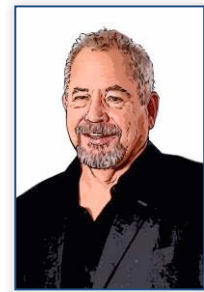


Random Notes



From the desk of Michael Willard, chairman of Willard International. Random Notes are written for a few special friends of Willard (the agency and the guy).

February, 2014

The Primary Question: What Can I Do?

What does one write in the middle of a revolution, the uncertain outcome of which veers daily from the absurd to the abominable? The worst-case scenario is unthinkable and the best result – for people like me – perhaps a misty dream. But I believe.

I have made my home in Ukraine for two decades. That still makes me a guest. I can't vote, and I can certainly be required to leave. That was why TV host Matvei Ganapolsky posed the question during an interview:

”Aren't you afraid of being put on a list of people who cannot return to Ukraine?”

My simple answer: “I am 68 years old. I have been through much in my life. I have reached a point where I always try to be true to myself. I wouldn't want it said, ‘He did nothing.’”

In truth, my activity is minor league compared with that of the brave men and women who spend night after night in freezing weather on Independence Square. There is no bravery in ranting on Facebook, an act that merely, I would think, elicits a collective sigh and smile from the authorities.

There is solidarity, though no bravery, in being one of several hundred thousand in a crowd yelling, “Go away, bandits!” However there are good feelings, after so long in Ukraine, that if all the stars line up right, one day there will be a patch of blue in an otherwise stormy sky.

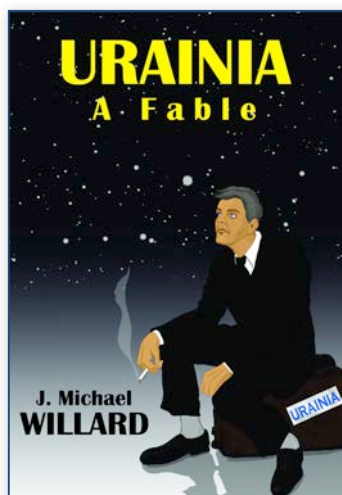
In many ways, my lone contribution was unintended. I wrote a book, “Urainia: A Fable,” last year, prior to the revolution. It is a satire, but many of the characters could be torn from the pages of real-life Ukraine. It has a simple, heartfelt premise:



Michael Willard, Olga Willard, Matvei Ganapolsky

The first leader who comes along and wants to leave a great legacy for his or her children and grandchildren will be the father of Ukraine, the George Washington, the Simon Bolivar, or the Winston Churchill. That person will be the one to whom monuments are built.

Someone needs to come along and say, “I don’t need any more. I’m simply going to do right by my country.” Sadly, to date that person only appears in my fiction.



Urainia: A Fable

The Ukrainian-language edition of “Urainia: A Fable” is in bookstores in Kyiv and other population centers across the country. Every kopek of the author’s royalties will go to EuroMaidan. It’s not a fortune, only about \$1 for each book sold locally, but it is what I can do.

The English-language edition is available through Amazon.com. Each Amazon purchase will generate \$3 a copy to EuroMaidan. Sales have picked up since I made the EuroMaidan donation announcement, including an order from Ernst & Young, which purchased a load of books. Individual buyers are making a difference as well.

The Willard Round Table: The Most Interesting Forum in Kyiv

In a burst of unrestrained enthusiasm, I called the Willard Round Table “Davos East.”

It’s ‘romancing the product’ a bit – something we PR people are accused of doing from time to time.

The Willard Round Table began its 20th year last month with the second meeting at our new home, the Sofiyskiy Fitness Center, where the food is great (and you are not required to swim laps or lift weights before dinner and discussion).



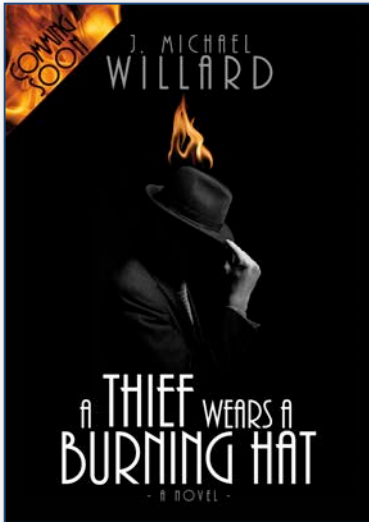
*Ambassador Katamadze, Marek Wojtyna,
Michael Willard, Krzysztof Siedlecki*

The elephant in the room, of course, was EuroMaidan, however with representatives of L’viv’s bid for the 2022 Winter Olympics in attendance, that topic received an airing as well.

Guests included: Ambassador Gia Katamadze, representing VETEK; Igor Kirilyuk, from Group DF; Dennis Bazilevych, from Mining Machines (SCM); Marek Wojtyna, Danone Ukraine’s new general director; Victor Liakh, president of the East Europe Foundation; Sergej Gontcharov, CEO, L’viv 2022 Olympic Bid Committee; Steven Fisher, CEO of Citibank Ukraine; Sergiy Lesyk, general director, UBS Bank Ukraine and our esteemed chairman, Dr. Krzysztof Siedlecki, country manager for Astellas.

The next Willard Round Table is set for Feb. 20.

A Thief Wears a Burning Hat



It's been nearly 20 years in the making, but the book is a wrap and waiting to be printed. "A Thief Wears a Burning Hat" is a fast-moving thriller set in Kyiv, Washington, D.C. and Crimea in the wild-and-wooly 1990s.

I started it in 1994, about six months after I arrived in Kyiv. Somehow, I got sidetracked by building businesses and other endeavors, but last year I got serious about the project (again) and spent three months on a total re-write.

Plans are to have it translated and released in Russian later this year. It will be out on Amazon.com in a couple of months. I'm grateful to my friend Scott Lewis for his diligent editing.

Best regards,

Michael Willard

PS: see you on the Maidan

