

# HERALD BICHIK

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## Shevchenko Museum Board Meets

— Photo: Jerry Dobrowolsky



The Board of Directors of the Taras H. Shevchenko Museum and Memorial Park Foundation met in Toronto on April 7 for a historic Annual General Meeting. Among the work it did was the election of a new Board, pictured in the photo above. Seated, left to right, are: Shirley Uhryn (Edmonton), Andrew Gregorovich (Vice-President and Librarian), Nancy Stewart (Treasurer), Wilfred Szczesny (President), Bernardine Dobrowolsky (Recording Secretary), Vera Borusiewich (Auditor). Standing, Left to right, are: Michael Parasiuk (Vancouver, substituting for Larry Kleparchuk), Lily Stearns (Winnipeg), Bob Ivanochko (Regina), Janice Beck (Richmond), Bob Seychuk (Ottawa), Lyudmyla Pogoryelova (Director), Jerry Dobrowolsky (Auditor). Absent from the photograph are Larry Kleparchuk (Vancouver), Debra Skrabek (Calgary), Clara Babiy (Welland), and George Borusiewich (Resident Executive Committee member). For a full report on the AGM, with photos, see page 5.

## The Next Issue

The next issue of the “UCH” will be dated June, 2018. Announcements of events in June or early July, 2018, as well as articles for the June, 2018, issue should be in our office by May 10. Thank you for your consideration.

**MAY DAY GREETINGS**  
to Readers of the  
*Ukrainian Canadian Herald!*

## Toning It Down in China

Sometimes bluster is as far as a confrontation goes, including a confrontation that is a trade negotiation. That may be why we had so much noise between China and the USA, with tariffs and threats of more tariffs, which looked ready, at any time, to blow up into a full-scale trade war.

Bluster aside, neither side would have found a trade war between the world’s two largest economies easy to win. Everybody would have lost, and the biggest losses might have accrued collectively to all the countries, like Canada, who would have been collateral damage, or perhaps more akin to road kill.

China moved back from the brink, by announcing that, within five years, it would eliminate the requirement that foreign automakers work through state-owned Chinese

companies. At the end of the five-year period, all restrictions on foreign ownership of Chinese car companies should be gone.

In 2009 the Chinese car market surpassed the USA as the largest in the world, in the number of cars sold. Companies around the world are salivating with the thought of sharing in that market.

## In This Issue

The Attack is Coming .....	4
Bill C-75 a Huge Disappointment .....	10
Centennial Concert in Regina .....	7
Commentary .....	4
Current Eclectic .....	3
Editorial .....	4
Eelgrass .....	2
False Flag Attack? .....	3
Family Night in Edmonton	6
Gas Pipelines .....	9
Happy Birthday, Friends!	11
Hearings Wind Up .....	2
A Housing Solution .....	2
Join Us! .....	11
Mixing State with Church .	9
Parliamentary Language ...	2
Pope Francis Declines to Apologize .....	2
Population Aging .....	9
Population in Decline .....	9
Regina Lesson in Pysanka	6
Russian Gas for USA .....	3
Ryanair .....	9
Shevchenko Museum 22nd AGM .....	5
Some Countries Have More Clout .....	3
Sustaining Fund .....	11
Ukrainian Miscellany .....	9
Venezuelan Election Decisive .....	3
Who, What, When, Where.	8
With a Grain of Salt .....	4

## Action in Mali

As Canada prepares to send troops and equipment to Mali as our contribution to “peace-keeping”, the UN troops already in the country are being kept busy.

In mid-April, for example, it was reported that a sophisti-

cated and underhanded attack had been made on a UN military camp in northern Mali. The attack left one peacekeeper dead and seven French soldiers wounded. In the counterattack, 15 attackers were killed.

Some of the attackers wore peacekeepers’ uniforms and used vehicles with UN and Malian army codes.

Three car bombs exploded.

## Action in Korea

As the “UCH” was going to press all seemed to be sweetness and light on the Korean Peninsula. Since the Olympics, the leaders in the north and the south had established a hot line to allow easy communications between them, and had arranged a face-to-face meeting. The Republic of Korea, it was reported, had stopped its propaganda broadcasts across the demilitarized zone, and the question was whether the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea would do the same.

As President Trump prepared to visit the DPRK for talks, North Korea announced that it was suspending its weapons programs to concentrate on peaceful pursuits.

Still, everyone was being cautious and keeping their guards up. The DPRK reminded the world that it had established its nuclear missile credentials (suggesting that the program could be resumed), while President Trump warned that, without progress, he would just walk away from the talks.

May the best sense win.

## Naftogaz vs Gazprom

The ongoing conflict between Ukraine’s Naftogaz and Russia’s Gazprom continues, with Gazprom reportedly refusing to abide by two rulings of the Stockholm Arbitration Tribunal.

At a meeting between the two parties toward the end of March, Russia’s gas monopoly refused to resume deliveries to Ukraine as ordered by the Tribunal in the Gas Sales Case concluded in December last year. Gazprom also refused to say that it will pay the \$2.6 billion which the Tribunal ordered it to pay in the Gas Transit Case award, which  
(Continued on Page 9.)

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## Chiefs Exonerated

More than 150 years after the so-called Chilcotin War, and 25 years after the British Columbia government, in 1993, apologized for the executions and installed a commemorative plaque at the hanging site, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivered the Federal government’s apology for the hanging of six Tsilhqot’in leaders.

Chief Joe Alphonse called the statement “a giant step” on the road to reconciliation. Prime Minister Trudeau delivered the apology by reading his statement in the House of Commons on March 26.

The back story is that a  
(Continued on Page 2.)

## Parliamentary Language

It has happened from time to time that Canada's House of Commons has been addressed in a language other than English or French. Over the years, there have been suggestions that Indigenous Members of Parliament be enabled to address the House in their own languages with interpretation into English and French.

In an editorial article on March 27, the *Toronto Star* noted that Romeo Saganash, MP (NDP), representing a northern Quebec riding, had addressed the Commons Procedure and Affairs Committee in Cree on this very issue. (There was no information how he made himself understood.)

Now, the suggestion is being studied by a committee of the House of Commons, which could result in enabling Indigenous Members of Parliament — First Nations, Métis and Inuit — to do business in their languages, with proper translation.

There are practical difficulties arising from the fact that more than 60 Indigenous languages are spoken in Canada.

Which languages should be used? Are there enough com-

petent interpreters? How much would it cost? Responses have been made to each of these concerns.

To begin, there will not be an immediate demand to use all the possible languages: there are only 10 Indigenous Members of Parliament.

One suggestion, by Liberal Robert-Falcon Ouellette representing Winnipeg Centre is that the Commons start with five to ten Indigenous interpreters, able to handle the languages most commonly spoken in Canada: Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut.

Another suggestion is that MPs be asked to indicate in advance which language they might want to speak, so that translation services could be arranged as needed.

The cost could be kept to a few million dollars — less than what is now spent for simultaneous translation into English and French.

The Senate successfully ran a pilot project in 2009 to translate Inuktitut. Commons committees have used it during hearings in the north.

The European Parliament provides full translation services in its 24 official languages.

## Pope Francis Declines to Apologize

One of the prominent Indigenous-related matters in Canada for much of April was the matter of an apology by Pope Francis for the role played in residential schools by the Roman Catholic Church — there wasn't one.

Prime Minister Trudeau, a Catholic, suggested the idea to the Pope while on a visit to the Vatican in 2017. The RC Church has extended apologies on other matters in the past, and in 2015 apologized to the Indigenous people of the Americas for the "grave sins" of colonialism. In 2010, he apologized to Irish victims of sexual abuse by priests.

However, Pope Francis declined to apologize for the residential schools.

Toward the end of March, Crown — Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said that Catholics have a role in urging the Pope to apologize for the church's role in running Canada's residential schools.

Ms. Bennett also indicated that the federal government would keep pushing the church to apologize for its role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. Such an apology is one of the 94 recom-

mendations by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer, who is also a Catholic, said that all institutions that played a significant role in the residential school system should apologize.

Charlie Angus, an NDP MP, who sponsored a motion in the House of Commons calling for a Papal apology, asked for unanimous consent. Mr. Angus said that he believes that Parliament, as a partner that created the residential school system with various Christian denominations, has a responsibility to call on the Pope to apologize for the church's involvement.

Mr. Angus did not get unanimous consent. Garnett Genuis, Conservative MP representing Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan in Alberta, loudly proclaimed that he "absolutely" does not support the motion.

After the vote, Mr. Genuis explained to reporters that he supports separation of church and state, and does not believe that Parliament should tell religious institutions what to do.

Mr. Angus said that he would reintroduce the motion as a private member's bill for discussion, instead of asking for unanimous consent.

## Chiefs Exonerated

(Continued from Page 1.)

white road-building crew entered Tsilhqot'in territory without permission in 1864. After the workers were killed, five chiefs were invited by government representatives, and attended, what they were led to believe would be peace talks. Instead, they were arrested, tried and hanged. A sixth chief was executed the following year in New Westminster.

Prime Minister Trudeau said, "We recognize that these six chiefs were leaders of a nation, that they acted in accordance with their laws and traditions and that they are well regarded as heroes of their people. They acted as leaders of a proud and independent nation facing the threat of another nation."

During the speech, the current leaders of the Tsilhqot'in Nation, having come from their traditional territory in British Columbia's central interior region, were on the floor of the parliamentary chamber. They heard the Prime Minis-

ter say, "As settlers came to the land in the rush for gold, no consideration was given to the rights of the Tsilhqot'in people, who were there first. No consent was sought."

