



June 2022 Newsletter

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Want to donate to Ploughshares Calgary? If you haven't yet made your 2022 donation, please consider doing so soon! Email office@ploughshares.ca for more information on how to donate.



Upcoming Library Installation

Starting in July, Calgary Floating Lanterns will be holding a new month-long installation at Calgary Central Library in the Shaikh Family Welcome Gallery. More information to come.

New Staff Member

We are pleased to introduce our new office assistant Haylie Smith. Haylie uses an office on the second floor of Parkdale United Church and will be there primarily on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and by appointment. Haylie is a long-time resident of Briar Hill, a recent BA graduate in Sociology from Mount Royal University and is pleased to be working in the non-profit sphere for a cause she strongly believes in.

CONTACT US NOW:





CHAIR'S MESSAGE



As I write, the war in Ukraine continues and we continue to hear about thousands of injuries and deaths, smashed and devastated buildings, and millions of displaced people. The situation is extremely disturbing to say the least, even more so for the millions of Canadians who have relatives and friends based in Ukraine. The surprise of the Ukrainian resistance and defense against invasion have led some to want to push the war further, with goals of permanently putting an end to Russia's superpower status, or even bringing about regime change in Russia.

With western countries and NATO supplying equipment, there is a sense in some circles (both west and Russia) that this is a war of Russia against NATO and not an invasion to enable Russia to take over Ukraine. But broadened ambitions in this war exceed what would be necessary to restore Ukraine's sovereignty, and are extremely dangerous due to the ways they could expand what is already a terrible war into World War III.

As was stated at our May 11 educational meeting about nonviolence in the context of terrible violence, these are key discussion points about the war:

- To what extent was NATO' expansion into east-central Europe a background cause of Russia's insecurity and invasion of Ukraine?
- What is the state of health of Russian leader Vladimir Putin? His behavior appears rash, ill-informed, unthinking and, to say the least, unwise. There are rumours, some from insiders in Russia, that Putin is suffering from Parkinson's disease, and/or blood cancer, has undergone surgery, has to use steroids for medical reasons, and is cognitively impaired.
- Evidence of war crimes in Ukraine is being investigated with a view to possible charges at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. One Russian soldier has been charged and convicted in Ukraine of killing a civilian.



- Do this invasion and its highly destructive events, together with Russian statements to the effect that Ukraine is not a separate nation from Russia, amount to genocide?
- What damage are extensive sanctions doing to the Russian economy? Considerable, apparently, but accounts vary.
- Is it wise for the United States and other nations to continue to supply large numbers of weapons to Ukraine?
- What are the risk that Russia will resort to the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine?
- How can this war end?

The situation is very worrisome indeed. We can urge changes in NATO policy (see the summary of an article by Ernie Regehr, to follow), and work for peace in other contexts. We can do our best to care for our planet and be kind to each other. I wish I could say more.

Trudy Govier.



Calgary's Peace Bridge

 **EVENTS**

- The Mennonite Central Committee announced the Michael J. Sharp Peacemaker Award, to recognize and encourage courageous peace builders around the world. This award was established on May 4, 2022 and will be awarded for the first time in October, 2022.
- The Calgary Peace Prize 2022 was awarded to Fatima Hassan of South Africa, in a Zoom ceremony on May 12. Fatima Hassan is a lawyer who works tirelessly to promote global access to medical technologies, including COVID-19 vaccines. She works with the Health Justice Institute in Cape Town, South Africa, of which she was a founder.
- A new group, Dignity Forum, was launched in Calgary at a Zoom meeting on May 25, noon to 12:30pm. Its goals are to encourage respect and civility and discourage hate and discrimination. Founding individuals include Ron Ghitter, Cori Ghitter, Karen Roth, and Alice Lam.
- Parkdale United Church held a workshop on 'Bridging Poverty and Privilege' May 28 – 29. This workshop will serve as an introduction to a framework for understanding poverty so that people can communicate effectively regarding issues of social class and change. Start 8:45am on Saturday and closes 3:30pm on Sunday
- Empathy Week, June 1 – 8, 2022. Check it out. Officially proclaimed by the City of Calgary. Sponsored by Humainologie.
- **June 8, Ploughshares AGM, 7pm on Zoom. Contact the office for Zoom info. office@ploughsharescalgary.ca**





FUNDRAISER FOR UKRAINE



One of our board members and her artist friend have created a small fundraiser for Ukraine. On offer are hand-printed, limited edition lino-cuts depicting the nightingale, which is the National animal of Ukraine. Legend has it that the nightingale heard sad songs from the people in Ukraine and sang its own sweet song to cheer them up. When the people responded with happy songs, the nightingale continued to visit Ukraine every spring to hear their singing. Ukraine National poet Taras Shevchencko has observed that, “Even the memory of the nightingale’s song makes man happy.” This image seems to convey the defiant hope that joy and peace will return to Ukraine. The prints are 7.5 by 10 inches. They are being offered in exchange for a donation of your choosing. All materials were donated, and all proceeds are being given to UNICEF’s Ukraine Emergency Fund.

