(with soloist Paul Greene), a song about a young Cossack and his love for perogies. While he was eating the perogies which his sweetheart had prepared, there appeared what he thought were his enemies. In reality, they were only hunters who, while he hid, took the young maiden and her perogies with them as they left. Upon seeing this, he approached the hunters, pleading with them to give him back the cherished perogies — they could keep the girl!

At approximately 9:00 p.m., the fine Ukrainian band The Hammertones, made up of many of our members, some of whom had entertained with the performers at the National Ukrainian Centennial Celebration in Regina, sprang into action, playing music while Bill Uhryn, Sasha Uhryn, and Fred Antoniow sang many Ukrainian favourites — thus keeping the public happily dancing the rest of the evening.

— John Zeleniuk



Shown in the photographs above and below are guest performers from the Yatran Dance Academy.



## Recipe for a Vancouver New Year!

Like a perogy, the 2009 Malanka at the AUUC hall in Vancouver on January 17, was filled with the most delightful ingredients.

In the mix were the Dovbush dancers, twirling an energetic "*Metelytsya*". This was one snow storm in Vancouver that the crowd greeted enthusiastically!

The celebration continued at the 80-year-old hall with the

Barvinok Choirs' flavourful rendition of traditional songs.

When the curtain closed, another stage was set, with a feast of delicious food to make any Malanka proud. And like the wheat kernels in a well-made *kutia*, the crowd stuck together through the evening for dancing and music from the entertaining Joe Tesla Band.

— Nina Hobbis



Sylvia Surette head chef (second from right) sharing a quieter moment with the kitchen crew. For more photos, see page 16.



— Story photos: Mark Greschner

# Malanka 2009 in Regina

Celebrating Ukrainian New Years at the Regina Performing Arts Centre on January 17 were 291 patrons, as well as 80 performers and volunteers.

The annual event is sponsored by the AUUC, Poltava Ensemble and the School of Ukrainian Performing Arts.

The evening started with our *hospodari* Dave and Teresa Wilson welcoming guests as they entered.

Sasha Lapchuk, Chairperson of the AUUC Regina Branch, greeted those present, as well as asking for a minute of silence for those who were no longer with us.

The balance of the evening was ably handled by MC's Ken Lozinsky and Dave Wilson.

A winning format of appetizers, a banquet and a cultural program by the Poltava En-

semble (as well as the Lileya and Pre-Poltava Dancers), concluding with the Ficor Show Band, may account for the popularity of this Malanka.

The Regina AUUC is grateful to all the volunteers who facilitated an enjoyable evening, and in particular the Malanka Committee: Bernie Zopf, Cindy Greschner, Sasha and Wanda Lapchuk, Zoya Shmyr, John Horstman, Randy McLeod, and Lynne and Alex Lapchuk.

— A. Lapchuk



Patrons at Regina's Malanka 2009 enjoyed a buffet supper prepared by J.&J. Specialty Foods and *varenyky* from the Ukrainian Cultural Centre. The tables were decorated with 60 *kolachi* (breads) prepared by Kelly Kaleniuk, Emily Laslo and Violet Yanko.



The Lileya Dancers, under the direction of Lisa Shmyr and Zack Evans, premiered the Transcarpatian dance "Uzhansky".



Orisha Greschner and Bob Millette are dancers with the Lileya Dance Group, performing the premiere of "Uzhansky" under the direction of Lisa Shmyr and Zack Evans.

# Super Bowl Party in Toronto



Some of the spectators who watched the Super Bowl Game at the AUUC Cultural Centre in Toronto on February 1.

On Sunday, February 1, the Toronto AUUC Branch held its second annual Super Bowl Party at the AUUC Cultural Centre on Bloor Street.

On entry to the hall, each of the 25 guests was offered

several activities to help them get into the spirit of the game. After selecting a badge to support his or her favoured team, each person was invited to take part in a thought-provoking trivia contest, a bargain

\$1-a-square football pool, and a 50/50 draw. Pre-game television festivities were shown as everyone mingled and enjoyed a variety of snacks and refreshments.

The spirit was further enhanced by the décor of the room. Black and yellow tablecloths honouring the Pittsburgh Steelers covered one half of the tables and the red and white of the Arizona Cardinals adorned the other half.

There was quite a buzz in the place as the guests tried to enter all of the contests before the game-time deadline.

One trivia question in particular created quite a stir, with everyone quickly reviewing their high school knowledge of the elements used in producing steel (in reference to the Pittsburgh team logo).

Just before kick off time, a delicious meal of pasta casserole and Caesar salad was served, followed by wonderful desserts.

The game itself drew an ongoing mixture of cheering, clapping, groans of disappointment, and sighs of relief.

There was just as much variety in the response to the final score of 27- 23 for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Regardless of one's loyalty, though, it was unanimous that this was by far one of the most exciting games in Super Bowl history.

And sharing it together made it the best ever for sure.

— B. Dobrowsky



Trivia contest winners Olga Soldat, Fred Panasiuk, Jane Jones, Samantha Jones, Pat Dzatko, and Joe Dzatko.



Cindy Greschner and Bernie Zopf, members of the Malanka executive, were all smiles at the attendance, and helped distribute 30 prizes donated to the event by corporations and individuals.



Donna Bannman and Norman Sawchyn manned the Poltava Reunion Table, encouraging all those involved in the cultural activities and behind the scenes at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre (Ukrainian Labour Temple) over the past 90 years to return for a renewal of old friendships and the birth of new ones, and for all the memories of good times. For more information email: reunion@poltava.ca or contact the Ukrainian Centre at 1809 Toronto Street, Regina S4P 1M7 phone 306-522-1188 The three-day event is planned for April 9, 10 & 11, 2010, at the Turvey Centre in Regina.