When the speech was interrupted by applause, the Tsilhqot'in chiefs held up eagle feathers in salute.

Prime Minister Trudeau plans to visit Tsilhqot'in territory in the summer, at the invitation of the chiefs, to deliver the statement of exoneration directly to the Tsilhqot'in people.

In the Opposition's response, MP Cathy McLeod, the Conservative critic for Indigenous affairs, said the six Tsilhqot'in war chiefs did what anyone would have done in the same situation — defended their land, their families, and their way of life.

Guy Caron offered the New Democratic Party support, calling the apology long overdue and recommending the creation of a national Indigenous Peoples day as a statutory holiday.

## A Housing Solution

Housing is a problem faced by many Indigenous communities. A community in British Columbia has developed an innovative solution to cover at least some of the needs of community members.

Sometime in May, new homes in the Nuxalk First Nation in Bella Coola will be ready for occupation by single men who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The complex of five buildings is located near the town centre. Each of four housing units is 338 square feet, with a small kitchen, a bedroom, a living area, and an enclosed bathroom with a shower.

The fifth building is a shared laundry and utility room.

Solar panels on each angled roof help power the houses.

With priority for housing being given to families with children, a couple of dozen single men needing housing were at the bottom of the list. Many of them, if not living on the street, were couch surfing or spending nights with family or friends.

The band council approved the building of the homes, each costing about \$50,000, in 2016.

Candidates for the homes, who will pay affordable rent, will be selected by the community's wellness department.

## Hearings Wind Up

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls completed its series of public hearings with a session in Vancouver on April 8. The final report of the inquiry is due by the end of the year.

Chief Commissioner Marion Buller said that the inquiry has enough material to produce a report, but will only scratch the surface of the issues without more time. The request for a two-year extension was made in March.

The government has not officially responded to the request at "UCH" press time. While the government wants to appear on track with nation-to-nation reconciliation,

the difficult history of the inquiry puts its political benefits into question.

Not only has the inquiry been plagued by internal dissension, with a consequent high rate of staff turnover, it has also been harshly criticized by voices within the Indigenous community who called for a completely different process.

The inquiry was established by the federal government in late 2015. It was given a two-year mandate to investigate the disproportionately high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada. It travelled throughout the country to hear the testimony of family members.

## Eelgrass

One upon a time, the James Bay Cree could step out of their front door, and be within a few steps of rich beds of eelgrass. Every spring and fall, these beds of eelgrass, just offshore, were filled with tens of thousands of geese.

Now the Cree of Chisasibi have to go far to the south, because the eelgrass is gone and the geese no longer come.

The Cree suspect that Hydro-Quebec's massive dams and reservoirs along the La Grande and Eastmain rivers release so much fresh water that they have damaged or destroyed the salt-loving eelgrass beds all the way up to Hudson Bay, more than 100 kilometres north.

Fred Short, a seagrass ecologist with the University of New Hampshire has been studying James Bay. Now, halfway through a four-year research program on eelgrass, his work suggests a link between Hydro-Quebec's operations and the marine plant's disappearance, due to reduced salinity.

Mr. Short found that salinity lower than 10 parts per thousand was fatal to eelgrass. Before development, water that fresh used to be found only around the mouth of the La Grande River. Now it's found as far as 40 kilometres up the coast.

As well, water from the La Grande reservoir is silty, allowing less light to filter down to the grass.

River outflows also have increased 60%. Since 2000, most of the water has tended to come in high summer, peak growing season for eelgrass.

Finally, fresh water freezes more quickly than sea water. A longer ice season means less eelgrass growth.

Hydro-Quebec referred questions to Niskamoon Corp., which oversees agreements between the power company and the Cree. The utility has said in the past that the problem is caused by disease, climate change and shoreline changes.

Mr. Short discounts those suggestions. "Salinity (is) a big part of the problem, and water clarity is also a concern."

He isn't ready to unequivocally blame eelgrass loss on Hydro-Quebec. Upstream agriculture and deforestation could play a role.

Final answers may be coming. A new research effort sponsored by Hydro-Quebec and Niskamoon Corp. began in 2016. Researchers from three universities — with assistance from local people — are looking at James Bay, the 13 rivers that flow into it and the plants and animals that live there.

The Cree hope the research will suggest ways to fix the problem.

## Current Eclectic

### False Flag Attack?

On March 20, StrategicCulture.org, website of the Strategic Culture Foundation carried a feature story by Federico Pieraccini reporting “an alarming warning by Sergei Lavrov and Chief of the Russian General Staff Valery Gerasimov” to the effect that Russia had “reliable information that fighters are preparing to stage the use by government troops of chemical weapons against the civilian population”. Sergei Lavrov is Russia’s Foreign Minister.

The story says that General Gerasimov “alleged that the US intends to accuse Assad’s troops of using chemical weapons against civilians, and then ‘carry out a bombing attack’ on Damascus”.

General Gerasimov explained, according to the story, “how the United States and its allies are preparing the ground to justify an attack on Syria”.

General Gerasimov is reported to have said that “terrorists stationed in Al-Tanf (an illegal US military base in Syria) received 20 tons of chlorine gas and detonators, disguised as cigarette packs, in order to attack in an area under the control of the terrorists that is densely inhabited by civilians.”

General Gerasimov indicated that “with the White Helmets (AKA Al-Qaeda) and mainstream media ready to broadcast the images of the victims of the attack,” the ground would be set for a military confrontation with Russia.

The Syrian Civil Defence White Hats, operating mostly in rebel-held areas, get most of their funding from Western governments.

The story asks, “How else are we able to interpret threats from Macron to strike Damascus, together with his ominous advice to foreign journalists not to go to Damascus in the coming days and, for those already there, to leave the capital immediately?”

In addition, there is a suggestion “that UN personnel are leaving Damascus”.

Mr. Pieraccini writes, “The normal reasoning I employ when considering total annihilation is placed to one side when US special forces deliver 20 tons of chlorine gas to Al Qaeda terrorists in Syria in order to execute a false flag for the purposes of blaming Damascus and Moscow. If we connect this event to what is currently happening in the United Kingdom, and the hysteria in the United States surrounding alleged Russian hacking during the American elections, we can understand just

how much international relations have deteriorated.”

Accepting the Russian information, Mr. Pieraccini writes, “Alas, in such circumstances, we can only hope for the best but prepare for the worst; we can only wait to read on the mainstream media notifications of the latest chemical attack in Syria.”

It took a few weeks, rather than a few hours, but such a chemical attack took place on April 7, as the Syrian army waged an offensive on Douma. The blame was immediately placed on Syrian President Bashar Assad, and US President Trump blamed Russia and Iran for supporting “Animal Assad”.

The town was inaccessible to the outside world, according to as report on April 9 in the *Toronto Star*, but “Images released by the Syrian Civil Defence White Helmets” in the rebel-held town showed the predicted child victims, foaming at the mouth.

By coincidence (?) John Bolton, President Trump’s new national security advisor, who had advocated air strikes against Syria, assumed his new job.

While President Trump warned of a heavy price to be paid, Israel attacked a Syrian air base on April 9, killing 14 people. On April 10, the USA, France, and Britain met to discuss an air strike. The USA also consulted with Qatar, which hosts the USA’s main “air operations centre” for the Middle East.

The air strike was launched by the USA, Britain and France on April 13, when the American administration was still admitting (according to an April 15 report in the *Toronto Star*) that it did not know whether a banned nerve gas, as well as chlorine, had been used against Douma.

The attacks on Syria occurred before a group from the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was able to enter Douma to determine whether gas had been used (but not by whom).

The West has been expressing concern that Russia and/or Syria are sanitizing the area to remove evidence of poison before allowing OPCW to enter, but an expert speaking on CBC radio said that traces of any poison would remain.

Though the attacking countries claimed to be targeting chemical warfare installations, there were reports of attacks on military bases, Republican Guards locations, as well as the Scientific Studies Research Centre.

## Some Countries Have More Clout

In the *Toronto Star* on April 19, legal analyst Azeezah Kanji discussed “the boundaries drawn around permissible free speech”. Much of the article was devoted to the experience of Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE).

The article notes that, between the beginning of Land Day demonstrations against Israel’s policies of occupation on March 30, and April 19, at least 36 Palestinians were killed, and more than 3,000 wounded. There were no Israeli casualties.

Photo journalist Yaser Murtaja was killed while wearing his press jacket, and at least 12 other journalists were injured by live fire.

The Committee to Protect Journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, and Reporters Without Borders have all demanded justice.

Human Rights Watch described Israel’s fatal violence

against demonstrators as “calculated” and “unlawful”.

Amnesty International castigated Israel for “unleashing excessive, deadly force against protesters, including children, who merely demand an end to Israel’s brutal policies in Gaza.”

Ms. Kanji notes that the strangling blockade threatens to render Gaza uninhabitable within the next two years, in violation of the Geneva Convention’s prohibition against collective punishment.

In response to the Israeli military’s use of live ammunition against predominantly peaceful protesters and journalists in Gaza, CJFE released a statement in early April urging the Canadian government to “condemn the one-sided use of military force against demonstrators and media.”

CJFE has issued similar condemnations of Saudi Arabia, Iran, China, Russia, Turkey, and Egypt. None elicited

the type of outcry generated by the organization’s criticism of Israeli atrocities.

