

Branch Two News Update

Make plans to attend

Tak Bulo: 125 years of Ukrainian settlement

Saturday, September 24, 2016

On September 1891, the first Ukrainians came to Alberta (then the British Northwest) to see for themselves whether the land around Edmonton was fit for settlement. Ivan Pyliiw and Wasyl Eleniak liked what they saw and returned home – today's Ukraine - to tell their fellow peasants what they saw. A few years later, Ukrainians mainly from Galicia and Bukovyna, began to arrive, forming Canada's first Ukrainian settlement in the Edna-Star area (by Lamont). By the time the First World War broke out, over 170,000 had arrived in Canada.

125 years later, Ukrainian-Canadians across Canada celebrate these pioneers, who left everything behind to build a new life in our country. Edmonton's AUUC Branch # 2 will hold a celebration on September 24, 2016; 'Tak Bulo!' (That's the way it was!) named by event organizer Shirley Uhry, to draw attention to the conditions under which these earliest settlers came, and the hardships they had to endure in order to survive in the new land.

'Tak Bulo!' will celebrate the courage and tenacity of people who left a homeland where life had become intolerable. Many were peasants, attempting to survive on incredibly small acreages, under oppressive Polish and Austrian regimes that imposed taxes with harsh conditions, and ruled over them with contempt.

The earliest Ukrainian immigrants were attracted by promises of free land (*Vilni Zemli*) offered by a Government that was intent on opening up the West but, unfortunately, was often aided by unscrupulous agents who lured settlers to their new homes with false promises.

Settlers in the new land faced a life that was often no easier than the one they had left, especially during the early years. They found little support or infrastructure, and often faced an unfriendly bureaucracy, employers intent on exploiting cheap labour, and an Anglo-Saxon elite that had little regard for them. They persevered, however, with hard work and mutual support, to pave the way for us.

On September 24, we will honour them at the Ukrainian Centre in Edmonton in a special way – by recounting the conditions under which

they came, established homesteads, worked on farms, mines and railways, built homes and communities, and laid the basis for a Ukrainian Canadian culture that has flourished.

The first 'wave' of Ukrainian immigration ended with the outbreak of WWI; there were at least three more 'waves' after that. While 'Tak Bulo' will celebrate them all, it will draw particular attention to how hard things were for those in the first wave, and will celebrate how far Ukrainian-Canadians have advanced since then. A Ukrainian meal will be followed by a memorable concert featuring a wide variety of stage events all demonstrating the theme, 'Tak Bulo'; i.e. *That's how it was!* Plan to attend.

Pre-register your children

Trembita Children

Dance School

Our **2016-17 Dance School** will begin in early September at Edmonton's Ukrainian Centre at 11018 – 97 St., Edmonton. Classes are led by highly-trained & experienced instructors. Parents are encouraged to pre-register, as space is limited. Call 780.424.2037 or e-mail us at trembitadance@gmail.com You are also welcome to drop into our Centre on weekdays.

AUUC Branch #2 holds Annual General Meeting

Members and guests of Edmonton's Branch of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians met at the Ukrainian Centre on Sunday, June 12, 2016 to review the activities of the past year, make plans for the upcoming months, and elect an Executive that will guide the Branch through the challenges and activities of the upcoming year. Andrew Thompson, who took over as Branch President when Peter Horon passed away earlier this year, began the meeting with a report in which he applauded the work of the Association in 2015-16, noting challenges we faced. He gave notice that a number of legacy projects will be initiated in the upcoming year, the 125th Anniversary of Ukrainian settlement.

Bob Kisilevich presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of the Auditors and Treasurer Lillian Osinchuk. He noted that the Branch was in good financial position, thanks primarily to larger-than-expected gaming proceeds from the Casino and Bingos that during the past year. Thanks to the volunteers who worked on these.

Winston Gereluk presented the Social Report on behalf of the Social Committee, in which he described some of the social events: the children's Christmas Party in December, the Malanka in January, the Family Night and Perogy Supper in March and the End-of-Year Concert at the end of May 2016. He also mentioned the successful 'Summer of '86' event at the Centre on June 4.

A Performing Arts report was presented by Tamara Krausher, who informed that the

Children's Dance School had grown to the point where the older group ('Kalyna') will likely have to be split into two groups in the upcoming year.

Also presenting reports was Shirley Uhry on behalf of the National Committee and the Shevchenko Museum in Toronto.

The following were elected to the Branch #2 Executive for 2016-17 :

President – Andrew Thompson

Vice-President – Leslie Bibkewich

Secretary – Tamara Krausher

Treasurer – Donalda Cassels

Vice-Recording Sect'y – Paul Greene

Directors-at-Large - Eugene Plawiuk, Bill Uhry, Winston Gereluk, Humberto Novella
Auditors - Vern McCann, Pauline Warick, Lucien Royer

The following delegates were elected to attend the AUUC National Convention in Winnipeg this October: Andrew Thompson, Bill Uhry, Shirley Uhry, Paul Greene, Eugene Plawiuk.

Note: Lionel Fruhbrodt will continue to staff the Ukrainian Centre from 10:00–Noon on Monday to Friday. Drop in or Phone: 780-424-2037

Branch #2 Update

is a bi-monthly publication of Branch #2 of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians. Branch #2 operates as a component of the National AUUC, which is headquartered in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Views presented in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Association. Contributions from members and supporters are welcomed. Send story ideas, news, promotions and letters to the Editor, *AUUC News Update* at our Ukrainian Centre, 11018 – 97 Street, Edmonton T5H 2M9. Phone us at 780-424-2037 Or you can visit us at www.tremitadance.com Or send an e-mail to tremitadance@gmail.com

'Summer of '86' Anniversary

On Saturday, June 4, 2016, AUUC Branch #2 and the Alberta Labour History Institute co-hosted an event at the Ukrainian Centre to commemorate the 'long hot summer of 1986'. Labour disputes broke out across Alberta that year, as thousands of workers took the streets in reaction to concession demands and roll-backs, as well as restraint measures imposed by the Conservative government of Don Getty.

The strike by UFCW at Edmonton's Gainer's was perhaps best-known, but also affected were: UFCW at Fletchers in Red Deer and Lakeside Packers in Brooks, AUPE at ALCB province-wide, Zeidlers Plywood in Edmonton and Slave Lake and ECWU (now UNIFOR) at Suncor in Ft. McMurray. All these provided lessons that were discussed at the meeting.