**Sent as a  
separate  
page.**

# Such Is Her Fate

Words: Taras H. Shevchenko

Arrangement: V Zarembo English

Translation by Mary Skrypnyk

She is so ill-fated . . . Dear Lord in your heaven!  
Why punish so cruelly a maiden so young?  
Because, so sincerely, she loved and responded } Repeat  
To soft Cossack glances? An orphan forlorn! }

Whom else could she turn to? No father,  
no mother:  
Alone like that fledgling in a far-away clime!  
O give her good fortune—so young and so trusting, } Repeat  
Or strangers will mock her and slander her name. }

Is a dove to be censured for tenderly loving?  
Or her loved one to blame that a falcon did kill?  
So—sad, broken-hearted, with all life grown weary, } Repeat  
She flies and keeps searching, for one she }  
loves still. }

Where can he be resting—perhaps in some forest?  
Or watering his steed in the Danube's swift stream?  
Or is he with someone, is he with another — } Repeat  
His first, dark-browed loved one, a vanishing }  
dream? }

Taras Shevchenko, who witnessed the suffering of his mother and sisters as serfs, frequently made the fate of women his theme. Long before feminism raised consciousness of women's inequality, Taras Shevchenko was depicting the injustices suffered by women not only because of their class position as serfs, but also because of gender inequality. The humanism of Shevchenko lies foremost in seeing the underlying humanity of each person, and standing as an advocate of human dignity for all. Mary Skrypnyk has contributed much to the dissemination of Shevchenko's legacy, particularly through translations like the one above, which first appeared in *The Ukrainian Canadian* forty years ago, in March 1969.

# Така її доля

Така її доля. . . О боже мій милий!  
За що ж ти караєш її, молоду?  
За те, що так широко вона полюбила } Двічі  
Козацької очі? . . . Прости сироту! }

Кого ж їй любити? Ні батька, ні неньки:  
Одна, як та пташка в далеких краях!  
Пошли ж ти їй долю — вона молоденька, } Двічі  
Бо люди чужії її засміють. }

Чи винна ж голубка, що голуба любить?  
Чи винен той голуб, що сокіл убив?  
Сумує, воркує, білим світом нудить, } Двічі  
Літає, шукає, дума — заблудив. }

Де милий ночує: чи в темному гаю?  
Чи в бистрім Дунаю коня напува?  
Чи може з другою, другу кохає, } Двічі  
її чорнобріву, уже забува? }

## Edmonton Seniors — Happy New Year!



Celebrating birthdays were (left to right): Bill Chomyn, Darlene Vinge (guest), Victor Horon, Rose Kereliuk, and Eva Doskoch. Bill Uhryn, though present, is not in the picture.

The Edmonton AUUC Seniors met for their regular social to honour the January birthday members on January 20, 2009. The honour roll included William Chomyn, Eva Doskoch, Victor Horon, Rose Kereliuk and William Uhryn. Absent were Harry Nykoliw, Jed Oleinyk and Mary Romach.

Warm best wishes were extended to all.

The theme for this month was traditional Ukrainian Christmas and New Year. President Pauline Warick spoke of the significance of wheat, first by speaking of the *kutia*.

William Uhryn then brought traditional wishes that the yield of crops be plentiful and the

livestock, such as the cows and pigs, bear many. He even hoped that the stork would bring Virginia Tautchin a wee bundle! With these wishes, Bill brought wheat from the Peace River country to each table, rather than tossing it on the floor as was traditionally done.

Following that, Shirley Uhryn drew our attention to the significance of the sheaf of wheat featured on the centre table. It has been said that on the top of each head of wheat rests the spirits of our ancestors. We all lowered our heads in a moment of silence and respect in remembrance of those who have gone before us.

Next was a cry for the evil

spirits such as poverty, unemployment, illness, disharmony, death and strife to join us NOW, or never to come to any of those present for the rest of the year.

The audience checked over their shoulders and saw none of the evil spirits coming down the hallway, so we commenced eating a traditional Ukrainian potluck meal (*Sviata vechera*): *kutia*, salmon, pickled herrings, *kapusta* (sauerkraut and peas), mashed beans with garlic, *pidpenky* with gravy, *varenyky*, *holubtsi*, *pampushky*, and *nachynka*, as well as *studanetz*, Ukrainian garlic sausage, *perohy* and meat balls. Traditional desserts involving poppy seed and traditional cookies followed.

Pauline Warick then ad-

dressed the audience to say that the hall was in the process of securing an elevator for the handicapped and those in need.

She entertained ideas for field trip activities for the seniors in the early summer. Suggestions included a bus trip with Anderson Tours, or an excursion to the Rosebud Theatre and surrounding area in central Alberta.

Our Saskatchewan guest, Walter Ballay, proposed a trip to Watrous Lake mineral springs in Saskatchewan.

Lastly, we received acknowledgement of the seniors' club donation to the Cuban Hurricane Fund.

While all completed their desserts, our resident musicians played traditional music

on violin and accordion.

The food left over from the banquet table was sold to members who wanted to take some home.

In addition, Mary Tropak donated a poppy seed chiffon cake for auction. It brought \$10.00 to the seniors' kitty. After fierce bidding, Sherry Capowski was the winner!

— Shirley Uhryn

## Happy Birthday, Friends!



The Edmonton AUUC Senior Citizens Club wishes a happy birthday to the celebrants of March:

Lucy Antoniuk  
Lillian Koshelek  
Mike Ursuliak

May you have good health, happiness and a daily sense of accomplishment as you go through life.

The Vancouver Seniors Club wishes the best of health and happiness in the coming year to March celebrant:

Margaret Hallstrom

Enjoy your day with family and friends!