Prominent Canadian media personalities, Ms Kanji wrote, rushed to denounce the statement as “one-sided”, a “mistake”, and “one-dimensional political lobbying” arising from an “obsession with Israel”.

The outcome was the CJFE rescinded the statement, and fired the employee who drafted it.

Ms. Kanji wrote that, “Far from being ‘one-sided,’ CJFE’s statement reflected the profound asymmetry of violence on the ground, and sought to uphold principles of international justice that are claimed to be universal. Perversely, however, CJFE has been subjected to greater censure for speaking out against Israel’s violations than the Canadian government has for remaining silent in the face of them.”

## Venezuelan Election Decisive

The Venezuela election on May 20 is one of several to take place in Latin America in 2018. It will be decisive in determining whether the revolutionary process continues. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba is the only country which has sustained the revolutionary process since its revolution in 1959.

Unlike Cuba, which has almost 60 years of revolutionary experience, Venezuela’s

experience is exceedingly short.

In the coming election the popular forces in Venezuela aim to maintain the transformation of the Venezuelan economy from capitalism to socialism and, alongside this, develop new forms and organization of democratic power. To do so the revolutionary forces in Venezuela must win this election facing internal and external pressures

that have created maximum disruption in the Venezuelan economy and destabilized the normal social and political life of the country.

The external pressures on Venezuela continue to mount. On March 28, Switzerland, noted for international neutrality, imposed sanctions against leading Venezuelan officials and on the export of goods and military equipment.

In announcing the sanctions, Switzerland adopted the rhetoric of other western nations, noting it was “...seriously concerned by the repeated violations of individual freedoms in Venezuela, where the principle of the separation of powers is severely undermined and the process in view of the forthcoming elections suffers from a serious lack of legitimacy.”

The actions of Switzerland have added significance beyond the mounting economic pressure on Venezuela. It adds to a growing concern as to the state of international relations.

The spread of misinformation and disinformation has long been the practice of the corporate media to influence opinion, but it now governs international relations as well. This has been the method used in the case of Venezuela and the recent allegations of Russian use of chemical weapons in Britain. What we are witnessing is a sharpening of contradictions unprecedented since the height of the Cold War.

On one side, US imperialism and its allies, supported by NATO, and on the other, Russia, China and Iran, along with

## Russian Gas for USA

On February 1, the *Boston Globe* carried a surprising item: a report on Ukrainian community reaction to the arrival in Boston Harbor of the first shipment of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The *Boston Globe* notes that it happened in a week when it emerged “that Russia’s spy chief had been allowed to visit the United States, in apparent violation of the sanctions”.

Importing the gas does not, technically, violate the sanctions, which apply to the company that exported it from gas fields in Siberia, but not to the gas itself.

However, the “Globe” notes that “the work-around clearly violated the spirit of measures designed to put a price on Russia’s aggression by punishing companies and individuals linked to the Ukraine war”.

Referring to the fact that a second shipment was due to arrive later in February, the paper recommends that “the company should reconsider the purchase, and the state

should reconsider the policies that put Massachusetts at the mercy of foreign gas imports”.

Though the United States is the world’s largest producer of natural gas, deliveries in New England are hampered by inadequate pipelines, which officials do not want to expand, and a federal law which bars shipments by water to Boston from American LNG producers.

About 90,000 Ukrainians and Ukrainian Americans live in the Boston area, and many of them have taken up the cause.

“If the rest of the world wants to support us, fine,” one of them told the paper. “If they don’t, we’re still going to do it.”

With Ukraine in the table, maybe the pipelines will be enlarged, or the restrictive laws (however long-standing) will be changed, or the LNG will be delivered by plane or train. Maybe they’ll buy it from Poland instead. Boston does need gas.

Whatever. The embarrassment has been suffered.

(Continued on Page 8).

UKRAINIAN CANADIAN

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not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board.**The Attack Is Coming**

AN EDITORIAL by WILFRED SZCZESNY

There is a disquieting movement building, riding piggyback on the attack on Russia, but affecting areas far beyond that one topic. It is a movement which starts as intolerance for any opinion which does not automatically and uncritically accept any accusations hurled at Russia. It is a movement which continues by labelling any dissenters as trolls, and any dissenting opinion as misinformation or disinformation.

If the movement stopped there, well, everyone has a right to their opinion. Unfortunately, that movement is continuing toward its logical conclusion.

We are increasingly hearing suggestions from this movement that the security of the western world can only be assured by decisive action against the dissenting opinions under the various names they are called. Decisive action, unfortunately means something other than stronger arguments and better evidence. Unfortunately, it seems increasingly evident that the proponents of this decisive action, or at least some of them are advocating banning media which carry dissenting views, ranging from *Russia Today* through, we fear, to publications like *People's Voice*, and even extending to the *Ukrainian Canadian Herald*.

History clearly tells us that such a movement does not stop there. When it starts to feel its strength, such a movement plows ahead until it takes society to McCarthyism and fascism. It starts with limited appeal and spreads, its very success giving it an aura of truth, as well as a sense of social solidarity in an "us against them" atmosphere.

One indication that these fears are not merely idle scaremongering, lies in the far-flung growth of right-wing populism, which succeeds in convincing large numbers of people with legitimate grievances that multi-billionaires are of the ordinary people and care for the welfare of workers. The really frightening part is that, like Donald Trump, they can openly say, "I am a businessman; my responsibility is to my shareholders," without losing their "nation".

Someone said that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. That vigilance should, of course, guard against the obvious demagogue, but that kind is easy to spot, if not counteract. Far more dangerous is the snake-in-the-grass who will quietly advocate banning "our common enemy", until we awaken one morning to find that — lo and behold — we, too, are one with the common enemy.

**COMMENTARY****With a Grain of Salt**

Do I believe that Russia is capable of the heinous acts of which it has been accused? I certainly do.

Do I believe that the government of Syria is capable of the heinous acts of which it has been accused? I certainly do.

Do I believe that the USA, Britain, France and their NATO allies are capable of those same heinous acts? I certainly do.

Do I believe the charges levelled by countries of NATO against Russia and Syria? Not without trustworthy proof.

With western governments and the overwhelming majority of news media singing those charges in unison, it's not easy to maintain a contrary view. Remaining sceptical, however, is made easier by the memory of another song sung in unison by pretty much the same choir, which was eventually revealed as fiction — the song of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. A heavy price was paid, and continues to be paid, for those lies.

When considering the reliability of the accusations being made, the first area of concern is the source.

Media reports are largely derived from a few sources. Most news media information comes from a few news agencies, most of them members of the Atlantic Alliance, with occasional input from the largest consumer-level media, like the New York Times (mostly, also members of the Atlantic Alliance). Your daily paper or local television outlet just edit and print the materials, which appear in hundreds of outlets more hundreds of times.

The news agencies, in their turn, get much, perhaps most, of their information from official handouts and issued statements, or from official representatives of governments or other institutions.

Alternative sources are discounted as biased (unlike the official sources), a situation which is becoming more pro-

nounced as agents with special interests (like the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, whose main interest is to champion Ukraine) anathematise dissenting voices with names like "Russian trolls".

It seems wise to consider the stories that start to seem true because of repetition with a grain of salt. Looked at more closely, they often start to appear less obvious.

As an example, let us examine the story of Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia. The United Kingdom has accused Russia of poisoning them by applying a substance called Novichok to the door handle of their home.

Other than the charge, no evidence has been produced that Russia did it, and most of the time the charges have been couched in terms of "probably", evolving to "beyond a reasonable doubt".

The BBC had an item giving four reasons why the British government claimed it was Russia. First, they claimed that the substance used is of Russian origin. Second, they claimed that the Russians had a motive: killing a traitor. Third, they said that there is a "track record" of Russia committing such crimes. Fourth, there is no other hypothesis.

All four points have been refuted.

There is no evidence that Russia produced this Novichok, other than Soviet research decades ago (research done at a facility that became available to the USA in Uzbekistan). It could have been produced in any other country, and was actually produced in Iran, in 2016, under the supervision of the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Britain has no sample of Russian Novichok to compare with what was supposedly used in Salisbury, Britain, to establish origin. If it actually has such a sample, it has an obligation to provide it to (OPCW), but has not done so.

As for motive, Britain has provided no convincing explanation why Russia would want to assassinate a traitor almost ten years after sending him west in an exchange of spies. Other countries, among them Israel, Ukraine, and Britain itself, with an interest in discrediting Russia and producing the situation which has, in fact, emerged, would have a stronger motive than Russia. Of course, if one assumes that Russia is an evil and irrational country, no other explanation is needed. And of course, "our side" wouldn't dream of such a thing.

If there is actually a Russian track record of killing exchanged former spies, why did Britain make no effort to protect the Skripals? Sergei Skripal was living openly, under his own name, with his address readily available. If there were a Russian track record, one would have to conclude that Britain set up Mr. Skripal for assassination.

There are many other hypotheses, no more far-fetched than the charge against Russia, for this event. A few possible culprits have been mentioned above.

Other facts suggest that Britain may be the strongest suspect. For one thing, without knowing anything about Novichok, Britain was able to determine within hours not only what the poison was, but also its source — and begin an effective treatment. (Maybe these whizzes should go to Cuba to investigate the mysterious illness plaguing Canadian and American diplomats.) So, this deadly poison turns out not to be fatal after all — before the Skripals succumb, a successful treatment is found, which results in Yulia Skripal, now tucked away in seclusion, being released from the hospital.

