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Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union

President's Message

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the fourth edition of "Student" newsmagazine for the 2012 - 2013 academic school year. This address comes to you on the heels of the 55th National SUSK Congress to be held in Edmonton, Alberta, which will mark the end of our academic and executive terms. Though students are hard at work studying for exams, your SUSK National Executive has been "going overtime" on a number of fronts.

As noted last issue, at the end of last March, on behalf of SUSK, and at the bequest of Ukrainian Canadian Congress President Pavlo Grod, I travelled to Lviv, Ukraine to participate in the World Congress of Ukrainian Youth Organizations – CKYMO: planning and strategy session. SUSK has been very active in re-constituting SKUMO over the past three years. As student leaders, we fundamentally believe in the unhindered development of the global Ukrainian diaspora youth movement and have sent

representations to several recent conferences, with the primary goal of creating professional structures to guide the organized development of such a movement.

Another hotbed of activity has been the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, a federal Canadian museum to be based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Specifically, I refer to its treatment of the Holodomor. This past month, SUSK devised a strategy which will be deployed, along with our Ukrainian Canadian partners, to raise awareness regarding this museum. In tandem with this, we highlighted the unfulfilled promises of the Israel Asper Foundation, by publishing a letter issued ten years ago which committed the museum to several actionable programming items. Through our social media efforts this garnered over 7,500 hits. At this stage, we do not view the museum as: a) Inclusive and equitable as it relates to the Holodomor b) reflective of the broader Canadian Human Rights history and experience.





SUSK was pleased to announce the introduction of a job board on our website. Our website now features various jobs and internship opportunities related to Ukraine and beyond. Our ultimate goal is to be a feeder for Ukrainian Canadian professionals and businesspeople. This is also a value-added service we can offer to our members and Ukrainian Student Organizations. Secondly, we have engaged the Canadian Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce in their desire to create a national mentorship program. With youth unemployment reaching record highs, such an initiative is needed more than ever. Tentatively, a roundtable is scheduled for June 1st to discuss potential possibilities.

As the year comes to an end, I thank you for reading, supporting, and contributing to "Student" newsmagazine. A subsequent issue will mark a milestone for us: the publication of the most issues since digitization. I remind you that "Student" tells our collective stories. As a community. As a "народ." As I noted in this year's first issue: though today Ukraine is an independent country, you would be surprised to see the similar nature of challenges faced by both SUSK and the broader Ukrainian Canadian

community in those days past. I hope you enjoy this issue and continue reading it!

З повагою - Regards,

Danylo Korbabicz

The Health Benefits of Your Local USC

In September, I commenced my education as an engineering student at the University of Toronto, taking up residence in St. Vladimir's Institute on Spadina Ave.. Being actively involved in the Ukrainian community throughout my life, I was fully aware of the existence of the Ukrainian Students' Club (USC). Though, it did help having a brother on the national executive... Now that I've finished first year, I've come to a few conclusions regarding USC membership.

As my year began hustling with school and trying to keep my social life alive through a tough curriculum, I was delighted to hear that the Toronto USC office was located just downstairs. Even better, many of their events are held in my (St. Vladimir's) basement! Though it's not the most convenient place for



commuters, it suited those near U of T's campus perfectly.

The year started off with the club's first general meeting. Nothing too special just yet. Just introduced the club, events...but then there was a ZABAVA! That's right, a ZABAVA! As we all know, zabavy with friends and some live music are great for stress relief. This is benefit number one. Being a part of a USC and going to events helps *lower stress*. Nine out of ten doctors agree that excessive stress is not good for your health. Therefore, nine out of ten doctors agree that being part of your local USC is good for your health! Nothing was better than coming back from a long day of lectures, tutorials, labs, tests, etc. to find that they were making fresh varenyky in the basement! And they had beer (for those who are of legal age, of course)! Instant. Stress. Relief.

As the year progressed, the club also made Pysanky. I was there for the beginning of that event but had to unfortunately leave for a rehearsal that night. My friends told me of how met new people. Benefit number two! Being part of a USC helps expand your network of people you know. With the upcoming conference in Edmonton, I look forward to an awesome opportunity

to meet Ukrainians from all over Canada, and to learn about what they are doing in their local communities. Having a good social network is also helpful to get you through stressful times. As the great Sir Paul McCartney once said: "I Get by with a little help from my friends"! Eight out of ten doctors agree social interaction is good for you (in case you were wondering)!