Bill Uhryn delivered Peace River country wheat to each table.

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## The Edmonton General Strike of 1919

*The article printed below is an abbreviated and re-edited version of material which the author has posted to <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/5202/Edm1919.htm>. A related article "CALGARY 1919: THE BIRTH OF THE OBU AND THE GENERAL STRIKE" may be found at <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/5202/Cal1919.htm>.*

In May, 1919, a heat wave crossed the province. Like the heat wave, a mood of union militancy was in the air across Alberta, indeed across Western Canada. A strike wave would soon erupt, sweeping the West like a prairie fire.

The Mathers Royal Commission on Industrial Relations was going across Canada trying to fathom the unprecedented series of strikes, that had been happening, since January, from Nova Scotia to Victoria. Many of these strikes were short-lived, but as soon as one was resolved another would spring up. The issues were the same; workers wanted an eight-hour day, one day off in seven, and recognition of their unions.

In Alberta, the battle was on between the craft unions representing the American Federation of Labour and represented by the Edmonton Trades and Labour Council (the Edmonton District Labour Council's predecessor) and the fledgling industrial union — the OBU (One Big Union).

The OBU was gaining strength and support across Western Canada, in spite of the craft unions' domination in Edmonton.

On May 13 and 14, 1919, the papers were full of news of the pending General Strike in Winnipeg. The OBU was strongest in Winnipeg. So strong in fact, that the unions in Manitoba had refused to even talk with the Mathers Royal Commission when it toured the province days before the strike call.

Even the OBU was not prepared to call a general strike this early. Members were planning for their May congress in Calgary, where they hoped to organize a general strike for June.

Negotiations between the metal trades unions and their employers in Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal had come to a standstill. The metal trades walked out, and the Winnipeg Trades & Labour Council called for a vote on a sympathy strike.

On May 15, 1919, Winnipeg workers had shut the city down in a general strike. The issues were still the same; the eight-hour day, a six-day work week, and recognition of the OBU as bargaining agent. The strike curtailed all major shipping and communications between Eastern and Western Canada, virtually isolating the West.

All of Edmonton's unions quickly responded to the Winnipeg General Strike. The Winnipeg Trades & Labour Council had issued calls for sympathy strikes, and the Edmonton Trades & Labour Council called an emergency meeting of all of Edmonton's unions for May 21.

At the meeting, two resolutions were passed unanimously. The first was to hold a vote of all unions in Edmonton to go on strike at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, May 26. This resolution was forwarded to the prime minister, the premier and the mayors of Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. The second resolution was to compose a strike committee immediately, made up of two delegates from each union.

The strike vote was to be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 25.

The mayor and city council responded to the strike vote by calling a special meeting for 7:30 p.m. on Friday, May 23. The resolution called for delegations from employers, unions that were taking the votes, and ad hoc representatives of non-organized employees, as well as concerned citizens, to attend the special city council meeting to avert the strike if possible.

"City Aldermen Believe Strike Here Unlikely" said the *Edmonton Journal*. Edmonton was different from other cities, or so the aldermen had thought. "We own all our own utilities, phones and street car operations unlike Winnipeg" said one alderman.

Edmonton workers had good relations with their employers. They were well represented by the International Unions. They would not walk out on their contract obligations, asserted Alderman Grant at the special meeting.

Furthermore, the aldermen felt that they could rely on the union leadership after recent turmoil in the Edmonton Trades & Labour Council. The dominance of the International Unions in maintaining control of the E.T. & L.C. was seen as a victory of the moderates over the radicals.

Mayor Clarke pointed out the councillors were not facing reality. Sympathy strikes were happening in cities across the West and the workers were determined to support the right for union recognition and collective bargaining. He blamed war profiteers who refused to recognize unions and locked out their men.

He told aldermen that he would avoid using the militia to break the strike and that the city would not endorse the use of strikebreakers as recommended by Alderman Grant.

The council ignored the opinion of the mayor and the strike committee, and assured themselves that the honest, upright employees in Edmonton wouldn't go on strike. Their confidence in the conservative nature of the union leadership would soon be proven an underestimation of the real militancy of the rank and file.

The turnout for the strike vote was overwhelming, with 39 of 45 unions voting. In some cases the votes were very close; in others, it was an overwhelming majority. The newly formed Edmonton Police Association voted 74 to 4 in favour of strike action!

The final tally showed that the majority had voted in favour of a city-wide general strike. Thirty-five locals were in favour; only four were totally opposed. On an individual basis, the final count was 1600 in favour of striking, with 500 opposed.

Edmontonians woke up Monday morning to find that there were no street cars or taxis operating, city hall was closed, and the number of police and fire patrols was reduced. There was no telegraph in service and the trains had stopped running. Restaurant staff walked out, and strikers closed shops that were still open. Milk was being delivered to homes, but no cheese or butter was available. City utilities were shut down, except to vital areas like hospitals. Street lamps went off early, and the Edmonton newspapers had to bring in gas-powered generators to run their presses. Packing houses and cold storage went without electricity or workers. The telephone system was shut down.

The strike committee set up by the unions was now running the city. Mayor Joe Clarke was negotiating with strikers for the continuation of essential services.

The strike committee had organized itself into several action committees to take care of essential services, propaganda and press releases, pickets and health and safety. Over three hundred trade unionists were active on various committees being coordinated by the 75-member steering committee.

The strikers announced that they intended to stay out until the end of the Winnipeg strike.

As the strike wore on, both the "Journal" and the "Bulletin" denounced the workers as dupes of the OBU. The editorial articles argued that the OBU was attempting to overthrow the duly elected government and set up Soviet

power in both Winnipeg and Edmonton. The accusation was that the unions were being led by radical 'aliens' who should be arrested and deported.

