

Sylvia Krogh—the *best* UCE activist!



Sylvia Krogh

This 22-member company [from Russia] was brought to Edmonton's *Fringe Festival* by Sylvia Krogh, a Social Studies teacher at Queen Elizabeth High School who worked for two years to obtain funding for the group after seeing their performance [George Orwell's *Animal Farm*] in London, England.

The Edmonton Downtowner, September 1991

Of 810 students surveyed, 17% had experienced sexual intercourse by age 13, 24% by 14, 40% by 17, and 67% by 18. . . For Social Studies teacher and course co-ordinator Sylvia Krogh, offering [a sex education program] was a question of necessity. "Every year I've taught, at the grade 8 and 9 levels in different schools, there have always been one or more pregnancies."

The Edmonton Sun, February 10, 1987

Throughout her teaching career in five junior and senior high schools, Sylvia demonstrated a commitment to peace and social justice. She organized United Nations model assemblies so the students could become aware of international issues. She had her classes twinned with classes in Africa through the Canadian Teachers' Federation School Twinning Program. In most schools Sylvia established student social justice clubs [that] wrote letters for Amnesty International, brought in guest speakers, sponsored and attended student conferences, raised money for World Vision and Change for Children, etc. At every election, Sylvia organized political forums for the candidates so that the students could become familiar with the political parties' policies. This was always followed by classroom debates and a model election.

Helen Ready's writeup of *Sylvia Krogh's Biography* for the 2013 Sage Award Nomination

Why am I starting Sylvia's profile with quotations? Because it's an obvious way to introduce readers to her lifelong energy, creativity, benevolent social justice character, and love of people around the world. How grateful I am that she has been in our church for so long, giving, giving, and giving.

But, let's now restart with her childhood, her early "religious" experiences, and years at university.

Sylvia was born in 1947 to Victor and Gerda Krogh and baptized in the Scandinavian Lutheran Church in Forestburg—about 120 kilometers southeast of Edmonton, and still fewer than 1000 people in 2017. When she was about 5, the church "went defunct" and her family joined the United Church. She attended mostly with her Mom, as her Dad was an atheist. She reported, however, that he did attend for Easter and Christmas as, being the owner of the Ford dealership in a small community, he knew that to be successful, he had to belong to the church!

When Sylvia was 13 and in her confirmation class, she asked the United Church minister, "Who is this Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?" (She was obviously a spirited Unitarian—even at that early age!) She did, however, complete her confirmation, as, she said, there was no choice then and her mom thought it was a good idea.

Sylvia moved to Edmonton to study Education at the University of Alberta as did her two younger sisters. She specialized in Social Studies. In the last two years of her studies, Sylvia and her sister, Marlene rented the old Emily Murphy house at 11011 88th Avenue, now on university grounds. On November 1, 2017, two days after I

had heard from Sylvia about this, I walked over to find the heritage house and— just in time, I thought, wire fenced in with “No trespassing” signs around the property and moving trucks. But the Emily Murphy ensign was still on the door, as were the house numbers. And I checked on line and found a 2017 notice stating that the Emily Murphy House would be lifted and moved directly north of its current location to allow for the foundation to be replaced, as part of a historic renewal project for the house. Relief! This historic house was not being taken down.

Sylvia and Marlene rented out rooms in Emily Murphy’s house to 8 girls in the first year and to 11 in the second. They all cooked and cleaned together in the house. And all three Krogh sisters graduated in Education to become teachers.

After graduation, Sylvia set off for Europe and worked there for 4.5 years. These years illustrate her strong sense of adventure and independence. First came a month in Denmark where she and Marlene met many of their relatives for the first time, including 17 first cousins! Her jobs were varied and in many countries—as a secretary in London, England; in Switzerland as a waitress until she broke her leg skiing and then got a sit-down job; in Germany for a year after applying to American bases for a job as a teacher or secretary; in Athens, Greece for a year teaching English as a second language.

After Greece, Sylvia went on a couple of months’ trip with a Canadian woman she had met and lived with in Athens. They “hopped on a bus” through the Middle East to India and Nepal. The bus broke down in both Iran and Turkey, and she ran out of money in India and was unable to get the money she had left in Greece. Her roommate left her to return to her boyfriend, so Sylvia returned to Tehran, Iran, and got another English teaching job for a year with the Imperial Iranian Navy. Wow!