Now from my experience, I must say that joining the USC was a fantastic choice. The small membership fee is nothing compared to the stress relief and the people you will meet. If you know anyone who isn't part of their local club, or are just entering university, tell them that seventeen out of ten doctors would agree that a Ukrainian Students' Club membership is good for your health!

Andriyko Kostruba

No to Ukrainian-Russian Super League

Since the completion of Euro 2012 and the retirement of Andriy Shevchenko the poster boy for Ukrainian soccer for almost 20 years the Ukrainian soccer has been searching for a new identity. Since late last year there has been talk





that some (if not all) Ukrainian Premier League clubs and clubs from the entire Russian Premier League are contemplating a merger into a super league that could start as early as the Fall of 2014.

The idea was first conceived by Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller (also an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin) and has gained the support of some Russian soccer officials, but no official backing from the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) or UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) Europe's official soccer governing body. Gazprom is a Russian state-run gas supplier, the largest extractor of natural gas and one of the largest countries in the world. The company also owns Russian club Zenit St. Petersburg, the club that was once captained by current Ukrainian national team captain Anatoliy Tymoschuk who lead the club to win the 2008 UEFA cup (now called the Europa League), which is European club soccer's second tier competition. Gazprom is also a major sponsor of European club soccer's first tier competition the UEFA Champions League and its logo can be found all over large field-side advertisements during Champions League matches.

If you know anything about past disputes between Ukrainian oil and gas company Naftogaz and Gazprom you know that they have been less than friendly. In 2009 Gazprom halted all Russian gas flows through Ukraine for 13 days, which caused major economic losses for Ukraine and in October 2011 former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko was wrongfully sentenced to seven years in prison for abusing her office when she signed the deal to stop the gas cut off in 2009. In April 2010 an agreement named the Kharkiv Accord was signed and ratified by both Ukrainian and Russian Parliaments. The Kharkiv Accord is a treaty between Ukraine and Russia whereby lease on Russian naval facilities in Crimea would be extended beyond 2017 to 2042 with an additional 5-year option to 2047 in exchange for a discounted price of natural gas to Ukraine from Russia. This agreement violates part of the Ukrainian constitution which forbids any country to host military bases on Ukrainian soil after 2017.

So, what do you think the motivation of Gazprom and Alexey Miller to form a united eastern European league is? Soccer or money? I am going to side with money. Between Russian and Ukrainian club sides there is no shortage



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of some of soccer's richest teams run by billionaire owners including Shakhtar Donetsk owned by billionaire Rinat Akhmetov. However, revenues generated by the Ukrainian and Russian Premier leagues are nothing compared to what it could be in a combined league. Gazprom is offering to sponsor the new league for 1 billion Euros a season in hopes of rivaling soccer's top grossing English Premier League.

The league would run in similar fashion to ice hockey's KHL (Kontinental Hockey League) a regional professional hockey league that has teams in Ukraine, Russia, Latvia, Belarus, Latvia, the Czech Republic and Kazakhstan. With a proposed 16 teams joining from the Russian Premier League and 14 from the Ukrainian Premier League. However, the major roadblock to the formation of the league is approval from UEFA and FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association) the governing body of association football. FIFA president Sepp Blatter has called the proposed league "impossible" and the league must meet UEFA's new financial fair play rules which limits teams spending over three year periods. The league also needs an agreement from the FFU, which is yet to say anything (take a hint Gazprom).

Although I believe a united eastern European soccer league would improve the popularity and quality of Ukrainian soccer its motives lay in oil and money and not the purity that sport provides. Frequent matches major clubs Spartak Moscow verses Dynamo Kyiv are very enticing but does Ukraine really want to take a step back as a nation and back to the days of the Cold War? Even if it is just soccer it is still a part of our identity as an independent nation. Ukraine's soccer identity belongs nationally independent and proud like its nation and people. To Russia, Gazprom and the proposed league I say: **HANDS OFF!**

By: Mark Moroz , McMaster University

Just Do It! - Unleashing the Prospects of Life as a Student

If your university experience was anything like mine, then your recollection of what the typical life of a student looks like probably goes something like this: 1) Wake up 2) Go to class 3) Study 4) Go to sleep 5) Omit step 4 and repeat. If you throw in "drink copious amounts of Red Bull and/or any caffeinated beverages" into the sequences, then what you're probably



left with is an accurate portrayal of student life during exam season – overall not very exciting or appealing, in fact it's enough to induce post-traumatic stress disorder in some of us. However, the reality is that it doesn't have to be this way, albeit sometimes the circumstances are inevitable, you certainly don't have to fall into the everyday grind of a lack luster undergraduate experience. I stumbled upon this revelation late in my student career but even so I have reaped tremendous benefit from my new found views and ultimately I'm here to tell you that YOU can do the same.

