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UCCA BULLETIN



October 2016 ... Our 76th Year of Service to the Community

XXII CONGRESS OF UKRAINIANS IN AMERICA CONCLUDES

The XXII Congress of Ukrainians of America, held at the Ukrainian National Home in Hartford, CT, over weekend of September 23-25, elected Andriy Futey as president of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), ratified over two dozen changes to the organization's by-laws, received greetings from two presidential candidates, and charted a course forward over the next four years and beyond for the organized Ukrainian diaspora in the United States.

Over 80 registered delegates followed in the footsteps of their predecessors who had gathered on 21 previous occasions over the past 76 years. Arriving on Friday, delegates enjoyed an informal gathering at the Ukrainian National Home. Prior to the commencement of the first plenary session on Saturday morning, UCCA President Tamara Olexy welcomed Nicholas Burns, a high-level political surrogate for the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton. Ambassador Burns pressed the case for the presidential candidacy of Secretary Clinton and also offered his personal conviction that Ukraine, as a friend and ally to the US, deserves additional support in the form of lethal defensive weapons. He said he hoped to see a President Clinton visit Ukraine early in her presidency to show for our friend and ally. He concluded his remarks by delivering a personal message from Secretary Clinton to the delegates, stating that Ukrainian Americans are an important part of "the fabric of our country" and emphasized that the United States "must continue to stand with the Ukrainian people as they continue their struggle in support of liberty and democracy."

A greeting to the congress also came from independent Republican candidate for president Evan McMullin, who pledged to "fully support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine" and to "work to ensure all territories illegally annexed or occupied by Russia are restored."

The first plenary session began with the election of the presidium. Elected as congress chair was UCCA's Philadelphia Branch, Eugene Luciw; Deputy chairs were Oleh Dekajlo of Long Island and Kenneth Wanio of New Jersey; Ms. Duplak of New Jersey and Peter Krutiak of Illinois took minutes as Ukrainian-language and English-language secretaries, respectfully. The delegates then elected various congressional commissions to examine crucial aspects of our community, including: Aid to Ukraine, Student and Youth Groups; Veterans' Affairs; External Relations; Educational Concerns; Financial Matters; New Immigrants from Ukraine; and Organizations Issues. Throughout the Congress, committees drafted proposals that were then presented to all the delegates on Sunday for discussion and approval. Reports from outgoing members of the UCCA Executive Board, National Council and Committee Chairs were also presented.

The congress then presented two forward-thinking panel discussions, featuring a mix of perspectives from voices within and outside the organizations present at the Congress. The first discussion – "Support Ukraine" – was moderated by the first U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Roman Popadiuk. Focusing on the millions of dollars and thousands of hours of volunteerism donated in the U.S. to aid Ukraine throughout the Revolution of Dignity and to support Ukraine's defenders against Russian military aggression, the panel featured two UCCA Executive Board members, Dr. Larissa Kyj (UUARC) and Mr. Sawkiw, director of UNIS, and Vasili Rukhadze of the Georgian Association in the USA. The second panel – "Hromada 2040" – was yet another interesting mix of voices that led everyone present towards envisioning the Ukrainian diaspora in the coming decades. Roma Hadzewycz, editor-in-chief of the newspapers Svoboda and The Ukrainian Weekly, moderated the discussion presented by Andrea Chalupa, award-winning author and founder of the Digital Maidan activist platform; George Mykytyn, chairman of the Ukrainian American Youth Association; Ayla Bakkalli, U.S. representative of the Mejlis of Indigenous Crimean Tatar people of Ukraine; and Myroslava Rozdolska, president of New Ukrainian Wave.

On Saturday evening, the delegates were joined by local community leaders at a gala banquet celebrating Ukraine's 25th anniversary of independence {see sidebar}.



On Sunday, following Liturgy at St. Michael's UChurch, delegates elected Andriy Futey as UCCA President. Other members of the newly-elected Board include: Stefan Kaczaraj, Chairman of the National Council; Michael Sawkiw, Executive Vice President; Marie Duplak, Executive Secretary; and Myron Kolinsky, Treasurer. The rest of the Executive Board will named at the first gathering of the National Council of Ukrainian Organizations in December, including the UCCA Educational Council representative, the director of the UCCA National Office, and appointed representatives from the following organizations: the Providence Association of Ukrainian Catholics in America, the Ukrainian National Credit Union Association, the United Ukrainian American Relief Committee, the Ukrainian American Youth Association, New Ukrainian Wave, the Organization for Defense of Four Freedoms for Ukraine, the Women's Association for the Defense of Four Freedoms for Ukraine, and a representative from the Illinois Division of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America.