Perhaps the most interesting group of people that Sylvia got to know over those fascinating years were Unitarians in Germany. Here’s how that miracle happened. She met an interesting young man (she was 27!) in a liquor lounge at the time she was working in Germany as a secretary for the U.S. Air Force. He took her to the American School Library and she met people from the Unitarian Church Fellowship. “All of the Unitarians were wonderful and interesting,” she reported. “I loved the fellowship.” (Sylvia had heard about the Unitarian Universalist Church but had never followed up on it.)

Sylvia then became part of a group of Unitarians who began the American Psychology Association who brought over Carl Rogers. There followed sessions based on Rogerian theory, all sitting in groups finding triggers to self-discovery and self-awareness. There was a Hindu Yoga leader as part of the group. Groups went on retreats to the Black Forest and to music festivals together. Obviously it was a group who became her family during her time away from Canada.

But after 4.5 years, it was time to return home to Forestburg, Alberta. Tragically, two weeks after she returned, Sylvia’s mother died in a car accident. To support her father, she spent the next year in Forestburg helping him as he sold his business and moved on with his life.

Sylvia then came to Edmonton looking for a teaching job. It was 1975, and she went to the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, at the time when Rob Brownlee was minister. “Oh,” he said, “Bill Brown is part of this church: I’ll introduce you.” (Bill Brown was President of the Alberta Teachers Association Edmonton Public School Local). He hired her. She went on to teach in five junior and senior high schools over decades.

And so her career as a Social Studies teacher began and immediately reflected her commitment to peace and social justice. This was reflected in the many creative learning activities she initiated through the years for students, colleagues, and UCE members. These included:

- organizing United Nations model assemblies to help students learn about international issues
- for many years, twinning her classes with classes in Africa through the Canadian Teachers Federation School Twinning Program, with students finding pen pals with the aim of making lifelong friends
- establishing social justice clubs in her classes
- getting students to write letters through Amnesty International to help prisoners unjustly confined
- raising funds for Change for Children
- being a leader and exemplar among fellow teachers
- during the 1980s, co-founding the Edmonton branches of both Educators for Peace and Educators for Social Responsibility
- being on the organizing committee of the International Peace Institute
- getting involved in social and political issues in local, provincial, federal, and international venues
- carrying her caring to a personal level when she met an African father with a teenage son and daughter, all immigrants to Edmonton. When the father became ill and died, Sylvia took the children under her wing and mentored them over years through the process of completing their education and becoming successful citizens. They were 17 and 21 when she met them and they are now 26 and 30.

And, Sylvia became involved in the Unitarian Church of Edmonton shortly after she “found” the church in 1975. She hadn’t wanted to return to a traditional church after the joy of spending time with her wonderful Unitarian group in Germany. She did find UCE more organized than her first Unitarians, but, “At least there were no pews!” She grinned while telling me that she was attracted to the UCE community because she didn’t have to believe in God. She describes herself as a secular humanist.

Very soon Sylvia started working with Bill Brown as the Canvas Chair, soliciting money from members and later was on the Board for the maximum 6 years, ending in the presidency from 2006 to 2008. She was also the Chair of the Social Justice Committee for 10 years (from 2005 to 2015) and is still on the committee, but goes to Victoria over the winter months now.

And who does she go with?

Well, here comes her second significant gift from the church (the first was help getting her first teaching job). The gift was that she met her husband, Alan Boyle, at UCE. Here’s how it happened.

In 1993, Alan Boyle, born in Scotland, was separated from his wife and was exploring different churches. At that time, John Marsh was the minister and he asked Alan if he was a humanist. The first time he came to the church, Sylvia was at the door to welcome members and greeted Alan. She had broken her arm skiing and trying to keep up with her 5-year old nephew. Alan’s first visit had wetted his appetite for the church and he re-appeared the next Sunday.

After the service, he stayed for a meeting and sat beside Sylvia. The Social Justice Committee had wanted to speak out publically on certain issues in the name of the church and there ensued a vigorous debate—in fact, as Sylvia remembered, it became quite acrimonious. This was followed by a vote that agreed to allow the committee to speak for the church, and then, as a result, the President resigned. Sylvia thought that it had been such an emotional meeting that Alan would probably never come back to UCE.