This revelation that I'm referring to doesn't have anything to do with attending dorm parties in excess or spending many late nights at the campus bar (although a little bit of that here and there will certainly lift your spirits, especially after your self-esteem has been pulverized following a ridiculous exam that your professor wrote to make himself feel smart by making you look dumb). Instead, what I'm referring to is adopting the view that university is a wealth of opportunity and not just a mandatory obligation that you need to check off your list of "Things to Do" in order to cross the stage and pick up your degree. Here's the trick: 1) Open your eyes and take advantage of the

opportunities around you no matter how convinced you are in your self-doubt, and 2) Stop seeing your professors as bad guys and start seeing them as colleagues, mentors, and future career partners. If you're reading this article, chances are you are probably part of a Ukrainian Student Organization on campus, so already you are on the right track! Along with student clubs and other community outreach programs, there are other avenues that can help propel you into your career and even change your life. Take my story for example:

As a Medical Sciences Master's student I used to walk through campus not paying much attention to the hustle and bustle of things going on around me. The only things that concerned me was doing well in whatever immediate tasks I had going on at the moment. Until one November afternoon while grabbing coffee with a friend, I ran into another friend running a booth in the main lobby. He was volunteering for a business competition that was being hosted by the Haskayne School of Business at the University of Calgary called the Global Entrepreneurship Innovation Challenge. I had no interest beyond saying hello and when I was about to leave my friend who I got the coffee with stopped me.



He said that the competition was open to non-business students and that we should sign up, that it would be “*fun*” he said, that we should “*just do it*” he said. Hearing this come out of his mouth was shocking, he himself being a philosophy student I thought he was out of his mind. I got tired of protesting and signed up to appease him, but I still had no real intention of going through with it. As registered contestants we were given a coat hanger, a 50 dollar budget, and 24 hours to turn it into a viable product and come up with a business plan that we were expected to pitch to a panel of judges consisting of CEO’s and Business Faculty Professors. I would have been extremely intimidated if I was actually serious about the whole thing – which I certainly wasn’t. Over beers later that night, my philosophy friend and I were half-jokingly brainstorming some thoughts and after a long conversation about his experience volunteering in the Congo we came up with the idea of hanging a net over the coat hanger and calling it an infant-sized anti-malaria net. Perfect! I thought it was a pretty clever idea, but with absolutely no business backing I thought it was doomed to fail – I couldn’t have been more wrong. We ended up going to the competition with our design that cost little more than 50 cents, and

although we were the only non-business team competing who didn’t know a thing about profit margins or generating revenues, it didn’t matter. We ended up winning the competition, and little did we know that we were to go on and win two more on a regional level. Now, our idea is up for a national award. On campus we became the rising faces of innovation and collaboration, being featured on websites, newsletters, and student brochures. Today, I am pleased to say that we are the proud directors of our non-profit organization called the MicroMalaria Project. Along with the help of university professors whom we now call committee advisors, our aim is to create reusable anti-malaria nets targeted to protect children under the age of 5 in Sub Saharan Africa which is the number one cause of death in those countries. Had I said “no” to the competition, I would have also said “no” to all of the opportunities that came after it.

So the moral of the story is simple – if you don’t try you’ll never know. Next time you’re walking through campus, stop and take a look at what’s going on around you. If something catches your eye or sounds interesting or your crazy friend wants you to join a competition with them – just do it! Who knows,



maybe it'll change your life one day, or something crazy like that. At the very least it may spice up your usual 5 step schedule. University can be boring, but your university experience certainly doesn't have to be.

Ann Zalucky

Fire Crosser: A Composite Review

On a quiet Sunday evening this past March, students and members of the local community gathered in the central theatre in Waterloo for a screening of *Fire Crosser*, also known as *Тої хто пройшов крізь вогонь*, a film by the famed Ukrainian director, Mykhailo Illyenko. The event, hosted by the Waterloo Ukrainian Students' Association, was widely attended and afforded both Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians the chance to experience a beautifully woven historical drama unfold on the big screen.

The film tells the story of a Soviet Ukrainian pilot, who is captured by the Germans in WWII, escapes and tries to return to his squadron, only to be arrested as a traitor and sent to Siberia. He then escapes to Canada and becomes a Mohawk chief, all the while

maintaining his Ukrainian cultural identity. The film is not a documentary, but the filmmaker states that it is based on historical fact. It seems that a Soviet delegation, visiting a Native settlement near Montreal during Expo '67, was shocked when the Native chief greeted them in Ukrainian.