The papers were particularly hard on the mayor of Winnipeg as a dupe of the Bolsheviks in the OBU, and accused Mayor Clarke in Edmonton of the same duplicity.

Alderman Grant, a past president of the Edmonton Board of Trade (aka the Chamber of Commerce), and his allies on the Board of Trade and on City Council, organized a Citizens' Committee. The Citizens' Committee provided automobile transportation for students and teachers still attending school and for the postal workers.

The strike committee had allowed reduced hours for the street cars and was diverting power from the utilities for hospitals, schools, the fire halls and police station. Alderman Grant continually demanded that the city use strikebreakers to keep the utilities and street cars running.

Mayor Clarke refused to endorse the use of strikebreakers, stating that as long as he was still mayor he would not tolerate strike breaking by the Board of Trade or their Citizens' Committee.

Regular communications were maintained between Winnipeg and the city through representatives of the strike committee, as well as members of the Board of Trade.

The returned veterans from the war, who were facing unemployment and no government compensation, were appealed to by both the strikers and the Citizens' Committee. The latter asked them to form militia units to protect strikebreakers and force strikers back to work. The unions raised demands that veterans should get full compensation and more jobs should be created for the returning soldiers.

The Great War Veterans Association (GWVA) passed a resolution stating that they would not interfere in the strike in anyway, though many of their members had joined the strikers' cause.

Unorganized workers had walked out as well, especially those working in the Chinese restaurants and laundries. The strike committee had made a special effort to contact and organize these workers, and had been successful. Facing the double burden of being unorganized and considered "aliens" fit for deportation, Chinese workers in Edmonton bravely walked out anyway.

More strikes were being called. Coal miners and railway workers were out on independent strikes over hours of work and wages. Metal workers were on strike across Canada over the same issue. This meant that less coal was being delivered to

the city, further reinforcing the power of the strike committee. Coal lay un-mined, and that which had been mined was undeliverable, lying on unmoving rail cars on sidetracks just outside the city.

In spite of attempts by local businessmen, with the endorsement of the press, to organize strikebreakers, the city continued to run. This was because of Mayor Clarke's regular negotiations with the strike committee.

Some unions returned to work under orders from their International representatives. Still, on June 11, the "Journal" reported that 36 of 45 unions were still out in sympathy with the strikers in Winnipeg.

The strike would flare up, repeatedly, as postal workers were locked out by the Federal government and when force was used to put down the strike in Winnipeg. Edmonton workers held mass rallies in the Market Square, denouncing the actions of the government and calling for fair play for Winnipeg workers.

"Month And A Day Old Strike In City Called Off" read the headline in the "Bulletin" on the morning of June 27, 1919. The city had almost returned to normal over the previous week. There were still restricted deliveries, reduced lighting, street car services and far fewer stores open than normal.

In a strike that was predicted to last only till May 31, 1919, Edmonton workers showed that they would defy the predictions of politicians, editorial writers and businessmen alike.

True to their word Edmonton trade unions supported those in Winnipeg to the end. They proved that they could effectively govern as a strike committee, regardless of the opposition they faced. Unfortunately, this also meant that the press would paint the unions and their allies as radicals, subversives and Bolsheviks. It meant that the unions would have to fight harder for editorial support from the press in the future.

Another casualty of the strike was Joe Clarke. He would lose re-election as mayor because of his support of the workers.

Workers had shown their ability to organize, and the E.T. & L.C. would go on to elect trade unionists to city council for the next 75 years. Several of those active in the strike committee, such as Dan Knott, would go on to become aldermen and mayors of Edmonton.

The results of 1919 are still with us today. Gains were made in collective bargaining and union recognition. The eight-hour day and six-day week became the norm.

— Eugene Plawiuk

# THE SHEVCHENKO HERITAGE IN UKRAINIAN MUSIC

The article printed below, lightly re-edited, was written by the late Eugene Dolny, and appeared in *The Ukrainian Canadian* magazine forty years ago, in March, 1969. The work reminds us of the pervasiveness of Taras Shevchenko's legacy in Ukrainian culture.

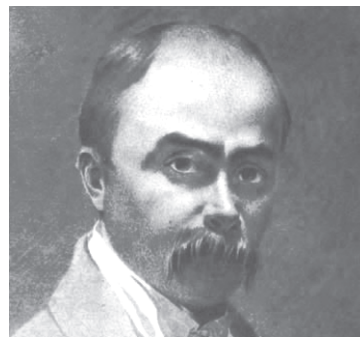
It was the late Maxim Rylsky who said, "It would be difficult to name a poet who had such meaning in the life of his people as Taras Shevchenko." For truly, the spirit of Shevchenko was all pervasive, leaving an indelible imprint in literature, art, music, as well as in the social and cul-

tural development of the Ukrainian people.

Born at a time when his people had already written glorious pages in the history of their liberation struggles, and traversed through centuries in the development of Ukrainian culture, his task was to synthesize in his writings all the

finest that had been achieved by the democratic Ukrainian culture, awaken the self-awareness of his people, elevate their material consciousness, and to show to his people and the world, with all the beauty and strength of his literary resources, the immense spiritual wealth of his people, their limitless creative potential.

"His poetry was born as poetry of struggle, truth, humanism, a poetry of great hope in the future", character-



Taras Shevchenko, self-portrait, 1854.

ized a great Ukrainian contemporary writer Oles Honchar. "His word is simple and necessary as heaven and earth, bread and water, it is captivating and nourishes many generations, speaking about life, love, hate, native country, peace," adds M. Tikhonov, an equally renowned contemporary Russian poet.