But he did! He returned the next week. And he asked Sylvia out for a date. When Sylvia told him she thought he might never come back to UCE, he exclaimed in his Scottish accent, “But I love it! It’s such a democratic church where everyone can have their say.” Sylvia and Alan have been together since 1993 and were married in 2003 in the Faculty Club at University of Alberta— because UCE was under renovations at the time.

With this joyful relationship, Sylvia inherited a step-son, Craig; his partner, Christine; and a granddaughter, Sarah.

When I asked Sylvia why she liked UCE so much, she focussed on the fact that so many members have become her friends and that there are so many open opinions in the services. Sylvia often does the Food Bank when needed, and she said that Helen Ready was the best person to work with on the Social Action Committee. After Helen died, Sylvia wanted to do something to help people remember her. She raised \$3500 for a bench to be placed in her memory in Government House Park by the peace Pole. And she arranged a commemoration event to dedicate it after the City had installed it with the name plaque.

Her view on Unitarianism is persuasive. She believes that the minister is not the church and that the church is what we, the members, make of it. Sylvia has attended the International Council of Unitarian Universalists in the Philippines; Unitarian Universalist Association conferences in the USA; the Canadian Unitarian Council; and the International Association for Religious Freedom’s conferences in Germany, Korea, India, Vancouver, and California. Wow! She’s always enjoyed meeting other Unitarians and the sharing of bonds and ideas. In the latter conferences, she attended Moslem, Buddhist, and Hindu services but admits that after many of these, she found them to be so patriarchal that she lost interest in attending their services. Her other activities over the years have included:

- all-candidate forums at the church at election times
- vigils at the legislature against attempts to privatize public health care
- participating in the annual Gay Pride parades
- supporting the Stephen Lewis’s Grandmother’s for African Grandmothers through the making and selling of “angels for aid”
- being a member of the Raging Grannies and Amnesty International
- being the Northern Alberta interviewer and host coordinator of Servas International Travel Peace Organization
- in the 1980s, co-founding the Educators for Peace and the Educators for Social Responsibility, Edmonton branches

Perhaps Sylvia’s longest and most dedicated volunteer commitment has been to Child Haven International (www.childhaven.ca), a charity founded by Unitarians Rev. Fred and Bonnie Cappucino of Maxville, Ontario. Child Haven has homes in India, Tibet, Bangladesh and Nepal. The homes accept children who are disabled, parentless, or from socially disadvantaged situations—and who are destitute.

Sylvia has been on the organizing committee of the annual Edmonton fund raising dinners since their inception in 2003 and has been chairperson since 2009 to the present. The annual dinner raises thousands of dollars for this extremely worthwhile charity.

Sylvia’s achievements and constant giving to individuals, organizations, her schools and church, and her community have resulted in many recognitions and awards.

Here are some

Year	Award	Organization
2001	Certificate of Outstanding Service (for significant contributions to the Edmonton and District Regional Council and to Social Studies Education)	Social Studies Council of the Alberta Teachers Association
0	Outstanding Gopher Award (with picture of a gopher!)	UCE gave this fun award to Sylvia after she had been the Go-for Person on organizing the renovations of the front part of our new church
2013	Lifetime Service Award	Project Ploughshares Edmonton
2014	Charles Potter Award for Community Engagement (outstanding volunteer contribution)	Unitarian Church of Edmonton

I want to end my review of this outstanding woman in two ways. I will describe what I consider to be one of her most vigorous and creative ventures that dates back to 1991, influencing probably thousands of Canadians. To end, I want to quote Helen Ready’s summing up of her profile of Sylvia Krogh, as it filled my heart with joyful agreement when I read it.

When Sylvia was in her early 40ties, she was in London, England and attended a superb play representing the classic story of “Animal Farm”. George Orwell had written the book during the war as a cautionary fable in order to expose the seriousness of the dangers posed by Stalinism and totalitarian government. And, coincidentally, she saw it just before the demise of the U.S.S.R. in 1991.



Sylvia Krogh stands in front of a colorful collection of Africa posters at Eastwood Elementary-Junior High School.

Sylvia stands in front of a collection of African posters at Eastwood Elementary-Junior-High School in her early days of teaching.

When Sylvia came home she invited and organized for the 23 actors from Russia to come and perform at the Edmonton, Saskatoon, Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria Fringe Festivals. In our city, it was called the Moscow-Edmonton Theatre Project and it was held over so Sylvia could arrange to have them come into seven Edmonton schools, too. When it was time for them to return to Russia, about half of them defected.

