



Tidewater Ukrainian Cultural Association

Newsletter No. 57, April 1, 2014

<http://tuca.us>

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL:

TUCA will again participate in the International Children's Festival (ICF) sponsored by Hampton city. It will be held on Saturday, April 19, 2014 from 10 AM to 2 PM, in downtown Hampton's **Mill Point Park**. The Board believes this festival provides TUCA one of the best opportunities to fulfill its charter goal of exposing children and their families to Ukrainian culture and history. We can learn from books, but we can also learn from our neighbors, as there will be 35 countries participating this year. Each year the attendance is measured in the thousands.

We will have an educational display within the guidelines of the Standards of Learning (SOL), and will present facts related to the country, such as maps, crafts, ethnic dress, historical timelines, currency, government, and religious affiliation.

The success of our participation in this largest-to-date festival depends upon the participation of our TUCA members. If you would like to help in any capacity (e.g. provide information, loan costumes, fabric, jewelry, art, artifacts, photos, crafts, puzzles, interactive activities, work with the committee, greet the visitors, walk in the Parade of Nations, ...), please contact either Myron Bilyj <crusier27@cox.net> or Elaine Hampton <edfhampton@cox.net>. We encourage all of our members with children (or without!) to come to Hampton and attend this fun festival.

With recent events in Ukraine, we also expect there will be increased interest in Ukraine by people attending the festival, so let us work together to make it a very exciting, educational event. Below is the web address provided by Hampton in support of the festival. Website: <http://www.hampton.gov/parks/icf/>.

Directions: Off of Interstate 64, take Exit 267 for US-60/VA-143/Woodland Road toward Hampton University. Turn on to Settlers Landing Road in the direction of Hampton University and Downtown Hampton. After going over the highway bridge, turn right onto Eaton Street and follow the instructions of the police directing traffic in the area.

Submitted by Myron Bilyj.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Since December, Ukraine has exploded onto the front page of world consciousness, with fast moving current events deeply affecting our members and local Ukrainian-American community. From the peaceful protests in the freezing snows of December, to the horrendous massacre of unarmed citizens in February, to the illegal military take-over and annexation of Crimea, these events have dominated the news.

Spontaneous protests that started in Independence Square in the center of Kyiv grew into a self-sustained tent city called the "Maidan" (meaning a central gathering place for citizens). Citizens were originally protesting the signing of a stifling trade agreement with Russia that would have voided all their aspirations for their future: to live in a country governed by European values. In mid-December, when police kidnappings, torture and brutal killings failed to disperse the Maidan, hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens came out in ever growing numbers and the protests turned into anti-government demonstrations, with citizens fed up with corruption and the suppression of their ardent desire to live with dignity in their nation. The horrific sniper shootings and attacks in mid-February brought about the resignation of the government, and fleeing of President Yanukovich, infamous for stealing billions from its citizens, from Ukraine to Russia. Russia then very quickly shocked the world with its advance and take-over of Crimea. This action has brought world-wide condemnation and the United States, NATO and European Union have focused on actions designed to deter further aggression onto Ukrainian lands and to protect its freedom and integrity. And now, the whole world is watching events, highlighting our anxiety for our families still living in Ukraine, our fear for friends who are living this nightmare, and our feeling of both hope and helplessness. We have all been deeply affected, tensely glued to computers for the latest news, listening and reading daily reports in all newspapers, radio stations and TV channels. The Daily Press was very active in reporting on our community, with articles and pictures for 3 weeks running. They also had articles and coverage of our demonstrations on their web pages. The Virginia Pilot story focused on the background of our lives as displaced persons that live and love the US but still love and support our homeland. That article also attracted diverse participants to the Norfolk demonstration. Our Ukrainian voices and concerns were shared and heard in our communities. We were proud to wave and wear the blue and gold colors of Ukraine.

Submitted by Olena Boyko.

IN MEMORIAM:

A sad announcement for our TUCA members. After a prolonged heroic struggle for many weeks, Ihor Taran, husband of our treasurer, Lucy Halunko, passed away peacefully in St. Mary's Hospital in Richmond. Ihor was a founding member of TUCA, always generous in his relations, smiling and joking. He loved sports, he loved Ukraine, and he loved the Klitchko brothers. We give our love and support to Lucy, who has contributed a few words about Ihor. *Vichnaya Pamyat! Eternal Memory!*

Submitted by Olena Boyko.