The film, released in 2011, was Ukraine's official submission for the 85th Academy Awards, and although it did not make the shortlist of nominations for the category of Best Foreign Language Film, it marks a significant development in Ukrainian cinematography. After many years, this was the first film that enjoyed a wide distribution across Ukraine and unprecedented box-office success.

At the screening in Waterloo, the film was received quite positively, with a few fair criticisms. Below are a few opinions from individuals who attended the screening:

"Unfortunately it is quite noticeable that Ukrainian cinematography lacks money - there are lots of aspects in the movie that could have been better. However, I found the story quite fascinating and I really loved the way movie was structured, as I am a fan of nonlinear storytelling (interchanged



order of events). You may want to watch it, as it's one of the brightest movies of independent Ukraine, but do not expect a Hollywood blockbuster.” – Volodymyr Lyubynets

“*Fire Crosser* was a movie which I felt had a lot of soul and passion put into its making. The acting was very good. Many emotions were stirred by the film, making it a great thriller to watch. Поздоровляю пана Ілленка!” – Stepan Jaworsky

“I found the movie *Fire Crosser* to be a quality film, fitting of a nomination. The actors chosen were a perfect fit for the storyline. The underlying story was interesting, and it provided good exposure to Ukrainian history and culture.” – Paul Cremona

“*Fire Crosser* is a brave endeavour of producing a feature-length film. The story is so unique and captivating, wrapped in love, jealousy and adventure that it is hard to believe that it is based off true events. I recommend this film as it embodies the adventurous spirit of a Ukrainian-Canadian, a hero fresh to cinema.” – Cassia Johnson

“The film presented a history and a perspective previously unknown to me. It put a human face and a human story to one of history's most tumultuous events and captured the story of two people separated by war and its aftermath, trying to find each other and themselves in a new world, while still staying true to each other and their pasts.” – Mark Diaczun



“Що стосовно фільму, то можна сказати, що нарешті, після досить тривалого часу, в українському кінематографі з'явився позитивний фільм. Фільм красивий і емоційний. Не те що б всім не до вподоби знайомі історичні стрічки, але вже настав час перегортати сторінку страждань і підіймати дух нації!” – Oleksiy Rossovskyy

It seems most individuals who attended the screening were captivated by the complex story told by Illyenko, made all the more interesting by its surprising plot twist and the fact that it comes from a lesser-known corner of the world. Unfortunately, the accessibility of Ukrainian films in Canada is quite limited; and to view a film with such a rich storyline, saturated in history and rich in cultural meaning and symbolism, is truly something else.

For those of you who are interested, Mykhailo Illyenko is currently shooting his next film, *Toloka*, which is based on a poem by the famous Taras Shevchenko. The film's release date is set for March 2014, to mark the 200-th anniversary of Shevchenko's birth.

Christine Czoli
SUSK Executive Vice-President and
WUSA Director of External Relations

Any USOs or individual students interested in finding out more about the film or the event can contact me at christine.czoli@gmail.com.

“The Kudzu of History”

Pulitzer Prize winning author Stacy Schiff once wrote, “And in the absence of facts, myth rushes in, the kudzu of history.” For those of you unfamiliar with the term, the kudzu is a fast-growing vine which can quickly cover any object over which it is growing. Looking back through the pages of history one can find countless examples of what I have informally dubbed to be a ‘kudzu effect’: instances where myth has taken the place of fact and steadily spread until it was able to secure a comfortable reign over its desired object. For better or worse, the March 2013 issue of *Student* struck me as containing more than a few concerning examples of the above-mentioned ‘kudzu effect.’ To be sure, the history of Ukraine is a long and complicated one, reasons for which I am sure do not need to be delved into here. Given its tumultuous history it comes as little surprise that a single, agreed upon historical narrative has yet to emerge (as is so often the case with its surrounding neighbours, near and far). One might argue that this void



encourages debate and close examination of a nation's past, but on the other hand, an upshot of such circumstances is the almost certain perpetuation of historical myths.

To illustrate my point I will draw on a few specific examples from articles published in the previous edition of *Student*. The use of such examples is in no way intended as an attack; rather, it is meant for the purpose of constructive criticism, the likes of which professors and peers would often raise when challenging my own writing and argumentation throughout my undergraduate and graduate careers. I found such feedback to be immensely useful, not only in the academic realm, but also in more personal realms, specifically as that of a second generation Ukrainian Canadian.