And, finally, here is Helen Ready's voice on Sylvia, written in 2013:

It is sometimes hard to keep up with Sylvia but the effort to do so is invariable worthwhile. Along with all her other attributes she is unfailingly caring, encouraging, high spirited, and fun to be around, making it impossible to resist getting onto her band wagon to support her many routes to peace and social justice in our world. A wonderful lifetime activist who shows no signs of slowing down — Sylvia Krogh.

The Clip-book of Sylvia in the News, In No Particular Order



Students take 'fast' way to fight world hunger

MARINA JIMENEZ
Journal Staff Writer

Edmonton

Chips. Salad. French fries and pasta. Normally Jason Cormier eats this and more in an evening.

But the 16-year-old Queen Elizabeth high school student made do with plain old fruit juice for 30 hours this weekend.

Cormier and 75 other students fasted from 5 p.m. Friday until late Saturday night to raise money and awareness for the world's hungry.

"It's hard for us, because we're really hungry now. It makes us realize what people who don't have enough food go through," Cormier said Saturday afternoon from the school gym.

The Queen Elizabeth students joined 100,000 other Canadians in "30 Hour Famine," an event organized by World Vision Canada. Money raised will go to World Vision's projects in Somalia, the National Pediatric Hospital in Cambodia, AIDS education projects in Thailand and to help street children in Toronto and Brazil.

Canada's fund-raising goal is \$2.5 million. Queen Elizabeth students hope to raise between \$2,000 and \$3,000 from individual pledg-

es. The school's charity club, Knights 4 Life, watched World Vision's video about world hunger and decided to organize the fast.

"This is something I've always wanted to do and finally got a chance. The feeling of helping others... is really fun," said Clint Domszy, 18, who runs the charity with fellow-student Stephanie Scott.

Their teacher, Sylvia Krogh, agreed the fast was a constructive way to help ease world famine.

The students spent Friday night at school, playing games and singing along to karaoke songs. Maria Domszy set up around the gym to sleep on, but many students were too hyper to rest. Cormier and his friends Valerie Lutz and Tara Pigott stayed up all night.

"We tried to go to bed, but we're over-tired and couldn't sleep," explained Pigott, a Grade 11 student.

On Saturday, some remained crashed out on giant mats, while others enjoyed games of badminton, volleyball, basketball or cards. The evening ended with a buffet of food, complimentary and a spoonful of starve-to think about the starving people in the world.

Then, a trip to paradise: a meal at Boston Pizzeria.



John Lucas/The Journal

Resting up during their 30-hour fast are Dan Stewart, curled up; Brad Smith, middle; with Kelsey Kinsey, Ken Meyer, Chad Smith and Dawn Bolduc at the far end

December 18, 1992
January 12, 1993

Neighbors

EDITOR: Bryant Avery, 428-3334

Model UN summit in local church

Q.E. High students take diplomatic stage

By ANDREA GRAHAM
Neighbors Reporter

Drawing up amendments, writing some words, writing and arguing about language and all added to the "realism" of the mock United Nations session held recently by 110 Grade 11 Queen Elizabeth High School students.

"At first it was kind of silly, but then we all began to feel like we were really representing the countries of the United Nations," says Heather Farnham, who was one of those speaking for Nicaragua at the UN Model Summit. "We read no resolutions based on how we thought our country would use. We really got involved in their issues."

Students, who donned the hats of representatives of 10 countries and one African province (Uganda), used the resolutions which proposed for-

sign up — in Italian and Filipino. Most students quickly learned the subtle nuances of the UN General Assembly. "We had to put up our country's name first if we wanted to talk," says Lorena Salinas, who represented Kenya. "We couldn't talk to the countries directly, but had to speak through the chair. Things also got messy when we started amending resolutions and then amending the amendments. Sometimes it was hard to figure out what you were writing on."

To ensure the Grade 11 Social Studies students got into the UN swing of things, teacher, Sibyl Krogh, had them learn everything about their "hated" country.

For the six weeks leading up to the mock UN, students visited Third World positions and began taking up the concerns of their

"hated" country. The UN Model Summit was held at Northgate Baptist Church.

A trip to the Edmonton Learning Centre and the International Centre at the University of Alberta helped students become more aware of Third World positions, says Krogh, who was UN secretary general for the day.

Students also held a multicultural evening at the school the night before the mock UN. Each country was highlighted by a brief presentation and display.

