



NEWSLETTER

December 2023

UKRAINIAN WINTER CELEBRATIONS - STEEPED IN CULTURE AND TRADITION

Ukrainian Nativity Puppet Theatre • Вертеп • Vertep



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Upcoming Events

Friday Night Suppers—Dine

In and Take Out!

- February 16th
- March 15th

All suppers take place from
4:00-6:30pm.

Saturday Sales

We continue to have Saturday sales from 10:00 – 2:00 pm. You can get perogies, cabbage rolls, borscht, and Ukrainian sausage. We will also have beets and horseradish relish available in December. Stock up for the holiday season and for your Christmas Eve dinner.

Saturday, December 23rd is the last day of sales before we close for the holidays. We will reopen in the New Year on Saturday, January 6th.

Malanka 2024

Join us for a very special evening of celebration. We are pleased to host Malanka 2024 on Saturday, January 13th. For ticket information, call 604-274-4119.

Ukraine is a country rich in cultural heritage which boasts a unique form of artistic expression known as a Bepren ("Vertep"), more commonly known as Nativity Puppet Theatre. This traditional art form is deeply rooted in Ukrainian folklore and custom and has been passed down from generation to generation while captivating audiences for centuries, especially during the festive Christmas season.

The origins of the Ukrainian Nativity Puppet Theatre can be traced back to the 17th century when it emerged as a vibrant component of the country's Christmas traditions. The puppetry tradition itself has ancient roots in Ukraine, but it became particularly associated with the Nativity scene during this period as theatrical performances during the Christmas season were a way to convey religious narratives, entertain communities, and celebrate the spirit of the holidays.

The Vertep is a very distinct form of theatre through its use of handcrafted, intricately designed puppets. These puppets were often made from wood and adorned with vibrant, traditional costumes, bringing to life the characters central to the Nativity story. The meticulous craftsmanship that goes into creating these puppets is a testament to the artisanal skills passed down through generations. And it is still practiced today.

The performances themselves are characterized by lively storytelling, accompanied by traditional Ukrainian

music, Christmas and New Year Carols and traditional songs. Puppeteers skilfully manipulate the intricately carved figures, bringing a magical quality to the tales of the Nativity. The fusion of puppetry, music, and narrative creates a mesmerizing experience that transports audiences young and young at heart to a bygone era.

In addition to the Nativity story, Ukrainian Nativity Puppet Theatre often incorporates elements of local folklore and regional traditions. This blending of narratives adds a unique flavour to each performance, making it a rich tapestry of cultural influences. Through this art form, communities not only celebrate religious events but also showcase their diverse regional identity and heritage.

The settings for these puppet theatre performances are just as important as the puppets themselves. Elaborate stages are constructed to resemble traditional Ukrainian villages, complete with miniature houses, landscapes, and symbolic elements. These meticulously crafted stages serve as a visual feast, immersing the audience in the festive ambiance of a Ukrainian Christmas.

While the themes revolve around the Nativity, the performances are not limited to religious contexts. Ukrainian Nativity Puppet Theatre has evolved to include social commentary and satire, providing a platform for artistic expression and reflection on contemporary issues. This dynamic adaptation ensures the continued relevance and appeal of this traditional art

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Ukrainian Nativity Puppet Theatre • Вертеп • Vertep ...continued from page 1

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form in the modern era and allows it to become a year-round artistic event.

Ukrainian Nativity Puppet Theatre stands as a testament to Ukraine’s cultural resilience and creativity. Rooted in tradition yet adaptable to change, this art form continues to enchant audiences with its vibrant puppetry, captivating narratives, and celebration of Ukrainian identity. As we marvel at the intricacies of the handcrafted puppets and immerse ourselves in the festive tales, we gain a deeper understanding of the profound cultural significance embedded in this unique form of theatrical expression.

Come see Vertep at these local events!

Dec 17 and 28 at 3:00 pm
at the Vancouver Art
Gallery at 750 Hornby
Street, Vancouver (no
tickets required)

Dec 23 at 1:00 pm at the
Ukrainian Community
Society of Ivan Franko at
5311 Francis Road,
Richmond (Children’s
holiday of St. Nicholas –
tickets required)

Dec 24 at 1:00 pm at the
Holy Trinity Ukrainian
Church at 154 East 10th
Ave, Vancouver (no tickets
required)

Dec 30 at 1:00 pm at the
Holy Eucharist Cathedral at
501 4th Ave, New
Westminster (no tickets
required)

Malanka Traditions • Маланка • Щедрий Вечір

A week after Christmas Eve, Ukrainians celebrate “Malanka” or New Year’s Eve, a cheerful festival that includes delicious food, entertainment, merrymaking, carolling and fortune telling.

Malanka is the name of a Ukrainian mythological figure dating back to Ukraine’s pre-Christian pagan days. Pagan carols and incantations still exist today when Malanka is celebrated during the winter solstice cycle on a night called Щедрий Вечір (“Shchedry Vechir”), meaning “Generous Eve”. Traditionally, Malanka was represented as a maiden wreathed in blossoms and fruit and accompanied by her consort, Vasily.