The first article I would like to discuss was entitled "The First Nationalist Party," and it addressed the Svoboda party's success in the most recent Ukrainian parliamentary elections in October 2012. To begin, the title of the article itself is problematic, as it cannot be said that Svoboda is Ukraine's "first nationalist party." In addition to nationalist parties that existed during Ukraine's brief but ultimately

unsuccessful struggle for independence from 1917-1921, nationalist (or nationalist-minded) parties also existed during Ukraine's initial years of independence in the early 1990s.

But perhaps most concerning is the author's statement that, *"Throughout history we have seen that nationalism has been the main force behind the revival of Ukraine. Bohdan Khmelnytsky, Taras Shevchenko, Mykhailo Hrushevsky and Symon Petlura, Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych - these are just a few of the leaders who have lead Ukrainians on the path for national liberation. All of them were nationalists."* This statement makes a sweeping generalization that is not entirely accurate. Firstly, if such statements are to be made then the author should include a definition of their term (in this case, "nationalism") in order to define the parameters within which the term is being used. It will also help to clarify for the reader the context and/or sense in which the author wishes use the term. "Nationalism" is a highly loaded term that can be (and has been) defined by many different people in many different ways, and as a result, one that means different things for different people. For example, did the author intend to use the term in a more strict, academic sense of the term (as defined by one of many



political scientists), or in a more 'casual' sense of the term, that is, meaning something along the lines of 'lover/defender of one's nation' and/or 'patriot' (I am assuming the author had in mind the latter).

So why raise this point? Because the definition of the term is the difference between the above-mentioned quotation being right and wrong. If one was to interpret the term "nationalism" along the lines of an 'academic' meaning then it would not be accurate to include figures such as Hrushevsky, Petlura, or Khmelnytsky in that list. Technically speaking, Hrushevsky was not a nationalist but a socialist, and Petlura was a social democrat. As for Khmelnytsky, the term "nationalism" did not exist (and was not even a concept) during his time. In short, the author was right in stating that Khmelnytsky, Shevchenko, Hrushevsky, Petlura, Bandera, and Shukhevych were figures who led Ukraine on a path towards national liberation, but claiming that such figures can all be grouped together under the heading of "nationalists" is somewhat of a misnomer, one which treads dangerously on the border of historical myth. The reality is that these figures often had competing visions of Ukraine

and pursued different strategies to try and achieve those goals.

A second article that raised the issue of the perpetuation of Ukrainian/Ukrainian-Canadian historical myths was "Challenges in a New Land." In this article the author discusses the plight of Ukrainian peasants and the initial wave of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. While the general picture given by the article is sound, as the saying goes, "the devil is in the details." At the beginning of the article the author states that there was a "mass exodus of peasants from Galicia, Bukovyna, and Russian Ukraine," but this is not true – the "mass exodus" was only from Galicia and Bukovyna, lands under the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The article's discussion of initial Ukrainian immigration to Canada reflects the widely held belief that Ukrainian (also referred to as "Ruthenian") immigration was encouraged by the Canadian government. Here, however, lies an example of historical myth oversimplifying and distorting a more precise picture of the past. While Clifford Sifton, on behalf of the Canadian government, did indeed



encourage European immigration to Canada's western frontier, this policy was not intended for "Slavic" immigrants. Even a brief examination of the documents and parliamentary debates from the era reveals a desire to attract immigrants from more "preferred" countries such as Britain, the Netherlands, France, and other western European nations. Slavs were considered undesirable and only to be admitted in limited numbers (as the author alludes to at the end of the article).

It is important that we as young Ukrainian Canadians continue to write about issues that affect us and our community in one way or another, and *Student* is a great tool for facilitating this discussion. Given this opportunity, however, contributors must be vigilant of what it is that they are writing. From general editing to meticulous fact checking, authors need to ensure to the best of their abilities that what they are submitting is accurate and void of pitfalls such as historical myths. Of course, it is impossible to know everything about any given topic, and knowledge and opinions change over time, however the point I am trying to make here is that it is important to check your facts and strive to give as accurate

and well-rounded a picture as you can. After all, you never know who might end up reading your article!

To conclude, I would like to cite a favourite quotation of mine from George Orwell: "The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history." While it might seem a bit dramatic here, this quote makes a point that I think resonates strongly among Canadians of Ukrainian descent. Perhaps more importantly, it also highlights the role and significance of history, and speaks to the importance of not allowing historical myths to get away from us.

Kalyna Kardash, University of Toronto