Shevchenko laid the foundation for the modern literary language of the Ukrainian people. It was this language, this literary heritage, infused with love of one's people, love of all downtrodden humanity and hatred of oppression, that nourished a Pleiad of writers and thinkers beginning with Ukrainian classical writers Kotsiubynsky, Panas Mirny, Marko Vovchok, Lesya Ukrainka, Ivan Franko, and Vasil Stefanyk, and continuing to such Soviet Ukrainian writers as Rylsky, Bazhan, Tychna, Malyshko, Sosiura, Voronko, Pavlychko, Drach and many others.

But this nourishment, this captivating spirit and beauty, served not only the men of letters. Music, too, was to revitalize and feel the impact of the democratic spirit of his legacy, so deeply rooted in Ukrainian folk character. He showed the direction for artists to take: the path of their people, always maintaining the closest connection with them, dipping ever deeper into their folklore in which can be found the people's soul, finding new forms to express some of the great wisdom found therein, as well as the people's hopes and aspirations.

The meaning of Shevchenko to his people, their love for him, was already evident during his lifetime.

He was hailed by progressive thinkers in society. Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov paid great tribute to the Bard, stating that with his advent, Ukrainian literature needs favours from no one; for here is truly Ukraine's poet.

His people paid him, perhaps, the highest tribute: his poetry was accepted by them and returned in the form of songs that were extensively sung through-out his beloved Ukraine. Among those were such songs as "Tyazhko, vazhko v sviti zhyty syroty bez rodu", (How Difficult to Live for an Orphan Alone), "Dumy moyi" (Thoughts of Mine), "Yest na sviti dolya"

(In the World There's Fortune) and many others. With the passing of time, more and more such folk songs were created to his lyrics, the most famous one, of course, was his "Mighty Dnipro", or "Reve to stohne, Dnibr shyrokiy".

Some of his works were also used by workers in their political struggles. An example of this is brought to light by a great Ukrainian musicologist Mykola Hrinchenko. In 1905 the workers of Kharkiv, during political demonstrations, sang a song to the tune of the Russian folk song "Stenka Razin". The lyrics were based on Shevchenko's "Jan Hus". Instead of talking of the "apostolic throne" as in Shevchenko, the workers changed it to "a well fed pig sits on the Russian throne". Further, in keeping with Shevchenko's "Jan Hus", they speak with confidence that truth will prevail, freedom will come and thrones will be no more.

Recent findings have shown that composers commenced setting music to Shevchenko's *Kobzar* as early as 1858, while Shevchenko was still alive. Documents show that in 1858 there existed a "Ukrainian romantic opera *Katerina* by Shevchenko." Unfortunately the music has not been found. Only mention of it was found in a collection of librettos issued at the time.

But it was Mykola Lysenko (1842-1912), the founder of the Ukrainian classical school of music that was the first great interpreter of Shevchenko's *Kobzar*. From childhood young Lysenko studied Shevchenko's poetry and knew it exceptionally well. This knowledge served as a never-ending source of inspiration and material for his future works. It is also significant that Lysenko's first composition was written to the Bard's "Testament", in 1868. From that time on he kept returning to the *Kobzar*, creating over 80 compositions — ranging from songs and romances to monumental cantatas. Among them are such outstanding compositions as "Jan Hus" for male chorus, "Ivan Pidkova", "Dream", "Rejoice, O Wilderness", "To The Everlasting Memory of Kotlyarevsky", "Hamaliya", "Haidamaki", and many others. He was most successful in capturing the character and spirit of Shevchenko's poetry.

After Lysenko followed a host of others — Zarembo, who wrote 30 songs and romances, Nischinski, with his music to Shevchenko's "Nazar Stodolya", Arkas and his opera *Katerina*, Stetsenko with his numerous romances and choral selections, Stepovey, Synytsia, Yavotsky, Vakhnyanin, Demutsky, Vorobkevich, as well as such Russian composers as Chaikovsky, Rach-

## Така її доля (Such Is Her Fate)

Words: Taras H. Shevchenko

Arrangement: V Zarembo

Andantino

Та - ка її - і

до - ля...О, бо - же мій ми - лий, за що ж ти ка - ра - еш її, мо - ло -

- ду? За те, що так ши - ро во - на по - лю - би - ла ко -

- заць - кі - ї о - чі? Про - сти си - ро - ту! Ко - // - е.

The words to this song, with a singable translation into English by Mary Skrypnik, originally presented in *The Ukrainian Canadian* in March, 1969, can be found on page 11.

(Continued on Page 15.)

# Obama

(Continued from Page 4.) major depression. The "Powers That Be" are well aware of the fact that an economy dangerously out of control could undermine and destroy their privileged economic status in society.

With reference to American foreign policy, which is inextricably linked to the economy, all indicators point to the harsh reality that President Obama will be hitting a brick wall should he attempt any major changes. The "American Power Structure" is neither receptive, nor is it prepared, to entertain substantive changes to American foreign

policy. Roughly half of the American national budget is geared to war and military expenditures. A significant component of American industry in a number of states relies heavily on manufacturing armaments for war. It is reasonably safe to assume that President Obama will succumb to the power and influence of the war industry, and in all likelihood he will reassign troops from Iraq to Afghanistan.

The Obama Administration has an electoral mandate to effect change; and President Obama can exercise the option for change, if he so chooses in an effort to solve the economic crisis and give new direction to American foreign policy. However, resolution of the American crisis necessitates "structural reforms"; the behaviour of the Obama Administration thus far precludes that possibility.

— Mike Uhryn

## Its Existence Mattered

(Continued from page 4.) descendants, the AUUC was well ahead of most other

Ukrainian organizations in learning to cope with the forces of assimilation. Eventually the immigrants of the third wave also had to recognize that assimilation was an objective process which could not be stopped.