On the basis of this lame accusation against Russia, a range of countries followed Britain's lead in expelling Russian diplomats. Aside from a few who echo Britain's determination to make the world safe for democracy, most of them openly asserted that they acted in solidarity with Britain. The European Union, in Brussels in March, joined in.

**SEE US ON THE WEB!**AUUC (National)  
auuc.caEdmonton AUUC, Trembita Ensemble  
www.ukrainiancentre-edm.caRegina AUUC, Poltava Ensemble  
http://www.poltava.ca/Taras Shevchenko Museum:  
www.infoukes.com/shevchenkomuseumVancouver AUUC  
http://www.auucvancouver.ca/Winnipeg AUUC  
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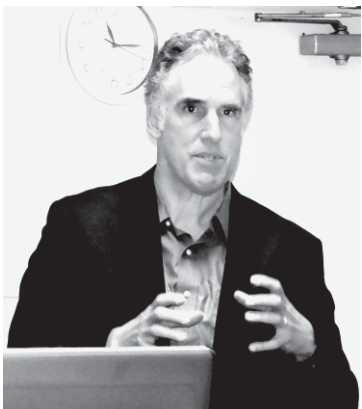
We invite readers to submit their views in letters to the editor. Letters must be signed. Letters may be edited, but their sense will not be changed.

## Shevchenko Museum 22<sup>nd</sup> AGM

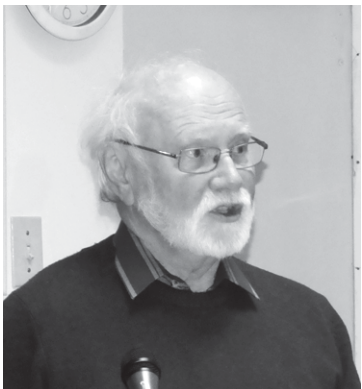
The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Shevchenko Museum would normally have been a teleconference. However, a historic decision was to be made, so members of the Board of Directors of the Taras H. Shevchenko Museum and Memorial Park Foundation gathered at the AUUC Cultural Centre in Toronto on



**Bernardine Dobrowosky, who read the minutes from the 21<sup>st</sup> AGM, was elected Recording Secretary for the 22<sup>nd</sup> AGM, and re-elected Recording Secretary of the REC.**



**Christopher McCormack, architect, presented an inspiring feasibility study recommending the relocation of the Shevchenko Museum.**



**AUUC National President Bob Seychuk, wearing several hats, including representative of the AUUC Ottawa Branch, presented the reports of the Lands Development Committee and the Investment Committee.**



**AUUC National Treasurer Kathy Schubert added information to the financial report.**

Saturday, April 7, to deliberate face-to-face.

The meeting was called to order by Museum President Andrew Gregorovich, who led the assembly through a number of routine items: a moment of silence for Museum friends and supporters who had passed away in the previous year; adoption of the agenda for the meeting; and giving voice (without vote) to all attending guests and AUUC members.

Then the meeting elected its officers: Wilfred Szczesny — Chair; Michael Parasiuk — Vice-Chair; Bernardine Dobrowolsky — Recording Secretary; Lily Stearns — Vice-Recording Secretary. The elected officers assumed their positions.

Bernardine Dobrowolsky presented the Minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> AGM, which were adopted with a slight amendment.

Museum President Andrew Gregorovich presented the first of the Resident Executive Committee (REC) reports. In his report, Mr. Gregorovich thanked Resident Executive Committee members and non-resident Board members, in addition to referring to a number of activities. His audience was pleased to hear that the Museum website had almost half a million "Total Statistics since March 9, 2000".

Next, Museum Director Lyudmyla Pogoryelova presented her report, reflecting a rich and varied year of activity since March, 2017. Sections of her report were devoted to "Bronze Plaque to Commemorate Museum Past-President William Harasym", "Possible Move to 1604 Bloor St. West", "Exhibitions" (which featured five separate displays), "Donation of Trilingual Kobzar to the World's Libraries", "Museum Governance" (with four sub-topics), "Donations", "Donation of Art From Ukraine", "Future Project", and "Other Activities" (listing 17 of them). Many of the items in the report appeared elsewhere on the agenda.

In her conclusion, Ms. Pogoryelova expressed gratitude to a list of people who



**Andrew Gregorovich, REC President, called the AGM to order, presented his report, and was elected Vice-President and Librarian**

had contributed in some way to the Shevchenko Museum.

The morning ended with a presentation by architect Christopher McCormack, who had been hired to prepare a feasibility study, with cost estimates, concerning moving the Shevchenko Museum from its current location to the larger space at the AUUC Cultural Centre.

Mr. McCormack's presentation, including graphics and figures, was very positive, generating not only acceptance, but enthusiasm. In the afternoon session, motions were adopted, among other decisions, to approve the move, accept the feasibility study, and hire McCormack Architects to implement the renovation plan outlined in the feasibility study.

Of course, it was recognized that the feasibility study was very preliminary, and that many decisions remain to be made. These decisions will be made jointly by the AUUC and the Shevchenko Museum.

The afternoon session continued the consideration of reports, starting with the report of the Lands Development Committee, presented by Bob Seychuk. Mr. Seychuk, who is a member of the Museum Board representing AUUC Ottawa Branch, was wearing several hats at this gathering.

The next report, also presented by Bob Seychuk, was from the Investment Committee. In the course of the afternoon, a motion was adopted to enlarge the Investment Committee to include the Treasurer of the Museum.

The final reports were sub-

— Story photos: Jerry Dobrowolsky



**Between the meeting and the dinner, some Board members, and others, took in a class in pysanky-making.**

mitted by Treasurer Nancy Stewart, including a budget for 2018, and Jerry Dobrowolsky on behalf of the Audit Committee. AUUC National Treasurer Kathy Schubert added information to the Treasurer's report.

As they were presented, following an opportunity for questions and discussion, each of the reports was adopted or received, as appropriate.

Following the presentation of reports, the AGM considered a resolution additional to those that have already been mentioned. This "Resolution on Accepting Large Collection of Fine Art from Ukraine". This concerned an offer, outlined in Lyudmyla Pogoryelova's report, of a donation of 50 to 70 original works by Ukrainian artists and sculptors, originally prepared for the Shevchenko National Museum to mark the bicentenary, in March, 2014, of the birth of Taras Shevchenko.

The Board was excited about the offer of a gift of so many original contemporary pieces of art, approved by the artists who had produced them. However, the excitement was tempered by concern about the cost of receiving the art.

After a serious discussion, the Board adopted the resolution, which authorizes the REC to pay all expenses connected to shipping and customs, to hold an exhibition of the art (including the printing of a colour catalogue), and to invite Yulia Shilenko, Curator of Exhibits and Collections of the National Shevchenko Museum in Kyiv to Toronto for about a week at Shevchenko Museum expense. (Ms. Shilenko was responsible for making this gift available, and looked after all the details in Ukraine, including contacting each artist for permission to transfer their piece to the Shevchenko Museum.)

The last major item of business was elections.

First elected were nonresident members of the Board of Directors: Larry Kleparchuk (Vancouver), Janice Beck (Richmond), Shirley Uhryn (Edmonton), Debra Skrabeck (Calgary), Bob Ivanochko (Regina), Lily Stearns (Winnipeg), Clara Babiy (Welland), and Bob Seychuk (Ottawa).

Elected next were the members of the Resident Executive Committee: President — Wilfred Szczesny; Vice-President and Librarian — Andrew Gregorovich; Treasurer — Nancy Stewart; Recording Secretary — Bernardine Dobrowolsky; Member — George Borusiewich.

Finally elected was the Audit Committee: Jerry Dobrowolsky and Vera Borusiewich.

The REC was authorized to find an additional REC member, as well as a third member

for the Audit Committee.

After determining that the 23<sup>rd</sup> AGM would be a virtual conference on March 9, 2019, the Annual General meeting was adjourned, and official photos of the Board of Directors and the Resident Executive Committee were taken.

However, the day was far from over for those in attendance. While waiting for the AGM banquet, participants had options: mingle, take a

(Continued on Page 8.)



**Lyudmyla Pogoryelova presented a rich Director's report. She was re-elected Museum Director.**



**Nancy Stewart, who was re-elected Treasurer of the REC, presented a financial report and a budget.**



**Natalka Mochoruk read Shevchenko poetry in Ukrainian at the AGM banquet.**



**Wilfred Szczesny chaired the AGM, and was elected President of the Museum. At the dinner, Mr. Szczesny read Shevchenko poetry in English.**

## Regina Lesson in Pysanka

The Poltava Ensemble has been invited to tour Portugal and Spain for three weeks in the summer of 2018. The European organizers will provide us with meals, accommodations and transportation once we arrive, but our group is responsible for the cost of flights from Canada, extra baggage fees (costumes are heavy!), equipment rentals and other miscellaneous charges. To meet our fundraising goals, we have initiated a number of

activities that are proving to be both fun and lucrative for the group, with one in particular a perfect fit with the culture and the history of the AUUC and Poltava.

Over two weekends in early March, Anastasiya Shved, a former Poltava dancer, was kind enough to share her time and her talents by facilitating three workshops in the fine art of pysanka, or Ukrainian Easter egg painting. These work-

shops were held in the lower level of the Ukrainian Cultural Centre in Regina and I'm positive I could feel the approval of the Poltava ancestors that forever keep the spirit alive in this grand old building.

Anastasiya, originally from Ukraine, provided the participants with everything they needed, including the tools, techniques, history and inspiration to create their very own

(Continued on Page 12.)