Students gained insight into their respective countries by listening with "helping partners."

For Douglas Hamilton, who represented the Soviet Union, that meant talking with a host of students from the Communist Party.

He noted that the Soviet Union performs best in which means no sitting are attached and the sitting country isn't dependent on us in any other way.

"One of the students was frustrated by the amount of reading done at the UN. And since the UN has 119 countries, they couldn't even represent the difficulty the UN has in promoting world peace and meeting its objectives."

During the session, he kept up the new game to personally introduce a resolution to his different resolutions.

The role-playing experience was much fun for helping students to understand the UN than a series of lectures ever could, says Krogh.

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W.P. WAGNER SCHOOL

May 2002

WARRIOR WORDS

Ms. Krogh Receives Award



Ms. Krogh with her plaque.

The staff and administration of W.P. Wagner School are proud to announce that another of our teachers is the recipient of a prestigious award. Ms. Sylvia Krogh, a 27-year veteran with Edmonton Public Schools, has recently received the Outstanding Service Award from the Provincial Social Studies Specialist Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association. Ms. Krogh's dedication to education is widely known, and it is not uncommon to find her working late into the evening many nights per week.

Ms. Krogh's career began at Highlands Junior High, and continued to Eastwood Junior High and Queen Elizabeth High School. Complementing her knowledge

of the Social Studies curriculum, Ms. Krogh has worked in six different countries and traveled widely to a total of 53 countries. During her travels, she takes slides related to the curriculum. As a result, she has a great interest in world affairs, which transfers to the students. This kind of varied experience with other nations is a great asset to the Social Studies Department.

Ms. Krogh teaches both Social Studies and Legal Studies. She frequently enriches her classes with guest speakers such as representatives from the John Howard Society, Sombeilla Guatemalan Refugee Association, and Change for Children. W.P. Wagner students also benefit from the annual field trip to the Provincial Courthouse that Ms. Krogh organizes. Every election, Ms. Krogh arranges a forum for the local candidates can present their views to the students. In terms of extra-curricular activities, Ms. Krogh organizes the 24 Hour Fast, a student favorite that raises money for Change for Children development projects in third world countries.

Recently, Ms. Krogh founded the W.P. Wagner Social Justice Club. She is usually involved in organizing the annual Social Studies Conference when it is in Edmonton. In sum, we at W.P. Wagner would like to congratulate Ms. Krogh for her outstanding work. She is a great model for new teachers, and a constant source of support for students. Thanks!

THIS DOCUMENT COMMENT

XEROX

We are able to produce such a high quality newsletter with the help of the staff at XEROX. We thank them for their continued support of the school, and for their assistance with the production of Warrior Words.



Students go around the world right here at home

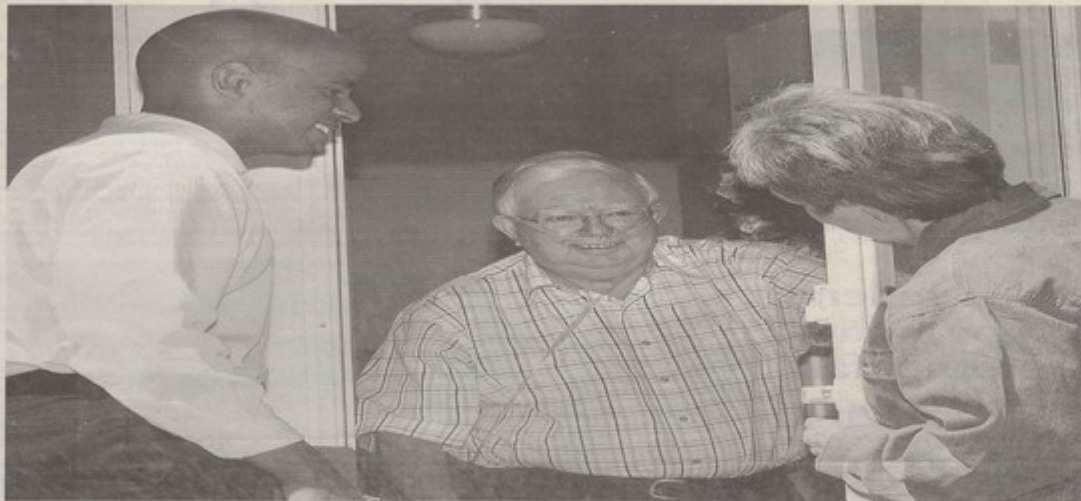
THE UNITED NATIONS made its own unique appearance for Grade 11 students at Queen Elizabeth High School recently and Douglas Hamilton (photo above) wears his name plates to draw the attention of the Secretary General, David Davis representing Canada (photo, top right) addresses the issue of the maritime and to African countries. Mick Lutz's (from left) Heather Patterson, Dean Jaber and Karen Chen represent Nicaragua and been invited to another speaker.