IHOR TARAN:

Ihor Taran passed away on February 1, 2014 after a prolonged battle with cancer. He was an active supporter and founding member of TUCA. He was born in a displaced persons (DP) camp in Regensburg, Germany and came to this country as an infant. He loved life and embraced all it had to offer. He attended VCU and started his own business in Richmond, VA. His diverse interests included playing baseball with his church league, dancing with the "Kozaky" Ukrainian Dance Group, competing in a 13-hour cycling marathon from Richmond to Virginia Beach, sailing the Chesapeake Bay, SCUBA diving old shipwrecks off the coast of North Carolina, attending the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore, skiing the mountains of West

Virginia, watching Formula One and NASCAR racing, and tuning in to a Klitschko boxing match. Ihor always enjoyed meeting new people and a good discussion. His sense of humor will truly be missed.

Submitted by Lucy Halunko-Taran.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR MAIDAN PARTICIPANTS:

On March 2, members of TUCA assembled at the Ascension Byzantine Catholic Church in Williamsburg. Father Alex Shuter, pastor, offered the Sunday Liturgy for the intention of peace in Ukraine and the world. After the liturgy, Father Alex offered the Panykhyda, prayers for the deceased, for the demonstrators in Ukraine who lost their lives. These religious rituals were very moving and symbolic gestures of heartfelt sympathy for the people of Ukraine, asking God's blessings and protection on them. Father mentioned that he was including all people in Ukraine, those of other ethnic backgrounds, as well as native Ukrainians. We were joined by Ukraine's NATO liaison officer in Norfolk, Captain Volodymyr Khilkevych of the Ukrainian Navy. After the liturgy a welcoming and delicious potluck was shared by all.

Also, On Sunday, March 9th, some TUCA members joined Lucy and her and Ihor's Richmond friends at the 40-day Liturgy and panakhyda for Ihor at the Sts. Constantine and Helen Orthodox Cathedral in Richmond. Dressed in our embroidered blouses we joined Lucy in honoring Ihor's memory. After the service everyone met at a local Italian Inn for a *tryzna*, (a traditional Ukrainian post funeral meal, similar to an Irish wake - less the alcohol.)

Submitted by Elaine Hampton.



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:

In addition to many of us writing letters, e-mails and telephoning the White House and members of Congress to support the fragile new interim government of Ukraine with financial, military and economic aid. TUCA members, as individuals, took part in 2 demonstrations at Towne Pointe Park in Norfolk, to show solidarity with the protesters in Maidan and their support for Ukraine.

The first demonstration in windy, drizzly conditions on February 8th was initiated by Oleg Alba, who was unaware of the existence of a multitude of Ukrainian-Americans in the area, but single-handedly organized the demonstration, lined up the press and TV, and spread the message via Facebook. WAVY10 News not only sent a correspondent, but on their web site recorded us singing the Ukrainian national anthem, holding a big sign "Virginia Supports Euro-Maidan, Down with Tyranny".

Two weeks later, Anna Kovalenko, with the help of a Facebook connection with Vera Yatsula, TUCA's webmaster, organized another demonstration to protest Putin's attack on Ukraine. Young people held up signs such as "Putin, Hands Off Ukraine". Anna has only been in the US for 6 months, but already engaged in community affairs. Our congratulations to both of these young people for displaying initiative and doing a great job.

TUCA's membership coordinator, Wally Melnitchouk, and his family also took part in a demonstration in Adelaide, Australia, while visiting his family there. The Ukrainian community in Adelaide is several thousand strong, and around 200 people took part in demonstration on the steps of the South Australian Parliament House to show their support for Ukraine, which was featured in the local news media.

Submitted by Olena Boyko.

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL:

We encourage all TUCA members, friends and families to come out and support our participation in the International Children's Festival on April 19, as mentioned in the leading paragraph. Ukraine is constantly in the news and we expect many festival goers to visit our tent for information and background. Again, as in many past years, Joanna Griffin will demonstrate the art of pysanka writing, which is always a big hit and attraction, especially since this year the Festival takes place just one day before Easter Sunday. Come for the fun.

Submitted by Olena Boyko.