The pagan ancestors of Ukraine were nature-worshippers with the sun god, Дажбог (“Dazhboh”), at the head of the pantheon. It was on the day of the winter solstice that the sun, having reached its lowest point south of the equator, turned back to begin its northward ascent. It may be surmised then that the Generous Eve (Malanka) was the eve before the day of the winter solstice and the rites of Vasily’s Day, the day of the winter solstice.

Eventually, Malanka became St. Melania, and her festivities were moved to New Year’s Eve or the Eve of Epiphany in some regions. Vasily’s Day was integrated with New Year’s Day (January 14th by the Julian Calendar of 46 B.C., or January 1st by the Gregorian Calendar of 1582 A.D.)

A prominent rite of Malanka festivities was called Щедрування “Shchedruvannia” (house-to-house carolling) performed separately by troupes of maidens or young men masquerading as maidens, with the chief characters in either troupe being Malanka and Vasily. In the female troupe, Malanka and Vasily performed the ritual gestures (in pantomime), supported by the maiden chorus in recitation and song. The male troupe, which generally included such stock characters as a gypsy, a fortune-teller, musicians and animals, introduced both humour and spontaneity into its performance.

After carolling, male and female groups gathered for a festive supper, fortune-telling, dancing and merriment. Young men viewed this as a favourable night for courting;

and the maidens, for enchantment and casting of spells.

Today, Malanka is celebrated as an ethnic holiday, which has adopted much of the traditions of the Canadian New Year’s Eve celebrations. Ukrainian organizations have created events at banquet halls to celebrate Malanka. This event typically occurs a week after Christmas Eve according to the Julian calendar on a Friday or Saturday closest to January 13 or 14. People come to these events ready to celebrate with family and friends. The event begins with a delicious dinner featuring many Ukrainian dishes and entertainment by singers and dancers, and ends with a zabava (dance) often showcasing a коломийка “kolomyika”. At midnight, everyone partakes in bringing in the New Year, singing, toasting with champagne and wishing each other good health and prosperity.

JOIN US FOR

MALANKA ... МАЛАНКА

2024

UKRAINIAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2024

Ukrainian Community Centre of Ivan Franko

5311 Francis Road, Richmond

Doors Open At ... 6:00 pm

Deluxe Buffet Dinner ... 7:00 pm

Dancing To “Silver Stars Band”

Champagne and Party Favours

Entertainment ... Door Prizes

Semi-formal Attire

Free Parking

Tickets must be purchased in advance for this popular event

For Tickets Call: 604.274.4119

Cost: \$75.00 per person (non refundable)

** Tickets only refundable due to BC Public Health Orders **





Vechornysti On St. Andrew's Day Fundraiser

On Sunday, December 3rd our Society was pleased to partner with Ukrainian Blue Yellow Art and hosted Vechornytsi on St. Andrew's Day fundraiser event. Vechornytsi are Ukrainian traditional gatherings with music, songs, jokes, crafts and other rituals that traditionally began in the fall after the seasonal agriculture work was complete.

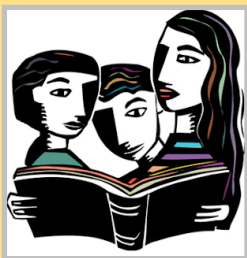
It was a wonderful afternoon and evening for families that included workshops, entertainment and delicious Ukrainian cuisine. The workshops offered were: motanka magnets, straw spider Christmas decorations, and didukh. Demonstrations of khustka or namitka wrapping were offered and a photo zone for pictures. In addition, Salmandra was performed - an exciting live theatre performance of drama and puppets.

\$1500 was collected from the workshops and all proceeds were donated to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The Ukrainian Scouts sold candles and sweets and raised

\$400 for Plast Canada – the Ukrainian Scout organisation that helps children who lost their fathers in the war. The event was a tremendous success with over 150 guests in attendance and numerous volunteers attending. Congratulations to the Ukrainian Blue Yellow Art group under the leadership of Yaryna Shulyak, for their hard work and dedication to Ukraine.



Ivan Franko



Library

For information about our Library and Book Club contact Theresa at books@ivanfranko.ca or call our Society at 604-274-4119 to leave a message.

Our library is a warm and inviting place to spend some time perusing excellent historical, cultural and literary books and archival material. Members are invited to sign out books for a one-month period. Please phone ahead if you have a particular interest or request. New Library hours are Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm.

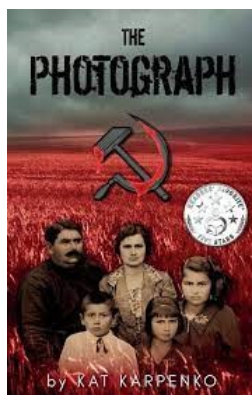
Наша бібліотека – це тепле та затишне місце, де можна провести час переглядаючи чудові історичні, культурологічні та літературні книги та архівні матеріали. Члени нашого товариства пропонується виписати книги на один місяць. Бібліотека працює в суботу з 10:00 до 14:00.