If you are interested in having one, please contact Marya at majarvey@gmail.com



GOOD NEWS

- In the second world war, the village of Niewlande, in the Netherlands, protected hundreds of Jews and other persons who had been marked for forced labour in Germany or death in concentration camps. It is estimated that between 250 and 600 people were saved, and a small museum in the town commemorates the brave effort. Now many of the same homes are being used to shelter Ukrainian families, as people recall the previous struggle and welcome fleeing Ukrainians who are in need. (Globe and Mail, May 24, 2022.)
- The relief organization World Central Kitchen has been serving meals to people affected by the war in Ukraine. The war started in February 24 and on the 25th, the organization was serving meals, offering between three hundred fifty thousand and four hundred thousand meals a day, and benefiting from the cooperation of local volunteers. (The New Yorker, May 23, 2022)
- Russian diplomat Boris Bondarev, posted to Geneva, has resigned. Bondarev strongly condemned the invasion of Ukraine as an “aggressive war” and said that he was ashamed of his country to engaging in it. He declared that the military effort was a crime against the people of Ukraine and also those of Russia and in fact the entire western world. He said that the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not about diplomacy but rather warmongering, lies, and hatred. (CNN, May 24, 2022)
- May 23, 2022. This article written by The Calgary Herald, highlights a local man who immigrated to Calgary when he was 13 years old from Ukraine. Maxim Olshevsky is a great representative of a hard working immigrant who is using his newfound success for good. Olshevsky moved to Calgary not knowing any English; he started working at the age of 16 as a construction labourer. He now runs two successful companies and employs over 100 individuals. He proudly kept his businesses running throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and is using his skills to create affordable housing in abandoned office buildings in Downtown Calgary. (Calgary Herald, May 23, 2022)

- A Vancouver father receives an outpouring of support after tweeting about his autistic sons birthday party. In this article from the Calgary Herald, David Chen created a tweet that hit a soft spot for many parents after saying his “autism spectrum disorder kid is the different kid in the class” and followed up with a story of his child’s birthday party. Chen described how he sent an invitation to all 19 of his sons classmates; one attended, two responded saying they couldn’t make it, and 16 of his responses went without reply. Chen received hundreds of thousands of responses on twitter regarding his sons birthday. Many of whom were from parents who also have children on the autism spectrum relaying their support and sharing their stories. (Calgary Herald, May 16, 2022)
- A Canadian-born woman with Ukrainian roots is painting flowers over bullet holes in Ukraine. Covered by the Washington Post, Ivanka Siolkowsky initially went to Poland when the war broke out to help fleeing refugees. She then left Poland to volunteer in Bucha, a suburb of Ukraine’s capital. While in Bucha, she met a man, Sasha, who told her he’d lost everything in the invasion, including his son. He spoke about how the streets of his hometown no longer feel the same, and that the bullet holes in his fence were a constant reminder of everything he’d lost. This is when Siolkowsky decided to cover the bullet holes on Sasha’s fence with his favourite flower, daffodils. Siolkowsky worried that her work may be interpreted as offensive but was delightfully surprised when other members in the community started asking her to paint their bullet holes as well. She painted 5 homes in total. Siolkowsky stated that she hopes that people in all formerly Russian occupied towns will start painting flowers on their fences, and has already seen painted flowers in other locations. (Washington Post, May 18, 2022)





MUSEUM INITIATIVE

It's moving along and most responses are **highly enthusiastic!** We have a detailed proposal and rationale and will work June to September approaching various individuals and groups for support. The plan is to get our proposal into an attractive pamphlet (by early June) and then make appointments to be attended by several members of our support committee. We will approach not only persons likely to be sympathetic but also some who are more 'establishment' (eg. Rotary, YMCA, Chamber of Commerce, Naheed Nenshi, universities) whose views we would not know in advance. That's because we have been advised that we need broad support for this substantial initiative. The support group for these interviews includes member Tamara Seiler, former staff person Karen Huggins, board member Marya Jarvey, former board member David Boutland, present staff person Haylie Smith, president Trudy Govier, and prospective board member Deb Kocay. If you would like to see the latest version of the proposal you can email the office to have an electronic copy sent along. Alternately, try trudy.govier@uleth.ca





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES RE: CHAIR'S MESSAGE

- Ernie Regehr (Waterloo, former director of Project Ploughshares) has a timely and thoughtful column in the Globe and Mail (May 24, 2022). It's called "NATO has a chance to step back from the edge of a nuclear abyss". Regehr states that nuclear weapons impose on humanity the relentless task of keeping them from being launched. He notes that western countries have no power to prevent a Russian nuclear attack. Contrary to office NATO policy statements, nuclear weapons are not supreme guarantors of security, due to deterrence.* There are risks they could be used, as illustrated by current threats. Regehr recommends that NATO make a no first use pledge and also that it remove tactical nuclear weapons from the five European countries in which they are currently located. A member of NATO, Canada should challenge current NATO policy.
- *Deterrence, in the nuclear context, is the view that the use of nuclear weapons would be so devastating that their possession and the explicit or implicit threat of their use are sufficient to cause potential enemies not to wage war against the nuclear power. In other words, threatening to use nuclear weapons will ensure that one's enemies do not use them. On this view, nuclear weapons prevent war (they deter a military incursion that would otherwise occur) and 'guarantee security'. (Note: on the 'deterrence' view, accidents, misinterpretations, rash leaders, and cognitively impaired leaders and personnel are not considered to pose significant risks. Ploughshares deems this supposed security and 'safety' to be illusory./tg)