RELIGION

June 12, 2004

EDITOR: JANET VLIEG, 498-5687; religion@thejournal.canwest.com



Unitarian Church vice-president Sylvia Krogh is canvassing with Edmonton-Strathcona candidate Malcolm Azania of the NDP. BRUCE EDWARDS, THE JOURNAL

☞ It's appropriate that our voice be heard and be at the table. It's not an extremist voice. ☞

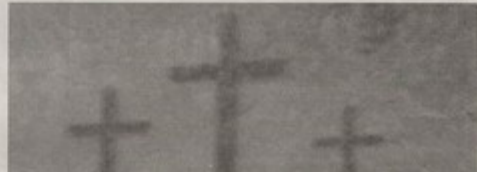
Pastor Gary Rohr

moral duty to take care of one another and not judge one another based on their lifestyle or personal

works toward improving it," she says.

Meanwhile, back at Southside Pentecostal, Rohr apologizes to the congregation for going into overtime on his sermon.

He quotes from the Bible in support of capital punishment, expresses revulsion over state-funded abortions — "It hurts me to pay (taxes) for murder" — and speculates that under Liberal-sponsored Bill C-250, "I could maybe get arrested in the future for speaking on the issue of homosexuality from





— DAVID BLOOM, Sun Mo

Chief and clergy

Edmonton police Chief Mike Boyd meets with city religious representatives during a multifaceted meeting Tuesday at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804 119 St.

Church defaced with swastika

'White power' on doors greets worshippers

TRISH AUDETTE
Journal Staff Writer
EDMONTON

Police are investigating a possible hate crime after members of the Unitarian Church of Edmonton arrived for their morning service Sunday to find a swastika and the words "white power" painted on the church's wooden doors.

Const. Wes Lavoie said the graffiti did not appear to be the work of young pranksters. He said the Edmonton police's hate and bias crime section would be informed of the case.

Sylvia Krogh, president of the church's board of directors, said the vandals who used black paint on the doors would have done so between 9 p.m. Saturday, when the last group left the former warehouse at 10804 119th St., and 9:30 a.m. Sunday, when members started arriving for morning service.

"We feel especially violated because it goes against everything we stand for," she said, pointing to the non-denominational nature of the church.

"We cherish and appreciate all different perspectives," Krogh said. "I'm sad that they had to resort to this as a tactic instead of being involved in a genuine dialogue."

The church, which has roughly 250 members, moved to the industrial area in the Queen Mary Park neighbourhood

last year, where they renovated a former warehouse. Krogh said there is a security system inside the building, but no cameras installed outside.

On Christmas Eve, Edmonton's largest synagogue was the target of similar vandalism when a swastika and another anti-Semitic message were spray painted on the side of the Jasper Avenue building.

Lavoie could not say whether the two incidents are connected. The police ser-

vice's hate and bias crime unit could not be reached Sunday.

Members of the Unitarian church—and several other religious organizations—offered their support for the synagogue last month, and Rabbi David Kunin returned the favour on Sunday.

"I think it's very much the same," he said. "There's no kind of words that can offer sympathy for this kind of evil."

With files from Susan Rattan
taudette@thejournal.ca/west.com

Soviet Animal Farm highlight of Fringe

By Jay Roberts

The tenth Fringe Festival has come and gone with the usual fanfare. The crowds were larger than last year but theatre sales were slightly down. The quality of entertainment on the outdoor stages and by the street buskers was better than usual and it was shoulder-to-shoulder pedestrians from early evening to well after midnight.

Festival director Judy Lawrence, who has taken over from founder Brian Paisley, is to be congratulated for the smooth running of this gigantic festival. She appeared to be completely untroubled and could be seen on all parts of the site with her cellular phone, ready to tackle any problems which might arise.