BEACH PARTY:

Though the date is not yet confirmed, mid-May or mid-June, TUCA will have a beach party at the home of Olha Cehelska, who lives on Shore Drive in Virginia Beach. She has graciously offered her home, where we can store cold drinks and stroll right onto the sandy shore. It will be fun.

Submitted by Olena Boyko.

SHEVCHENKO - CHAMPION OF UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE, SELF-DETERMINATION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:

Such was the title of the commemoration of Taras Shevchenko's 200th birthday at the United Nations International Conference on March 27, 2014 in New York City. This year, Ukrainian communities in the whole world are honoring the birth of this beloved national poet. There are 150 monuments erected to Shevchenko through the world and over 1000 of them in Ukraine. One of them on P Street in Washington, DC, was dedicated by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1964, and bears the inscription "When will we be sent our Washington" so relevant that even today Ukraine is still awaiting a leader.

Shevchenko was born a serf and as a 15 year old taken to St. Petersburg, where his paintings inspired a group of artists to buy his freedom. For his patriotic statements and poems, written both in the Ukrainian and Russian languages, he was exiled to the Caucasus and his works were censored. His famous line "Fight! You will win", so appropriate and appropriated to today's struggle of Ukraine, was originally written to inspire the people of Caucasus to rise up against tsarist Russian tyranny. This is why so many nations striving to achieve freedom find inspiration in the words and poems of Shevchenko.

The "Kobzar", Shevchenko's inspirational book of poems, many of which every Ukrainian child had to memorize, has remained the bedrock in nurturing and sustaining the Ukrainian spirit in its never-surrendered quest for human dignity and national freedom. Today, in the fiery environs of the Maidan, his photograph and portrait hang on the tire barricades, on tents and burnt building facades. His patriotic words rang out from the stage and his poems sustained the protesters, giving them hope of survival through night after tense night.

Recently translated by Peter Fedynsky, the complete Kobzar is available in an acclaimed English translation, which can be purchased on Amazon.com. The webcast and video from the UN can be seen and heard on-line at webtv.un.org, in the search bar type in Taras Shevchenko and listen to this inspirational program in English.

We, Ukrainian-Americans, who have been reared on the iconic words of Shevchenko, are proud of our heritage, proud of our unquenchable fight for human dignity as we stand strong for freedom for Ukraine. In the words of the great poet "Our idea and our song will never die, will never perish".

Submitted by Olena Boyko.

RUSLANA RECEIVES WOMAN OF COURAGE AWARD:

On March 4th, with First Lady Michelle Obama attending this special ceremony, the US State Department honored 10 women at its eight annual International Women of Courage Award which recognizes women who exhibited exceptional courage and leadership in the struggle for peace, justice and human rights.

Ruslana Lyzhychko, a native of Lviv, is a pop singer, very famous as the winner of EUROVISION 2003, but today she is noted for her political activism and heroic commitment to Euro-Maidan. She spent freezing nights, month after month, to rally the protesters. Most notable is one night in December when panic swept the crowd that riot police were starting a security sweep. She held the stage for hours, singing the national anthem, urging protesters to remain calm and composed, to have courage, and over and over reminding the police to respect human rights and refrain from violence. This night, when unarmed citizens withstood 2,000 riot police will be remembered in Ukrainian history as a watershed in the fight for Ukrainian human rights and dignity.

Deputy Secretary of State Heather Higginbottom presented the award which read: For her steadfast commitment to nonviolent resistance and national unity in the fight against government corruption and human rights abuses, we name Ruslana Lyzhychko a Woman of Courage.

Submitted by Olena Boyko.

NEW MEMBERS:

TUCA is also pleased to welcome two new members who have become active in our organization. **Oleg Alba**, a member of the US Navy, lives in Norfolk and was the organizer and guiding force for the pro-Maidan demonstration in Norfolk. His mother comes from Odessa where she met and married his father, then a student from Cuba. His family resides in Miami.

Ludmila Rich, a native of Kyiv, resides with her husband in Williamsburg where she works as a realtor. She is a member of the Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Church in Williamsburg where she is reaching out to other Ukrainians and was instrumental in organizing the Ukrainian program at the ICF. We welcome both of them for their energy and high level of enthusiasm.

Submitted by Olena Boyko.