Drawing on their political, financial and other resources, which far exceeded the resources at the command of the AUUC, the immigrants of the third wave could establish valuable mechanisms for heritage maintenance, such as funding for Ukrainian language instruction in public schools. In their own work, however, these institutions had to turn increasingly to using English, as the AUUC had done thirty years earlier.

The AUUC adjusted to political changes over time, while maintaining its generally progressive philosophy. For example, The ULFTA championed the cause of trade unionism, and the AUUC espoused the peace movement in the 1950s. When these movements had grown and were no longer dependent on the AUUC, the organization devoted more attention to other matters.

In the last twenty years, there have been tremendous changes in the world, and the AUUC has been, and is, changing in response. The dissolution of the so-called socialist system of states has changed the conditions for interaction with Ukraine. There has been another wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada, an immigration with its own unique characteristics.

The new facts of life in the last two decades create new opportunities and pose new challenges, and the constant discussion in the AUUC about the path to follow has risen to a new pitch. Serious questions are being considered about culture and about politics, and about the relationship between the two in today's AUUC.

Often the discussion reveals an understanding which pits one aspect against another as mutually exclusive. Perhaps it would be well to recall the broad understanding of our pioneers, which integrated the various aspects of their life.

## Who, What, When, Where

**Toronto** — The **Taras H. Shevchenko Museum and Memorial Park Foundation** will hold its **Annual General Meeting** at the AUUC Cultural Centre, **1604 Bloor Street West**, starting at **9:30 a.m.** on **Saturday, March 7**. Observers are welcome. At **6:00 p.m.**, a **dinner (\$17.00)** will be served, with entertainment. For more information, call **416-534-8662**.

\* \* \*

**Toronto** — The **Toronto AUUC Branch** will host **Cabaret Afternoon with Adam Timoon**, at **1:00 p.m.** (doors open at noon) on **Sunday, March 8** at the **AUUC Cultural Centre**, 1604 Bloor Street West. Hors d'oeuvres and refreshment will be served. Seating is limited. For your reservation, call **Connie** at **416-255-5623**. Admission: **\$15.00**.

\* \* \*

**Welland** — The **Welland AUUC Branch** and the **National Shevchenko Musical Ensemble of Canada** present the **Shevchenko Choir** and the **Welland Mandolin Orchestra** in concert, with a diverse and exciting program, at the **Polish Cultural Centre**, **595 Ontario Road**, starting at **3:00 p.m.** on **Sunday, March 29**. For more information or to order tickets, call **Clara** at **905-732-4716** in Welland or the **Shevchenko Ensemble** at **416-533-2725** in Toronto. Admission: \$20.00.

**Readers of the Ukrainian Canadian Herald are invited to submit items of interest to the progressive Ukrainian Canadian community for free listing in this column. The deadline for material is the 10th of the month preceding the month of publication.**

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**WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THESE CONTRIBUTIONS AND THANK THE DONORS FOR THEIR GENEROSITY. IF YOUR DONATION HAS NOT APPEARED ON THE PAGES OF THE "UCH", WATCH FOR IT IN FUTURE ISSUES.**



## JOIN US!

**Join us for a new season of AUUC activities! Each Branch has a unique schedule of events and activities. To discover what we have to offer, contact the AUUC in your area:**

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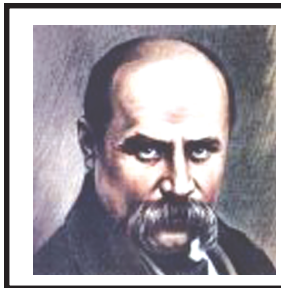
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### WELLAND BRANCH

Ukrainian Labour Temple  
342 Ontario Road  
Welland ON L3B 5C5  
Phone: (905) 732-5656



## Taras Shevchenko Museum

### Shevchenko Biography: Quick facts

#### 1814 - March 9

Taras Shevchenko was born into the serf family of Hrehory and Kateryna Shevchenko, belonging to landowner P. Engelhardt in the village of Moryntsi, central Ukraine.

#### 1816 - January

The Shevchenko family moved to the village of Kerelivka (now Shevchenkove), where Taras spent his childhood years.

#### 1822 - October

Shevchenko began to study reading and writing, under the tutelage of church deacons.

#### 1825 - March

Taras was orphaned.

#### 1828 - Autumn

The Engelhardt household, including Shevchenko, moved to Vilnius, Lithuania.

#### 1831 -

Because of rising popular unrest in Poland and Lithuania, Engelhardt moved his entourage to St. Petersburg, and the following year apprenticed Shevchenko to the painter Shiryayev for four years.

#### 1835 - July

While drawing statues in the St. Petersburg Summer Gardens, Shevchenko was noticed by fellow countryman and art student I. Soshenko, who recognized Taras's talent.

#### 1838 - April 22

In his 24th year, Shevchenko's freedom was purchased for 2,500 rubles, raised by a lottery of a painting of V. Zhukovsky by K. Bryullov.

#### 1840 - Spring

The first collection of Shevchenko's poems was published under the title *Kobzar* (Minstrel).

#### 1843 - April

On a trip to Ukraine, Shevchenko visited various cities and villages, including Kerelivka (for the first time in 14 years).

#### 1845 -

Shevchenko graduated from the Imperial Academy of Arts, and left on his second trip to Ukraine. In Kyiv he was appointed to the Archeological Commission. During this year, he wrote "*Zapovit*" (My Testament).

#### 1846 -

Shevchenko participated in the Cyril and Metody Society, which was opposed to serfdom.