The UCCA Executive Board would like to sincerely thank the entire UCCA Hartford Branch for their hospitality and for organizing a successful XXII Congress of Ukrainians in America!

GALA BANQUET CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF UKRAINE'S INDEPENDENCE

On the evening of September 24th, the delegates of the XXII Congress were joined by local community leaders at a gala banquet celebrating Ukraine's 25th anniversary of independence held at the Ukrainian National Home in Hartford. In addition to performances by the Yevshan Ukrainian Vocal Ensemble under the direction of Alex Kuzma and the Zolotyj Promin Ukrainian Dance Ensemble under the direction of Orlando and Larisa Pagan, the over 200 banquet attendees were greeted by three distinguished guest speakers. Congressman John Larson (D-CT) spoke on behalf of the entire Connecticut US Congressional delegation, each of whom had been visited personally by Ukrainian activists numerous times since the Revolution of Dignity began in 2013. Ambassador Popadiuk discussed at length the transformation he has personally witnessed both in Ukraine and within the Ukrainian diaspora in the 25 years since Ukraine's re-establishment of independence. Ukraine's Ambassador to the U.S. Valeriy Chaly hailed the work of Ukrainians in the U.S., especially that of the UCCA leadership, which Ukraine's leaders understand is what enables this diaspora community to advocate for aid to Ukraine in ways that many other countries cannot.



L to R: T. Olexy, R. Hadzewycz, M. Duplak, M. Sawkiw, L. Kyj, A. Futey.

The final event of the evening was the presentation of the Shevchenko Freedom Award, UCCA's highest honor. Recipients who were in attendance to receive the award that evening included: long-time director of the UCCA's Washington office, UNIS, and a former UCCA president, Michael Sawkiw; longtime director of the United Ukrainian American Relief Committee, Larissa Kyj; long-time UCCA executive secretary and former president of the Organization for Defense of Lemko Western Ukraine, Marie Duplak; the family of Mark Paslawsky, the only Ukrainian American to have given his life in defense of Ukraine against Russia's most recent invasion, who accepted the award in his name, adding to the many posthumous honors bestowed on this hero. The final recipient of the Shevchenko Freedom Award was doubly awarded that evening. Not only was Editor-in-Chief Roma Hadzewycz honored with the Shevchenko Freedom Award, but she was further surprised when Ambassador Chaly bestowed the Order of Princess Olha (third degree) on behalf of President Poroshenko, for her "contribution to strengthening the international authority of Ukraine, popularization of its historical heritage and modern achievements."

HISTORIC SYMPOSIUM ON UKRAINE SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDES

On September 17, a symposium commemorating The 25th Anniversary Of the Modern Ukrainian State attracted over 150 attendees to the Princeton Club of NY. The day-long conference attracted over two dozen speakers from academia, international diplomacy, government, journalism and civil society - who dissected Ukraine's distant and recent past, followed by predictions and prescriptions for Ukraine's future.

Throughout the conference similar themes were brought up by the various speakers whether discussing Ukraine's past or its present - the territory of modern Ukraine, by its geographic location or via the dynamic leaders of rebellion it has produced, played a critical role in the development of Europe and beyond to foreseeing the incredible influence it could bear in the event that the Russian Federation collapses, China seeks territorial expansion, or the existing post-WWII order fractures even further. And all addressed into the difficulties Ukraine will continue to endure due to Russia's imperialism.

The morning and afternoon panels were separated by a special lunch presentation during which Dr. Anders Corr, publisher of the Journal of Political Risk, and Dr. Phillip Karber, President of the Potomac Foundation, discussed Russia's ongoing military invasion of Ukraine. Dr. Karber's remarks were accompanied by documentation and photos gathered over the course of 70+ trips to Ukraine since 2014.

The day was further contributed to by a detailed report on the Ukrainian military's defense of their homeland, a screening of excerpts from an upcoming feature-length documentary about the "War for Democracy" in Ukraine, and a live performance by the Ukrainian Chorus Dumka of New York.

For the attendees of the evening's banquet, the day was capped off by speeches by three former cabinet-level government officials - Governor Tom Ridge, who had served as the first Secretary of Homeland Security from 2003-2005; Ambassador Madeleine Albright, who had served as Secretary of State from 1997 to 2001; and, Borys Tarasyuk had previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine from 1998-2000, and then again from 2005-2007.

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