The calibre of performances was very high and I have never had more difficulty in picking out my favourites. Shows from the Soviet Union have always been highlights and this year George Orwell's *Animal Farm* from the Igroky Moscow Theatre was no exception. This 22-member company was brought to Edmonton by Sylvia Krogh, a social studies teacher at Queen Elizabeth High School who worked for two years to obtain funding for the group after seeing their performance in London, England. This political (and topical) fable about the Russian Revolution had been banned in the Soviet Union until 1989 when Leonid Gerchikov, the director, wrote a stage version of the book, which has been a big hit wherever it has been seen.

I saw the show on the first night following the Soviet coup. It was a poignant experience as the performers had been up all the previous night listening to the news and phoning their families in Moscow. One actress actually saw Soviet tanks on the street outside her apartment. They realized that that some of them might not be able to return home but they gave a wonderful and energetic performance with smiling faces and tragedy in their eyes. Now, with the collapse of the coup, they are relieved but still somewhat concerned and will continue their tour to Vancouver and Victoria. *Animal Farm* was a sellout from the first day and will be held over at Theatre Network from August 28 to September 1.

The Edmonton Journal, Monday, August 19, 1991

Animal Farm ★★★

Moscow's Igroky Theatre
Where: Stage 11, Bus Barns
Wonderful.

An adaptation of George Orwell's famous scourge of totalitarianism could easily slip into a dismal, heavy-handed rant. No so with this colorful, spirited and touching production from Moscow.

Igroky's artistic director Leonid Gerchikov has updated Orwell's classic, cleverly superimposed it on to the fabric of Soviet life and enlarged its relevance while preserving the book's dark and powerful essence.

The 90-minute production clips along (it) with a youthful, completely engaging cast, which imbues the drab farmyard with infectious energy. There's traditional Russian folk dance (tap dance, too), and a stirring mix of music (traditional and modernized folk themes again, but also Ravel's *Bolero* and a Brechtian Parisian cabaret song). This, combined with some wise, minimal dialogue (in English), ingenious sets and costumes, and stage business which includes several absolutely striking Soviet worker-realist tableaux, makes for a Fringe pick to click.

The audience clapped enthusiastically when the concept of perestroika popped up in the piece. But methods Gerchikov & Co. are looking beyond perestroika, for more dark forces which may well be waiting in the wings... it's happened before; it can happen again.

— Mairi MacLean

The Edmonton Journal, Saturday, August 24, 1991

For your last weekend of X Marks The Fringe (and if you don't mind marking time in the queue), try *Animal Farm* (Stage 11, Bus Barns North). Indeed, take along your old copy of the Orwell novel — it's so short you could easily reacquaint yourself with the story in the time it takes to reach the head of the line.

This Russian piece wins The Most Uncannily Precise Production Of Fringe No. 10 Award, a play which paralleled the events of Sunday/Monday/Tuesday in the U.S.S.R. so closely, it had folks shaking their heads in wonderment.

"Les Miz of the Fringe," said a regular Fringer. And he's not far off the mark, as the Moscow show has higher-than-usual production values and an easily absorbed but lasting message. The fact that the play is based on a book which was banned in the U.S.S.R. until two and a half years ago lends it an even deeper ironic resonance. Get yourself a commemorative T-shirt; doubtless Igroky's *Animal Farm* will provide the stuff of one of those amazing Fringe anecdotes which will be oft remembered in the years to come.

MAIRI MACLEAN

the edmonton bullet fringe hits

Contents August 28, 1991, volume 9, number 9

Emerging from the lineup to find enrichment

A few days before the Fringe opened an unsigned letter landed on my desk. It was written by a disgruntled artist whose Fringe experience has been less than lucrative. The gist of the letter was that the Fringe organizers should limit the number of "foreign" acts.

As I sat in a sold-out audience of people, some of whom had lined up for five hours or more, watching *Animal Farm* (Igroky Theatre from Moscow) I was convinced that a narrow approach to Fringe programming would only impoverish us. *Animal Farm* nourished, enriched and filled me with awe. To watch 13 beautiful, talented and energetic young performers, regardless of their national origin, was an experience I wouldn't easily forget.

The dialogue was minimal, relying heavily on song, dance and mime. The first word was spoken by the synthesized soundtrack and that word was "Revolution". *Animal Farm* was 90 minutes of pure enjoyment with stunning performances. Especially outstanding was Victoria Medvedeva as the mare Molly who can no longer walk when the others remove her shoes.