The pysanky produced by the students in the class.

## Family Night in Edmonton

On March 3, 2018, the Performing Arts Committee of AUUC Edmonton Branch held its Annual Family Night celebration under the guidance of the committee's chairperson, Tamara Krausher.

The evening began with a delicious perohy dinner, prepared by Elsie Horon and Marcia Bilyk, who were helped in the kitchen by the women parents of the dancing school children.

The formal part of the program began with Winston Gereliuk relating the history of our early Ukrainian immigrants' brutal treatment by racists.

He said that he recalled, as

a child, being called a bohunk, the discriminatory name used against Ukrainians.

He also recalled the famous Percy Page, coach of the renowned McDougall all girl's basketball team, who won over 500 games and lost only about 15 games. Around 1958, he was made the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Alberta. This showed some of his good aspects, but in 1948, when he was the chairperson of the public school board, he made the statement, "As long as I am the chairman of the public school system, there will never be a Ukrainian teaching with the Edmonton public



— Photo: Fatima Abaruyan

Among the guests at Family Night were Sharhabeel and Fatima Abaruyan, with their daughter Lulu.

schools." This caused many Ukrainian teachers to anglicize their names — for example, from Pidvisotski to Ross. He was my math teacher and my mother's friend.

Mr. Gereliuk recalled Al Shawley, an Edmonton AUUC activist, who had applied for a job at Esso but was turned down mainly because he carried the Ukrainian name Shewchuk. He changed his name to Shawley, applied again at ESSO, was hired, and worked there for 35 years.

This sort of discrimination against Ukrainian immigrants occurred throughout Canada,

regardless of the person's religious or political persuasion.

The immigrants, in the main, arrived from the Galicia area of Western Ukraine, which for over 500 years was under the rule of Poland and, later, under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Ukrainians had arrived as Austrians. Therefore, in the First World War, they were considered enemy aliens, and placed in concentration camps.

Winston then showed many pictures of our cultural forces in Edmonton over the years. The hall was the home of many who attended the varied cultural and educational activities of our Association, where they were taught to be friendly in the Canadian society. Not only did AUUC participate in the cultural field, but it also had a strong agenda of support for world peace, and thus, it played an extremely important role in the Canadian Peace Congress.

It is important to state that our mentor in the Youth Section was Bill Harasym, who did a marvellous job of teaching us how to live justly and peacefully, with love, not hate.

Transportation Minister

Brian Mason sent greetings on behalf of the Government of Alberta. This was a first: to have a government official issue greetings to our Ukrainian Centre.

The Concert Program began with the Tiny Tots Group performing the Central Ukrainian Dance "Malitka". Their instructors are Maria Vorotenko and Jordan Onyschuk.

The Trembita Children's Choir, under the direction of Marina Lavrinenko, performed a song about rain called "Doshchychk". The choir then

(Continued on Page 11.)



The Trembita Choir performed three numbers on the concert program.



Edmonton's Junior Boys Group.

— Story photos: Tamara Krausher (except as



The Junior Dance Group performed a central Ukrainian dance called "Molodiy kozaky" (Young Cossacks).



Who'll win the next one? The cake walk is always a source of friendly competitive tension.



A table full of delicious cakes enticed contestants in the cake walk.



Bob Kisilevich played music on the piano, and MC Pat Krausher called numbers, for the cake walk.



The Intermediate 2 Dancers of the Poltava School of Ukrainian Performing Arts presented "Hopak molodiy".

## Centennial Concert in Regina



The Regina AUUC Annual Concert was held on February 10, 2018, to a capacity audience of 500 patrons. This concert was dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians and the 90th Anniversary of the building of the Ukrainian Cultural Centre (1928), and also acknowledged the AUUC Poltava Ensemble's upcoming Portugal/Spain tour in July/August, 2018, with the ongoing fundraising campaign.

The concert program began with an audiovisual presentation (edited by Dave Wilson), which included a colourful video of all the international groups (including Poltava) who took part in the Portugal tour in 2015.

The presentation then moved on to the history of the AUUC, portraying the first thirty years (1918 to 1948) of the AUUC through the use of photographs, narration and archived video. The presentation outlined the early historical transitions of the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association (1918), the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association (1924) and ultimately the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians (1948).

The video contained segments of interviews with Alex



"PRYVIT" – This Ukrainian welcome dance, performed by the Poltava Ensemble, includes the traditional presentation of bread and salt.

Lapchuk, Zoya Shmyr (Lapchuk), Ginger Kautto (Sawchyn) and Gerry Shmyr, who spoke about early immigration to Saskatchewan, barriers faced by new Ukrainian immigrants, and the subsequent emergence of the AUUC. They spoke about the AUUC's political, social, and cultural work during the 1920s, '30s and '40s, and how those years formed the basis for the development of the Regina AUUC in the broader community, the formation of the AUUC Poltava Ensemble, and the formation of the Regina AUUC Poltava School of Ukrainian Performing Arts.

As the video concluded and faded away, the Poltava Ensemble Orchestra began its presentation with a musical overture. The curtains then opened, and the entire Poltava Dance Ensemble was silhouetted on stage. The Ensemble welcomed the audience to the 100th Anniversary Concert, with "Pryvit" (Welcome). This Ukrainian dance showcases the regions of Zakarpattia, Bukovyna, Volyn and Central Ukraine, and includes the traditional presentation of bread and salt on an embroidered runner, symbolizing the warmth and hospitality of the Ukrainian people.

"Pryvit" set the stage for the seven children's classes, which number 84 students, in the Poltava School of Per-

forming Arts. The newly staged children's dances, were intermingled with Poltava repertoire, and ranged from character dances to dances from the Central, Hutsul, Volyn and Trans-

carpathian areas of Ukraine. Most notable was that this concert was the first appearance on stage for many of the young children.

The Poltava Orchestra, un-  
(Continued on Page 12.)



The Poltava Orchestra, under the direction of Vlad Osatiuk, accompanied every number performed during the evening.



The Intermediate 1 Dancers of the Poltava School of the Ukrainian Performing Arts perform "Valenka", a Kuban character dance.



The Junior Dancers of the Poltava School of Ukrainian Performing Arts present "Tropotianka".



The Novice Dancers of the Poltava School of Ukrainian Performing Arts perform "Teddy Bear's Picnic". These are the youngest students in the Poltava Dance School.



Natalia Koshelieva performs the well-known violin solo Czardas.



The Beginner Dancers of the Poltava School of Ukrainian Performing Arts present "Hutsul dance".

## Venezuelan Election Decisive

**Continued from Page 3).** a host of other countries not fully under the political domination of the U.S./ Western alliance.

**What makes Venezuela stick in the throat of the neo-liberal West?**

It is a country that threatens Western values, though not in the sense the media would like people to believe.

One threat posed by Venezuela is the development of a popular nationalism that targets the interference of US imperialism, both internally and throughout Latin America. Another is its economic orientation under Chavez and continued by Maduro and the PSUV.

Oil revenue has been the backbone of Venezuela's economy through its modern history. During the presidency of Hugo Chavez, the price of oil reached the historic high of \$111 a barrel in 2014. Unlike other periods and governments, under Chavez the money earned from oil exports was not used to enrich a relatively small strata of Venezuelan society. The enormous revenues this generated for the state were redistributed and used to lift the conditions of the poorest sections of the people. Oil revenues sustained

the huge advance in social programs and supports for the Venezuelan people, and the reduction in the cost of everyday items.

**Falling oil revenues began the internal economic crisis.**

The fall of oil prices began in 2014, reaching a low of \$27 a barrel in 2016. This meant that Venezuela's internal economy was increasingly hard pressed to maintain the system of subsidies, price controls, and social supports based largely, or solely, on oil revenue.

Externally, the fall in oil prices meant Venezuela would have difficulty paying its international debt. According to the Central Bank of Venezuela the country had \$10.4 billion in foreign reserves in late 2017.

**Effect of sanctions.**

In 2017 Venezuela's export revenues rose from \$28 to \$32 billion, due to the rise in world oil prices. Under such conditions a rise in a country's exports would leave it with more resources to pay for its imports. But in Venezuela's case, imports fell by 31% during the same year. The reason is that the country has lost access to financial markets because of sanctions. Consequently, Ven-

ezuela was unable to refinance its debt.

As a result of this, the government was forced to build up huge external surpluses to continue servicing the debt, in an attempt to avoid default. Internationally, creditors threatened to seize the Venezuelan government's revenue sources, such as refineries located abroad and payments for oil shipments, if the country defaulted.

US sanctions have stopped Venezuela from issuing new debt, and blocked attempts to restructure its existing debt obligations. Major financial institutions have delayed the processing of all financial transfers from Venezuelan companies, significantly hampering the ability of Venezuelan companies to do business in the US. For example, Citigo, a Venezuelan based subsidiary that owns 4% of US refining capacity, has not been able to get financial institutions to issue routine trade credit because of sanctions.

**The situation imposed by sanctions has forced Venezuela to develop a response.**

In February, 2018, the Government introduced two significant measures to stabilize the economy:

1) fighting corruption and profit-taking on currency exchanges; and

2) improving international transactions in the face of sanctions and embargo.

One measure was to do away with the two-tiered exchange rate introduced in 2010, highly regulated by the government in an effort to control prices.

Under this system, one tier was a heavily subsidized exchange rate for the import of "essential goods", while the other rate was relatively fluid, and set by the Central Bank in response to the market, but still utilizing a cap on the exchange rate.

