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How the US benefits from NAFTA

The seventh round of NAFTA negotiations was scheduled to take place in Montreal at the end of January.

An article by Samuel Schofield on January 3 says that, after six rounds of talks between Canada, Mexico and the United States to renegotiate the 24-year old North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA), parties still appear far apart. President Trump continues to call the deal unfair and threatens to exit the agreement if Canada and Mexico cannot meet US demands.

Ironically, what could stop Trump's quest to exit NAFTA, or at least delay a withdrawal, are many of the constituencies that propelled him to the presidency and have supported his economic policies in office.

Seven of the top ten US states most dependent on NAFTA for commerce voted for Donald Trump.

Trump's claims that NAFTA has hurt U.S. manufacturing and small businesses

holds some validity, but overall the net benefits provided to the US economy and workers have been quite positive.

Many of the states that voted for Trump in the 2016 election send the majority of their exports to Canada and Mexico. North Dakota sends 82% of its exports to Canada; Texas and Arizona send 30% of their exports to Mexico. This would change significantly following any termination of NAFTA, as tariffs would increase and make exports cost-prohibitive for many companies.

Since its inception, estimates indicate that NAFTA has created around 14 million jobs due to trade with Canada and Mexico, and has created nearly 200,000 export-focused jobs that pay, on average, 15-20% more than U.S. jobs lost by NAFTA.

Reducing tariffs close to zero under NAFTA eliminated traditional barriers to exports of U.S. agricultural products such as beef and corn, the latter of which could not access

the Mexican market pre-NAFTA. As a result, since 1994, U.S. farm exports to Mexico have increased more than 450%.

Total farm exports to both Mexico and Canada were also expected to quadruple to \$40 billion in 2017 under NAFTA.

Concerned about potential losses to a 125,000-person industry, US Senators such as Chuck Grassley from Iowa and Pat Roberts from Kansas, generally supporters of Trump's policies, have lobbied to promote the benefits of NAFTA to agriculture.

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue likely understands that a NAFTA exit would force him to implement a subsidy program to protect the industry.

If the United States withdrew from NAFTA, export rules would revert to those of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which would mandate drastic increases in tariffs for many agricultural products. Further, the ability for the United States to negotiate more favourable bilateral trade deals is in doubt, putting U.S. agriculture at a further disadvantage.

Under WTO rules, US farmers exporting to Mexico would face a 15% tariff on wheat, 25% on beef, and 75% on chicken.

The recent passage of a sweeping tax reform bill in the US Congress could also complicate Trump's positions on NAFTA. Tax savings and economic growth will also likely

The Next Issue

The next issue of the "UCH" will be dated March, 2018. Announcements of events in March or early April, 2018, as well as articles for the March, 2018, issue should be in our office by February 10. Thank you for your consideration.

allow Americans to spend more money on cheap, foreign-made goods, including those from Mexico. This will boost the trade deficit with Mexico.

However, if Trump left NAFTA and tackled the deficit through increased import tariffs, most imported consumer goods would become significantly more expensive for Americans, thereby erasing many of the gains from the tax reform. The latter scenario would surely hurt Trump politically much more than an increased deficit with Mexico.

The US negotiating team, have approached negotiations with three weighty demands:

1) Increase the rules of origin component. This raises the percentage of a product that must be sourced within NAFTA countries to receive benefits.

2) Eliminate NAFTA's Chapter 19 ISDS dispute settlement mechanism. Currently, Chapter 19 provides dispute resolution through panels made up of trade representatives from each country involved in the particular case, rather than members being from a single country.

3) Persuade Canada and Mexico to raise their tax-free rates on e-commerce purchases from current levels of

\$16 and \$50, respectively, to closer to the US \$800 rate. Canada and Mexico strongly oppose these changes.

In the end, Donald Trump may still choose to invoke NAFTA Article 2205, the six-month withdrawal clause, in an effort to fulfil his campaign promise.

Negotiating parties also could reach a compromise to sustain the deal, with a new mandate to review the deal every five years. However, significant bipartisan support for NAFTA in Congress and key industries could ultimately dissuade Trump from making any explosive decisions on NAFTA in 2018.

Death By Cop

For the third year in a row, US police nationwide shot and killed nearly 1,000 people, a grim annual tally that has persisted despite widespread public scrutiny of officers' use of fatal force.

Police fatally shot 987 people last year, two dozen more than they killed in 2016, according to an ongoing *Wash-*

ington Post database project that tracks the fatal shootings.

Since 2015, the Post has logged the details of 2,945 deaths, culled from local news coverage, public records and social-media reports.

The number of unarmed Black males killed in 2017 was 19, up slightly from 17 in 2016, but down from 36 in 2015

Tackling Corruption in Ukraine

Ukraine's fight against corruption has been mainly directed against former President Viktor Yanukovich and his cronies, while maintaining the fiction (at least by implication) that President Petro Poroshenko became a billionaire by honestly working his fingers to the bone, as did the oligarchs now in control.

On December 22, 2017, the President's administration submitted a draft law on the High Anti-Corruption Court (HACC) to the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's parliament).

On January 18, UNIAN, an independent Ukrainian information agency, carried an informative opinion piece on the subject by Viktor Suslov, in

which he wrote that, a few days earlier, "a letter was published which the International Monetary Fund (IMF) addressed to the Presidential Administration's head, Ihor Rainin. Later, another letter to the Ukrainian authorities... (was) written by the World Bank (WB). Both assert that the draft law on the High Anti-Corruption Court, submitted to the Verkhovna Rada by President Poroshenko, is not consistent with Kyiv's commitments laid down in the Memorandum of Cooperation between the IMF and Ukraine. It is also claimed that the bill does not comply with the recommendations of the Venice Commission."