#### 1847 - April 5

Shevchenko was arrested by the Tsarist Russian police, and underwent extensive questioning. He was sentenced to 25 years military service as a rank-in-file soldier, and exiled to distant Orenburg, with an order in the Tsar's handwriting forbidding him to write and paint.

#### 1848 -

Shevchenko was allowed to participate as an artist in an expedition to explore the Aral Sea.

#### 1849 - November

Shevchenko returned to Orenburg with the expedition. He continued to write poems in small notebooks which he hid in his boot.

#### 1850 -

Shevchenko was arrested again, for disobeying orders not to write or paint, and banished to even more remote

Novopetrovsk Fortress, on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea (today, Fort Shevchenko).

#### 1857 -

Shevchenko was released after persistent efforts by friends. He travelled to Nizhny Novgorod, but was not allowed to enter St. Petersburg.

#### 1858 -

After another intercession, he journeyed to St. Petersburg and Moscow.

#### 1859 -

Shevchenko visited family and friends in Ukraine. In July, he was arrested again, and accused of making anti-government and blasphemous speeches. He was barred from living in Ukraine, and returned to St. Petersburg.

#### 1860 - January

Shevchenko's *Kobzar*, the third edition during his lifetime, was published. During this year, Shevchenko concentrated on engraving with aquatint. In this year, the Academy of Arts Council awarded Shevchenko the title of Engraver Academician.

#### 1861 -

In February, Shevchenko wrote his last verse.

On March 10, Taras Shevchenko died.

On March 12, he was buried in Smolensk Cemetery in St. Petersburg.

On May 6, his body was disinterred and moved to Kaniv.

On May 22, he was buried on Chernecha hill, near Kaniv, by the Dnipro River.

\* \* \*

Authoritative sources indicate that Taras Shevchenko produced over 1,000 works of art. He is acknowledged as one of the outstanding realist painters in mid-19th century Ukrainian and Russian art.

Shevchenko's writings – especially his poetry – have been published in thousands of volumes, including translations into the major languages of the world. Taras Shevchenko, founder of the new Ukrainian literature, is considered one of the greatest humanist writers of all times.

#### DID YOU KNOW THAT

\* The Shevchenko Museum in Toronto is the only Shevchenko museum in the world that is on the internet.

\* The Shevchenko Museum web site has been visited by almost 190,000 visitors since March 2000.

\* When you search for Taras Shevchenko on internet search engines, like Google and Yahoo, the Shevchenko Museum's web site appears the second in the list.

\* Museum Board Member Andrew Gregorovich was recently awarded a medal by V. Ohrysko, Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, for his outstanding cultural contribution to the Ukrainian Canadian community.

\* Cambridge University in England recently requested from the Shevchenko Museum in Toronto copies of Shevchenko's paintings.

## New Fund-Raising for the Museum

The Shevchenko Museum has announced a new fund-raising initiative: gift cards.

Working through Fundscript, a Montreal-based company which specializes in fund-raising for not-for-profit groups, the Shevchenko Museum has arranged to market gift cards for purchases at various retailers.

Information provided by Shevchenko Museum Director Lyudmyla Pogoryelov indicates that the program allows the institution's supporters to shop at no extra cost while contributing to the Shevchenko Museum.

How does this work?

A museum supporter buys a gift card, paying the face value of the card. The card may be used by the purchaser, or given as a gift to someone else. Whoever has the card may purchase goods or services from a variety of retailers, paying up to the face value of the card. That is, a

hundred dollar card, say, which cost \$100.00, will buy \$100.00 of goods or services. It costs the buyer nothing extra to use the card instead of cash. The Shevchenko Museum gets a commission from Fundscript, different cards providing different commissions.

The cards never expire in Ontario, and usually expire in two years in other jurisdictions.

The list of retailers include grocery chains, gas stations, restaurants and coffee shops, drug stores, department stores, and many other retailers. The cards come in various denominations.

The Museum can provide an order form with a list of options (see the contact information at left). Information about Fundscript and the options offered is available at the web site [www.fundscript.ca](http://www.fundscript.ca).

These cards are great gifts!  
— Wilfred Szczesny

## Shevchenko Heritage

(Continued from Page 13.)

maninov and Moussorgsky.

A number of compositions written by Soviet Ukrainian composer Liudkevich belong to this period: his cantata "The Caucasus", an indictment of tsarism, war and colonial conquest, as well as the cantata "My Testament", both written for chorus, soloists and symphony orchestra.

While these compositions live on, the greatest number of musical works based on Shevchenko's lyrics, as well as compositions dedicated to him, were composed after the Socialist Revolution. Among the reasons for this, of course, is the fact that education became available to the widest masses, to sons and daughters of workers and peasants, thereby enabling new talents to advance and develop as they had never done before. New composers were born.

Today the list of Soviet Ukrainian composers is a most impressive one, both in number and in stature: Revutsky, Liatoshinsky, Shtoharenko, Verekevich, Kozytsky, Dankevich, Zhukovsky, Nadenenko, Maiboroda, Svyetchnikov, Meytus, Dremliuha, Homolyaka, Kos-Anatolsky, Kolessa, Kereyko, Kolodub and Skoryk, to name but a few.

Throughout the course of their creative activity all the above-mentioned composers, as well as others, turned to the greatest genius of their people, Taras Shevchenko. They found new meaning in his poetry, understood him better after having experienced the dawning of the new era in their socialist society. They continue receiving "nourishment" to this day, and are as captivated by his prophetic and beautiful words as were his contemporaries.

Over 150 composers have created close to 1,000 compositions to Shevchenko's lyrics. They range from simple songs to great choral and symphonic canvasses, operas, ballets, touching every musical genre imaginable. This is a great tribute to the Bard by the composers of his beloved Ukraine, and can be multiplied many more times if we venture into other sections of the arts, and into society as a whole, for the same can be witnessed there.