One abuse this led to was profit-taking by buying "essential goods" at the heavily subsidized rate and then selling these goods at highly inflated prices. An anti-corruption operation initiated last year by then newly appointed Attorney General Tarek William Saab has uncovered numer-

ous cases in which national and transnational companies resold subsidized dollars, intended for imports, on the black market for huge profits. According to Saab, the public treasury was looted of millions of dollars through such transactions.

The new unified exchange rate will be regulated by the state through "auctions" in conjunction with transnational foreign exchange centres and suppliers.

Under this new system:

1) to access foreign currency individuals and business owners will have to register with the government website handling transactions;

2) individuals and business owners will have a limit on the total amount of foreign currency that they can purchase: 1680 euros for an individual/340,000 euros monthly, or 30% of declared net monthly profits, for business owners and directors of corporations.

—Glenn Michalchuk

## Who, What, When, Where

**Vancouver** — AUUC Vancouver Branch will host a **Concert** celebrating AUUC National 100th anniversary and our hall's 90th anniversary at the **North Vancouver Centennial Theatre**, including performances by the Barvinok Choir and Children's Choir, the Vancouver Folk Ensemble, the Dovbush Dancers and the Dovbush School of Dance, on Friday, **June 8**. Look for more information next month.

\* \* \*

**Calgary** — The **Calgary Hopak Ensemble**, accompanied by **guest artists, Edmonton's Trembita Choir**, invites you to "**Celebrating Our 100th**" Concert on Sunday, **May 6** at the **Leacock Theatre, Mount Royal University**. Please join us at **2:00 p.m.** for an enjoyable afternoon of Ukrainian music, song and dance.

Tickets are **\$20.00** each, with children's tickets (for ages 3 – 12) only **\$10.00** each. Reserve your tickets by calling the Ukrainian Cultural Centre at **403-246-1231** or Darlene at **403-271-2379**.

\* \* \*

**Winnipeg** — The **Winnipeg Mandolin Orchestra**, under the direction of Annis Kozub, will perform its annual **May Concert** at **2:00 p.m.** on Saturday, **May 5**, at the **Ukrainian Labour Temple**, 591 Pritchard Avenue. To reserve tickets, e-mail **auucwinnipeg@gmail.com**. Tickets: **\$20.00**.

\* \* \*

**Winnipeg** — The **Winnipeg Branch of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians** is holding "**AUUC@100**" **Gala Banquet** to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the AUUC under the theme "**100 years of our contributions to Canada**" at the **Ukrainian Labour Temple**, 591 Pritchard Avenue, on Saturday, **May 12**. Doors will **open at 4:00 p.m.**, with a **concert at 4:30 p.m.**, and **cocktails and dinner to follow**. The Concert will feature the performing arts groups of the Winnipeg Branch: **Festival Choir, Winnipeg Mandolin Orchestra, Yunist School of Folk Dance, Yunist Dance Ensemble**. The program also includes a **dramatization by Brian Richardson and Kevin Longfield**. To reserve tickets (**\$25.00** each) contact: Gloria at **204-467-5043**.

\* \* \*

**Toronto** — AUUC Toronto Branch will host a Spring Luncheon at the AUUC Cultural Centre, 1604 Bloor Street West, starting at **noon** on Sunday, **May 6**. All who partake are welcome to stay for the Annual General Meeting of the Branch, which will start at 2:00 p.m. Tickets: **\$20.00**. Call Nancy at **416-766-8895** to confirm..

\* \* \*

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.

## Shevchenko Museum 22<sup>nd</sup> AGM

**(Continued from Page 5.)** Museum tour conducted by Lyudmyla Pogoryelova, attend a pysanky-making class, do something self-generated. Each of the options had at least one adherent.



The appearance of Peter Krochak on the keyboard was the highlight of the dinner.

Dinner, served family style, was catered by Baby Point Lounge, who served their usual delicious fare. Board members were pleased to be joined for the meal by several additional friends and supporters.

Part of the entertainment for the banquet was a bilingual reading of Shevchenko poetry by Natalka Mochoruk (in Ukrainian) and Wilfred Szczesny (in English). Presented were a section of "Ivan Pidkova", translated by C.H. Andrusyshen and Watson Kirkconnell, and "On Easter Day, On the Straw", translated by Mary Skrypyk.

The highlight of the dinner, however, was the appearance of Peter Krochak on the keyboard. Mr. Krochak, who is well known in Toronto AUUC circles, having accompanied

the Hahilka Choir for many years, was received with warmth reserved for old and esteemed friends.

He started his performance, the formal, official part, with a mixture of classical music and music written on Taras Shevchenko themes. In response to popular demand, Peter launched the second part of his performance — a sing-along of music from the Hahilka repertoire.

While the diners would have held him forever, Peter chose to follow the wise counsel long given to entertainers: leave them wanting more.

Thus the day came to an end, as participants said their farewells, looking forward to the next AGM, to be held in 2019 on the anniversary of Taras Shevchenko's birth.



A banquet served family style by Baby Point Lounge ended a long day for the Board of Directors of the Taras H. Shevchenko Museum and Memorial Park Foundation.



## Ukrainian Miscellany

### Gas Pipelines

Work on a gas pipeline between Poland and Ukraine is to begin this summer. *Ukraine Business Journal* says that the 173 kilometre east-west line will run from Poland's Strachocina, about 60 km south of Rzeszow, to Ukraine's Bilche, about 60 km south of Lviv.

*Ukrinform* quotes Piotr Naimski, Poland's plenipotentiary for strategic energy infrastructure, as saying that "The interconnector will promote creation of a competitive gas market in Central Europe."

Furthermore, "This will allow us to create a real market in Poland. Therefore, we will be able to offer gas to our neighbours, for example, Ukraine, which also needs a real and normal gas market."

The pipeline is to be operational at the end of 2020.

In the meantime, the pressure from the Baltic states and Poland, together with the USA and Britain, to stop the development of Nord Stream 2 is growing. While the welfare of Ukraine is given as the reason, clearly each of the most vociferous opponents also have an economic interest in limiting the flow of Russian natural gas.

Germany's Angela Merkel has apparently thrown her weight against the development of Nord Stream 2, but that may be mere posturing for

Germany's NATO allies. Not only does Germany stand to benefit greatly from the new capacity for cheaper Russian gas, but its security of supply will be enhanced without Ukraine's hand on the shut-off valve.

In addition, it is unclear how much Germany is willing, or can, do to stop the project, which has serious private investment by powerful corporations.

Ms. Merkel is right when she says that "it is not just an economic issue, but there are also political considerations."

However, the main political consideration is hostility to Russia, while the main economic issue is the amount Germany is being asked to pay for NATO's political consideration — while the USA and its allied gas suppliers reap

the rewards.

In reality, anyone who is concerned about becoming increasingly dependent on Russian supplies is welcome to buy at higher prices from other suppliers.

Russia too has the right to seek economic security, which means not being at the mercy of Ukraine, a country which is on a campaign to isolate Russia, a campaign which most of NATO, and especially Britain and the USA support, not because they love Ukraine, but for their own economic benefits.

The USA says of Nord Stream 2 that, "We see it as undermining Europe's overall energy security and stability and providing Russia yet another tool to politicize energy as a political tool." However, if anyone is politicizing energy, it is the USA and its allies — as they do with whatever is available.

### Mixing State into Church

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty has reported, that "Ukrainian lawmakers have backed President Petro Poroshenko's appeal to the worldwide head of the Orthodox Church to recognize the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's independence from Moscow.

The vote in the *Verkhovna Rada* (Supreme Council) Ukraine's parliament, reportedly came days after President Poroshenko met with the

Archbishop of Constantinople, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, during a trip to Istanbul.

The resolution was supported by 268 lawmakers — more than the minimum 226 votes needed.

In a speech to parliament on April 19, Poroshenko called the move an act of "restoring historical justice".

Poroshenko said earlier on April 17 that the issue of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's getting autocephalous status may be considered by the Council of Constantinople by July 28.

### Ryanair

*Ukraine Business Journal* has reported that Ryanair, Europe's largest airline, will start flying to Ukraine on October 15 of this year. There will be flights from ten European cities to Kyiv's Boryspil airport, and from five European cities to Lviv.

The Kyiv routes include: Barcelona, Bratislava, Gdansk, Krakow, London Stansted, Poznan, Stockholm, Vilnius, Warsaw Modlin and Wroclaw. The Lviv routes will go to: Dusseldorf Weeze, Krakow, London Stansted, Memmingen and Warsaw Modlin.

Looking to the future, Ryanair is negotiating with Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Odessa airports.

Ryanair is planning to use new Boeings for use on the Ukraine routes. There is an indication that Ryanair will open offices in Ukraine and hire Ukrainian pilots and flight attendants by 2020.

### Naftogaz vs Gazprom

(Continued from Page 1.)  
Gazprom to pay Naftogaz more than \$2.5 billion to conclude a long legal battle that has run alongside Ukraine's broader political standoff with Russia.

Ukraine claims that both arbitration awards are final and binding on Gazprom.

According to Naftogaz, Gazprom's position was, instead, to amend the contracts or to terminate them to reverse the decisions of the Tribunal. Both positions are in direct contravention of, and disregard for, the decisions in the Arbitral Awards rendered by the Stockholm Tribunal. Naftogaz finds this position unacceptable, and has rejected Gazprom's proposals.