Book Club

The Ivan Franko Book Club meets four times a year to discuss excellent books and view films on Ukrainian themes and topics. New members are welcome.

Our next meeting will be on April 16, 2024 when we will discuss *The Photograph* by Kat Karpenko.

The Photograph — Kat Karpenko



In this historically accurate novel, the reader will see a family facing events on the ground level. When Stalin rose to power in 1928 some of these family members saw impending doom for Ukraine and left while others stayed. Inspired by a family photograph taken in 1928, this novel is about what happened to those who stayed and those who left.

English Language Classes for New Immigrants

English Language classes are offered to the new immigrants on Saturdays from 10 am to 12 pm. This is an opportunity to learn basic English and socialize with new friends.

Заняття з англійської мови тривають по суботах з 10 до 12. Це можливість вивчити базову англійську мову, а також поспілкуватися з новими друзями.



Staying Connected



A reminder to our members to check our website www.ivanfranko.ca for upcoming events at our Society and in the Ukrainian Community. We update our website on a regular basis and information on our homepage is current.



Golf Tournament 2023

It was another successful golf tournament at Country Meadows Golf Course on Sunday, September 10th where 12 teams participated in our 28th annual Ukrainian Community Society of Ivan Franko Golf Tournament.

Congratulations to the following three teams who tied for first place with a scoring of 6 under:

Team Brian Giroday, Grace Giroday, Stan Archer and Ruth Archer | Team George Daschko, Sean Daschko, Devon Daschko and Jon Gilmore | Team Jennifer Wickson, John Ellis, Karen Holden and Bill Holden

Also congratulations to the following golfers:

Iza Matsumoto for the Ladies Longest Drive | Charles Ukrainetz for the Men's Longest Drive | Moreen Takada for the Ladies Closest to the Pin | Bill Holden for the Men's Closest to the Pin.



We are very grateful to George Daschko for donating two BC Lions box seat tickets worth \$500. Roman Herchak was the very appreciative recipient of this generous prize. Money raised went towards our donation fund that is used to assist Displaced Ukrainians and the war efforts in Ukraine.

In addition, we were very fortunate to receive many wonderful door prizes from various local businesses, members and tournament participants. We are so appreciative to all of our donors for their generous contributions.

We would like to recognize and thank: Vera Adams and Tasha Zukewich for organizing the golf tournament; Frances Zukewich for helping to collect door prizes and for organising the delicious dinner and crew of hardworking volunteers. Our volunteers are the heart of the kitchen! Inna Smashna, our fabulous cook for her hard work cooking all day to prepare a delicious Ukrainian meal.

We also think of George Brandak who was not able to organize and be part of the tournament this year. He has been the driving force behind this annual event for over 25

Thank You to Our Volunteers

Our Volunteers are much appreciated for all they do. We couldn't do it without all their help in our kitchen, hall, library and outdoors.

A **big thank you** to all our volunteers!



Scholarship Winners 2023

We are pleased to announce that Daniil Zelenko and Frida Monlui are the Ukrainian Community Society of Ivan Franko Scholarship winners for 2023. Both recipients are very worthy recipients and we wish them all the very best as they begin their post-secondary education.



We offer Post-Secondary and Cultural scholarships yearly. Applicants are required to complete the scholarship application, attach a transcript of grades, two letters of reference (one from the school, the other from a person within the Ukrainian community) and an essay to describe why they are deserving of the scholarship.

Scholarship applications are available in March of each year on our website at www.ivanfranko.ca.

2024 Membership Payments

Current, previous, and new members are reminded that their membership dues for 2024 should be paid by **January 31, 2024, or one year since the member's last payment.**

We inform our members through email of upcoming events at Ivan Franko and in the Ukrainian community. Our members also receive Newsletters three times per year. Most importantly, we really appreciate the support of our members and staying active in our Society.

Please complete and return a membership form that is attached to your email with your payment (cheque or e-transfer). Our Office Manager will process and renew your membership for our files. Thank you for your continued support.



**WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A SAFE
AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON!
MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!
З Новим роком
та Різдвом Христови!**

years. We are forever grateful for his dedication and hard work.

We look forward to seeing everyone in 2024.

NEXT FRIDAY NIGHT SUPPER IS FEBRUARY 16, 2024 — NO FNS THIS DECEMBER.

This newsletter is produced by the Ukrainian Community Centre of Ivan Franko, 5311 Francis Road Richmond, B.C. V7C 1K2
Office: 604-274-4119 || Website: www.ivanfranko.ca || General info: info@ivanfranko.ca || Rental Inquiries: rental@ivanfranko.ca
Book Club and Lending Library: books@ivanfranko.ca