Shevchenko will continue to have an honoured place among Ukrainians and among peoples of the Soviet Union as they march forward in their quest for new horizons. He will also have an honoured place among all people that are fighting against oppression, for freedom and humanism. They will continue in their tributes as he will continue to inspire mankind.

—Eugene Dolny

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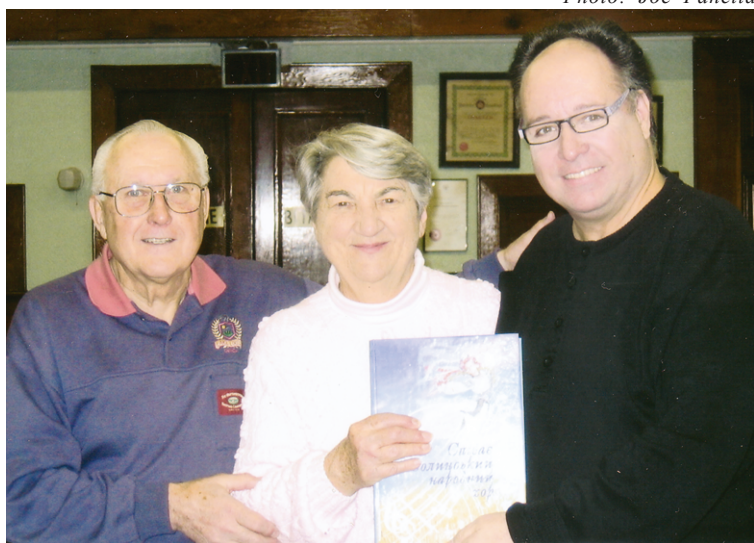
— Photo: Joe Panetta

## Volyn's Gift

Michael Curry, one of the producers of the Ukrainian television program "Kontakt", has been a supporter and a longtime friend of the Welland Ukrainian Mandolin orchestra. He is also a strong supporter and good friend of the renowned Ukrainian folk group, Volyn.

On Michael's last trip to Ukraine, where he spoke with members of the group, Volyn director Alexander Stadnyk expressed his surprise that there was a mandolin orchestra in Welland performing Ukrainian folk music and songs.

Mr. Stadnyk gave Michael Curry a complimentary copy of a book published in celebration of Volyn's 30th anniversary to pass along to the Welland group. The book contains many beautiful colour photographs of their singers,



Rudy Wasylenky (left) and Clara Babiy accept the book *The Volyn Choir Sings from Michael Curry*.

musicians and dancers, as well as over 100 songs, complete with music and words.

Michael presented this book to the orchestra on January 18, 2009, in Welland.

The inscription on the inside cover reads:

*Presented to Rudy Wasylenky and the Welland*

*Ukrainian Mandolin Orchestra knowing that you can make use of much of this incredible repertoire! Best wishes for many more years of music making.*

Michael Curry  
January 18/2009  
Welland Ontario

— R. Wasylenky

## Coming to the Reunion

Chris Temple, alumnus of the Poltava Ensemble Dancers, is now a performer in Las Vegas. He is the second former Poltava Ensemble dancer to appear on the stages of Vegas, the first being Donna Bobyck.

Christopher began his professional dance career in 2000, with the Oklahoma City Ballet. He then went on to dance with the Nashville Ballet and the USA Ballet.

In 2003, he got a job dancing for Royal Caribbean Productions and performed on one of their cruise ships for eight months.

He went on to work for Stiletto Productions aboard Holland America Cruise Lines and Princess Cruises Productions.

In 2006 he moved to Las Vegas, where he got a job dancing in *Jubilee!*, one of



Christopher Temple

Las Vegas' longest running and most lavish production shows.

He performs nightly at Bally's Hotel and goes to school during the day, studying communications at the College of Southern Nevada.

Chris is looking forward to attending the AUUC Poltava Reunion in April, 2010.

## More Photos from Vancouver's Malanka



The Barvinok Choir under the direction of Beverly Dobrinsky added a festive flair to the evening. They are accompanied by Tatyana Savchyshyn on the piano.



Performing their new Kozachok/Hopak, are the female members of the Dovbush Dancers.



Jake Hobbs and Montana Hunter taking centre stage in the Kozachok/Hopak.



The Dovbush Dancers "played" in the snow with their rendition of "Metelytsya".



Guests lining up to enjoy the delicious Ukrainian cuisine.

— Story photos: Dan and Cameron Fung



Guests enthusiastically dancing the night away and sharing in the fun of a Kolomeyka.

## Ukrainian News Briefs

(Continued from Page 5.) had negotiated with the IMF last fall. The first portion of \$4.5 million was transferred to Ukraine last fall, but the second portion of \$1.9 billion was recently denied by the IMF, due partly to Tymoshenko's reluctance to cut social spending (as demanded by the U.S.-based IMF).

Predictably, President Viktor Yushchenko (who is locked in a tooth-and-nail war with Tymoshenko for the presidency next year) labelled the possible Russian loan as treacherous, and compared it with the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact.

Tymoshenko replied, "Everything the President has said is untrue."

## Banana Prison

The Ukrainian secret service — the SBU — impounded a Greek-owned cargo ship loaded with bananas as part of a drug smuggling investigation.

No drugs were found but, five months later, the ship is still under arrest. The security chiefs have said that they will not release the ship, but will not say why.

In the meantime, the crew of the ship (docked in Odessa) has been issued with nuclear war-style biohazard suits and respirators to protect them from the toxic rotting bananas.

Valery Osipov, head of a local ecology group, said: "We are now raising this with the SBU, the port authority, and the regional environment department."

"They need to understand the situation and release the crew from this 'banana prison'."