Furthermore, Naftogaz said that Gazprom's refusal to honour valid arbitration awards by an internationally valued and respected commercial arbitration tribunal seriously questions Gazprom's trustworthiness as a partner to the European gas industry. It is also endangering the respect for contracts as such with its unlawful withholding of payments due under the decisions of the Tribunal.

Reuters reported on April 9 that Naftogaz has said that it will go to European courts to try to seize Gazprom's assets in Europe (but not in Ukraine), after the Russian energy firm failed to make a payment ordered by an international tribunal.

The arbitration ordered

Gazprom to pay Naftogaz more than \$2.5 billion to conclude a long legal battle that has run alongside Ukraine's broader political standoff with Russia.

TASS reports that Gazprom rejects the arbitration, apparently, on the grounds that the tribunal discriminated against it. For example, it accepted Naftogaz's argument that lowered purchases were due to a slump in Ukraine's economy, but rejected Gazprom's claim that lower deliveries were due to a drop in demand from Europe.

The contract was to run from January 2009 to December 2019, and included a take or pay clause. Ukraine failed to buy the contracted volumes since 2012 (that is, before President Yanukovich was deposed), and has bought no Russian gas since November 2015, buying reverse gas from Europe instead.

The arbitration changed some of the terms of the contract between Naftogaz and Gazprom. Among changed items are prices, volumes of gas to be exchanged, and take or pay provisions.

Gazprom has indicated that it would pursue its interests through all available legal channels, but its prospects are not bright in the current international atmosphere.

### Population in Decline

In late March, the Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. reported that Ukraine's total population had fallen from 51.7 million in 1991 to an estimated 42.4 million in 2017. (This figure excludes Crimea, and the parts of the Donbas which are controlled by separatists. These areas have a total combined population of 2.5 million.)

The population was declining at an average annual rate of 0.4%, limiting the country's long-term economic prospects.

Average population growth in the European Union, is slightly above 0.2%, which, the report says "is also weak".

Though the natural replacement rate to maintain a population is 2.1 children per woman, Ukraine's fertility is only 1.52. On the other hand, Ukraine's death rate is 14.4 per 1,000 people, so deaths far outpace births.

Emigration is another important factor in Ukraine's population decline. Central and eastern European countries, as well as north America and western Europe, are currently hosting a large number of Ukrainian migrants, who usually move out of the country in search of better economic conditions.

An example is Poland, which has an estimated 400,000 Ukrainian residents, with many others commuting for work. Monthly wages averaged US\$289 in Ukraine in January, 2018, compared to US\$1,317 in Poland.

Significant gaps in access to health care, combined with poor lifestyle choices, mean that Ukraine has one of the lowest life expectancies in Europe, at 72 years. (The average in the EU is 78.)

As well as declining, Ukraine's population is also aging, with serious consequences.

### Population Aging

Toward the end of March, a number of information media published information about the consequences of Ukrainian population trends.

For example, Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. discussed the decline in Ukraine's population. In that same article, it discussed the aging of that population. It noted that the combination of a slow increase in life expectancy and a persistently low fertility rate, means that the worker to pensioner ratio, now at 10:9, will tilt even more towards pensioners in the coming years.

It is unclear how the pension fund, with a current deficit around 145 billion hryvniy (US\$5.4 billion), will be funded, the report said, as fewer workers support more pensioners.

Ukraine did adopt a pension law in 2017, but instead of raising retirement ages (as the International Monetary Fund requested), it raised pensions and set retirement ages at 60 for men and 58 for women.

On March 21, Reuters news service reported that

Ukraine's central bank expected Ukrainians working abroad to send home around \$9 billion in 2018, about the same as in 2017. Compare this amount in one year with the total of \$8.4 billion the country has received from the IMF under the 2015 reforms-for-aid program.

The number of Ukrainians working abroad continues to rise. At the moment it is about 2.2 million people, some 8% of the working population.

Among them are about a million Ukrainians working in Poland.

Unfortunately, Ukrainians working abroad do not contribute to the pension fund, which has a deficit equivalent to about 5% of the Gross Domestic Profit (GDP) in 2017.

The government of Ukraine is frantically seeking help to stop the bleeding. Progress has been reported on a plan, reported by Interfax Ukraine in January, to develop a plan for job-sustaining grants and loans to small- and medium-sized businesses from the European Commission and the European Investment Bank.

**Note:** Readers may detect inconsistencies in the spelling of some words transliterated from Ukrainian, particularly names. Our general rule is not to change spellings that appear in quotations, but to use our preferred spelling outside of quotations. —Ed.

## Bill C-75: A Huge Disappointment

Canada's criminal justice system has lately been under much critical scrutiny. Recent high profile verdicts have highlighted what has long been recognized by reports and studies going back decades: in effect, if not in intention, there is systemic discrimination against indigenous people in our justice system. Layered on top of this, and closely related, are ongoing and worsening problems of access to justice with chronically underfunded legal aid programs, larger and larger numbers of accused people spending time in custody while on remand awaiting trial, and widespread and endemic delay.

At the end of March, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould introduced this government's long-awaited criminal justice reform bill. This is the first comprehensive reform package put forward by the government, and has several broad and commendable goals: to decrease delay in the court system; to address concerns about systemic discrimination against indigenous people in the system; and to roll-back the unjust aspects of the previous government's criminal justice reforms. Unfortunately it not only fails to address any of these problems, it may actually make them worse.

It does nothing to address problems of access to justice. Beyond that, it leaves the most significant and counterproductive reforms of the past government in place, and introduces some new ones which have the potential to significantly reduce the ability of accused people in Canada to receive a fair trial.

While in opposition the Liberal Party was highly critical of the previous Conservative government's reforms to the criminal justice system — and a review of these changes was part of the mandate given to Minister Wilson-Raybould.

The most significant of these was the imposition of a wide range of mandatory minimums for a large number of offences, and the removal of Conditional Sentence Orders (CSOs), also known as house arrest, as an available sentence for a number of other offences (including any with mandatory minimums).

These reforms meant that, in a vast number of cases, judges were forced to send people to jail who would have otherwise served their sentence in the community. House arrest as a sentence for first-time drug traffickers, for instance, provided the perfect carrot and stick approach: if you could get your life together — whether by going to rehab, or getting a job, or going back to school, or just staying out of trouble and changing your lifestyle — you had a very good chance of convincing a judge to let you serve your jail sentence in the community. If you didn't — or if you violated the conditions of your house arrest — you would, instead, serve real jail time.

House arrest was only available for those who, the court found, did not pose an undue risk to the public. This

allowed the court to provide a very real and meaningful sanction, but without removing an individual from society — allowing them to stay in their job, or with their family, and making their rehabilitation more likely.

When a person goes into custody it doesn't just affect them. These same people are often also valued employees, loving and caring parents, caregivers to their elders — people on whom others rely, who are harmed when that person goes to jail.

In addition to the negative long-term effects it had on offenders and ultimately the community, the removal of house arrest also meant that a lot of cases which would have otherwise been resolved with a guilty plea are now set for trial, further clogging up the court system.

In October, 2016, Minister Wilson-Raybould spoke at the Criminal Lawyers Association conference and promised that restoring judicial discretion was an issue of utmost importance, and specifically that mandatory minimum sentences were a priority for change. Yet the bill finally introduced a year and a half later inexplicably leaves these untouched.

While the bill does correct some aspects of the previous government's counterproductive reforms — such as the restoration of judicial discretion to waive the significant victim's surcharge imposed on offenders — it leaves the most significant parts firmly in place.

As concerning as what is left out of this bill is what is in it.

Peremptory challenges in jury selection, which allow lawyers to remove a certain number of jurors without stating a reason, are set to be eliminated. This is a drastic step which has been undertaken without any consultation with the legal community or study of its overall effects.

It is hard to believe that Minister Wilson-Raybould had peremptory challenges on her radar for reform

prior to the notorious Gerald Stanley verdict in February of this year. The way they were

used in this very high-profile — but also very unusual — case certainly calls out for possible reform.

Lack of First Nation representation on juries is endemic and disgraceful. It was first identified as a problem in the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry as long ago as 1999. In most cases, the problem is not a non-indigenous person being tried for a crime against an indigenous person in front of an all non-indigenous jury. It is, rather, an indigenous accused person being judged by a jury with no indigenous representation at all. In our history classes we learn about the horrors of Jim Crow America, with all-white juries sitting in judgement of African Americans, but few are aware that we have a similar situation here and now in Canada.

The knee-jerk reform proposed by the government not only does nothing to address this issue, but will likely

make it worse. Defence lawyers representing racialized accused people generally use pre-emptory challenges to *increase* diversity on juries — for instance, by excluding potential jurors preceding someone on the list who appears aboriginal. It also allows defence lawyers to exclude from juries individuals who, through their body language and facial expressions, give the impression that they would not give the accused person a fair trial.

Removing this important tool, without any study of its impact or discussion with the legal community, risks significant unintended consequences, including making juries *less* diverse, and making wrongful convictions more likely.

The government's proposals to reduce delay are even more worrisome. Not only are they not justified by any available evidence, they actually run contrary to it.

In the landmark *Jordan* ruling in October, 2016, the Supreme Court

of Canada took a bold step to address endemic delay by imposing strict time lines on the courts to complete prosecutions: 30 months for prosecutions in Superior Courts and 18 months for prosecutions in Provincial Courts. Any delay beyond this, unless justified by the Crown, would violate the Charter right to a trial without unreasonable delay.

The new rules left provincial governments and courts across the country struggling to reduce delay any way they could.

The main federal government response in this bill is to eliminate preliminary inquiries for all but the most serious cases.

Preliminary inquiries are currently available to any accused person charged with an indictable offence who chooses to be tried by a judge or jury in superior court (rather than provincial court). They serve two purposes: to ensure that there is a minimum level of evidence before a charge is brought to trial, and to give both the Crown and Defence a chance to assess the Crown's case. They are a kind of dress rehearsal for the most significant evidence.

According to Justice Minister Raybould-Wilson, removing preliminary inquiries will reduce delay, and unclog the courts. This belief, however, is contrary to all available evidence, and will very likely have the opposite effect.

Currently only 3% of criminal cases have a preliminary inquiry. Preliminary inquiries usually take a fraction of the court time of a trial. Very frequently, a preliminary inquiry plays a key role in facilitating resolution without a lengthy trial, as both the Crown and Defence are able to better assess the strengths or weaknesses of the Crown's case.

When trials do go ahead, a preliminary inquiry allows it to be more focused and efficient. In the experience of most defence lawyers, preliminary inquiries ultimately make the court system more, not less, efficient.

Not only will their removal likely increase delays, it removes a key protection for an accused person, and will almost certainly lead to more wrongful convictions.

In his 2007 report into the wrongful conviction of James Driskell, retired judge Patrick Lesage, Q.C., found that, had a preliminary inquiry been held, it may have prevented the wrongful conviction in that case.

Also intended to reduce delay, another proposed reform would allow the Crown to file written police reports instead of having officers testify and be cross-examined. It can not be overstated how misleading, incomplete, and fundamentally inaccurate police reports can be.

The defence, however, will be able to apply to the trial judge to allow cross-examination of the officer. The right to cross-examine witnesses on their evidence is so fundamental to our system, that it is hard to imagine that judges will ever deny a defence application to cross-examine an officer.

These applications will take court time, however, and will ultimately increase the length of trials and contribute

to delay.

It is currently very common for defence lawyers to agree to certain police evidence being entered in this way, if it is not contested and is straightforward, simply as a way to save time.

If defence applications aren't routinely granted by judges, this reform represents a significant erosion of an accused person's ability to question the state's evidence against them, and to hold police officers accountable. If the applications are routinely granted, this reform does nothing other than to further complicate and lengthen the trial process with pointless applications. Either way, the ultimate effect is a negative one for the justice system.

The common theme of the government's proposals to address delay is to remove existing due process rights for an accused person in favour of greater efficiency. Given that the right to a trial within a reasonable time is itself part of due process, this amounts to robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Our government's answer to ensuring compliance with one right is simply to remove others. Not only that, but the promised efficiencies are unlikely to materialize, as these reforms run contrary to all evidence on what will actually reduce delay.

Instead of addressing mandatory minimums, expanding alternative sentencing and prosecution options, or increasing support for legal aid — things that would meaningfully address problems of delay, access to justice, and systemic discrimination in the justice system — Bill C-75 is mostly a series of poorly thought out measures which will only make these problems worse.

All in all it is a huge disappointment to those who had hoped that this government would live up to its promise to return to evidence-based policy in the realm of criminal justice.

— Karl Gowenlock

(Karl Gowenlock is a defence lawyer at Bueti Wasyliv Wiebe and is a member of the Criminal Defence Lawyers Association of Manitoba.)

**Bill C-75 ... will only make these problems worse.**

**(Bill C-75) does nothing to address problems of access.**

# Family Night in Edmonton

(Continued from Page 6.) sang a song about spring, named "Vesnyana pisenka". The last song they sang was a Japanese song called "Spring has come".

The Kalyna dance group performed the Transcarpathian dance "Bereznyanka".

The Junior Dance Group performed a central Ukrainian dance called "Molodiy kozaky" (Young Cossacks).

The senior Trembita Choir sang the humorous song "Oy pid vyshneyu" (Oh, Under the Cherry Tree), accompa-

nied on the piano by Svitlana Romanova. They then sang "Oy yeekhaly khlopsti z yarmarku" (The Boys Were Travelling from the Fair) and "Nyeech yaka misyachna" (The Bright Moonlit Night), with soloist Orest Hrechukh.

The Lileya Dance Group performed the Western Ukrainian dance "Na Hutsulshchyniy" (In the Hutsul area), the last number on the concert program.

The cake walk followed.

With numbers placed all around the floor, the contestants walked around, stepping on the numbers. Like musical chairs, when the music (played by Bob Kisilevich) stopped, MC Pat Krausher read a number, and whoever was standing on that number won a cake. This continued until all the cakes were won.

Thus ended another Family Night, with all having had a wonderful evening.

— Paul Greene

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## Happy Birthday, Friends!



The **Edmonton AUUC Senior Citizens' Club** wishes a happy birthday to the celebrant of May:

Pauline Warick

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

The **Toronto AUUC Senior Citizens' Club** extends best birthday wishes to May celebrant:

Nita Miskevich

May good health and happiness be yours in the coming year!

The **Vancouver Seniors Club** wishes the best of health and happiness in the coming year to May celebrants:

Charles Hegeous  
Carol Snider  
Sylvia Surette  
Anna Withers

Enjoy your day with family and friends!

The **Welland Shevchenko Seniors** extend a happy birthday wish to May celebrants:

Melissa Hercanuk  
Millie Kish  
Jennifer Labenski  
Karen Longfellow  
Mike Lusak  
Joan Sitak

May the coming year bring you all the best in health and happiness!

## Centennial Concert in Regina

(Continued from Page 7.)  
der the direction of Vlad Osatiuk, as per tradition, accompanied all the children's dances as well as the Poltava dances and vocal/instrumental duets and solos, and featured orchestral selections.

The Poltava Dancers, under the direction of Lisa Wanner, performed seven dances. The Ensemble's repertoire continues to be unique, and is not only known for the grace and acrobatic energy of Ukrainian dance, but also includes renowned song, music and dance of the various cultures within, and bordering on, Ukraine.

The costumes used by the Poltava School and the Ensemble are impressive, and are designed in Regina by Lisa Wanner and Zoya Shmyr, in cooperation with designers in Ukraine. The costumes are produced in Ukraine, and upon arrival in Regina are sized and altered by volunteer seamstresses.

The Regina AUUC 100th Anniversary Concert was diverse, educational, wide ranging in repertoire and colour, and was presented by over 140 performers and technical staff to a very appreciative audience.

Not only did music, song, dance and visual affects help to recognize and pay tribute to our Anniversary, but a major contributing factor to this

Concert's success was the atmosphere of the performing venue. Being situated in a building such as the Regina Performing Arts Centre, with its magnificent stage, excellent lighting, and impressive sound, Regina AUUC concerts have a touch of professionalism within a professional venue. Because of this, Poltava has always been recognized for providing high-calibre events, with outstanding cultural programs!

Special thanks must be given to:

Regina AUUC Branch President Sasha Lapchuk;  
AUUC Poltava Ensemble

Executive Chairman and Master of Ceremonies Dave Wilson;

Poltava Ensemble Dance Director Lisa Wanner;

Poltava Ensemble Orchestra Director Vlad Osatiuk;

Poltava School Coordinators Renee Boyd and Lisa Wanner;

Poltava Dance School Instructors Jordan Bidyk, Nicholas Dmyterko, Daniel Hebert, Luke Melenchuk, Emery Millette, Julia Pringle, Kayla Swicheniuk, and Bailey Swicheniuk;

Vocal soloists Valeria Honchar, Guennadi Ostrikov, Elena Bryleva;



The Lileya Dancers of the Poltava School of Ukrainian Performing Arts perform "Volynskiy Patterns".



## Lesson in Pysanka

(Continued from Page 6.)  
work of art. She even provided everyone with blank, empty egg shells on which to work, and she admitted to eating lots of omelettes in the days and weeks leading up to the workshops!

Limiting each class to 10 people ensured that Anastasiya could provide personal instruction and encouragement to each person, many of whom were young, enthusiastic artists with astonishing ideas and results. Each workshop lasted two hours, with the bulk of the first hour spent trying to get your brain to think in layers, and hues. Think

waxing what you don't want painted, and then painting in layers of progressively darker colours. The final touch was a coat of clear varnish that immediately added shine and depth to the designs, and shine and depth to the smiles of the students.

Thank you so much to the wonderful Anastasiya! She devoted so much time and energy to making these workshops such a success, and we truly appreciate all of her efforts. She says she's willing to do it again next Easter.

I know the ancestors are pleased.

— Dave Wilson



Above, one of the three workshops begins with an explanation by Anastasiya Shved.

Below, creative hands at work to produce an imaginative masterpiece..

## Correction

Thanks to Brendan and Nykol Kroeker for manning and organizing the bar at Calgary's Family Night. Our April, 2018, issue provided incorrect information.

Technical staff Brandon Carr and Kelly Munce (sound, lighting, stage management);

Parents and grandparents for the supervision and preparation of the children in lower auditorium dressing rooms and rehearsal area; and

All dancers, musicians, vol-

unteers, and committee and executive members for their dedication and commitment in the pursuit of cultural and educational success.

Our Focus is Our Culture...  
Our Strength is Our Members.

— Gerry Shmyr



The Poltava Ensemble Dancers perform Dziumbalyky, which is based on western Ukrainian folklore traditions and styles.



The Pre-Poltava Dancers of the Poltava School of Ukrainian Performing Arts present "Kozachok".



The Poltava Ensemble concludes the evening with one of Ukraine's most popular dances "Hopak".

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