According to Mr. Suslov, a former Minister of the Economy of Ukraine, "The main argument is that the adoption of such a law will not contribute to strengthening the fight against corruption in Ukraine, since the bill does not ensure the HACC's independence, while the proposed procedure for judges' selection allows the authorities to gain full control of the process (this may entail the appointment of judges who will follow instructions of the authorities instead of being independent)."

The consequences could be that Ukraine may not receive the next tranches from the IMF, as well as losing the **(Continued on Page 6.)**

The Ukrainian Canadian Herald

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Conservatives Bounce Beyak

In an item posted by Catharine Tunney and Joe Lofaro on January 4 and updated on January 8, CBC News reported that Senator Lynn Beyak had been expelled from the Conservative Senate caucus and the National Conservative Party of Canada caucus.

The report said that, “Beyak had posted roughly 100 letters in support of her earlier defence of residential schools — where some 6,000 Indigenous children died from malnutrition and disease — to her Senate website.

“In a statement, Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer said he found out about the letters on Tuesday and asked Beyak to remove some of the comments, but she refused.”

According to the report, “‘To suggest that Indigenous Canadians are lazy compared to other Canadians, is simply racist,’ (Mr. Scheer) said in a statement,” and “‘Racism will not be tolerated in the Conservative caucus or Conservative Party of Canada.’”

Mr. Scheer’s spokesperson, Jake Enwright, perhaps to explain why action was not

taken earlier, said, that there is “... a fine line between espousing distasteful views on a policy position and willingly promoting unacceptable racist comments.”

Although she holds no party status, Ms. Beyak can remain a member of the Senate. This is drawing negative comments.

Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett commented that, “... it is more than disappointing that her appointment by the Conservatives allows her to continue to use parliamentary

resources to validate the views of those who refuse to accept the truth and propagate the misinformation and prejudice that continue to feed racism in our country.”

NDP MP Charlie Angus wrote a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, to say, “In terms of what can be done now in the absence of any clear tools of accountability I would remind you that as prime minister your words carry an enormous moral weight,” Mr. Angus urged the Prime Minister to reach out to independent and Liberal senators, as well as to Conservative leader Scheer, to address “Beyak’s fundamental unfitness to serve as a representative of the Canadian people.”

Senator Beyak, was appointed to the Senate by then Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2013. She was removed some Senate responsibilities following widespread demands arising from her comments about residential schools. She was removed from all remaining Senate committees by then interim

leader Rona Ambrose, after a storm of calls for her resignation for her comments, such as urging First Nations people to exchange their status cards “for a Canadian citizenship”, and calling on them to promote their culture “on their own dime, on their own time”.

Of course, Senator Beyak has her supporters, among them the people who sent her the racist messages of which she is so proud. Among them, too, is her son Nick Beyak.

Mr. Beyak’s views might just be filed in with those mentioned above, except that he is a City Councillor in Dryden, Ontario. When Mr Beyak says that his mother’s views are shared by the majority of Canadians, concern should be triggered about the affect his views have on the lives of the people, including Indigenous people, living in that northern community.

Nick Beyak was appointed to fill a vacancy on Dryden city council last August. He gave up his party membership after Rona Ambrose penalized his mother.

St. Anne’s Survivors

Listening to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, one might get the impression that all is sweetness and light in relations between Indigenous people and the government of Canada. After the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and especially on matters related to residential schools, one would expect that the accent would be on maximizing fairness in dealings with survivors.

Unfortunately, far too often such expectations would be wrong. The government of Canada continues repeatedly to take a very legalistic approach on issues, harming the case of justice and reconciliation by resorting to court cases instead of fairness in settling issues.

An example of this approach concerns the treatment of certain survivors of St. Anne’s Residential School.

Thousands of Indigenous children from northern Ontario were taken from their homes and forced to attend St. Anne’s from 1902 to 1976.

In 1992, leaders from several communities held a conference for former students that prompted a five-year Ontario Provincial Police investigation into alleged abuse at the school. Six former St. Annes employees were convicted of crimes after the investigation.

In 2000, more than 150 former students joined civil suits against Ottawa and the Catholic Church, which ran St. Anne’s for almost 70 years. Many of them agreed to settlements in 2005, before the larger agreement was reached between Canada and the Assembly of First Nations that created the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and included a formal apology from the prime minister.

As the IAP started adjudicating claims for compensation from former students, the Justice Department sat on thousands of documents from

the police investigation and civil suits relating to St. Anne’s. In 2014, the Ontario Superior Court ordered the government to release thousands of those documents, prompting some former students to try and reopen their IAP cases with newly available evidence.

On January 15, the website *pmnationtalk* carried an article on the issue, including a statement by Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde was quoted as saying, “We stand with the survivors of the St. Anne’s Residential School in their fight for justice. We join their call for Canada to put aside court battles and work with them to reach a negotiated settlement that will help in their journey to healing. Canada says it is committed to reconciliation, and justice for residential schools survivors is fundamental to that work. We have supported the survivors of St. Anne’s Residential School in the past and we stand with them again today.”

(The AFN is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.)

In its article, *pmnationtalk* notes, “On January 4, 2018, ... Ontario Superior Court Justice Paul Perell ruled that the federal government could continue to reject the use of police and court transcripts as evidence in student-on-student compensation claims from survivors who attended St. Anne’s Indian Residential School.”

An article by Alex Ballingall in the *Toronto Star* on January 20 gives additional information.

Mr. Ballingall reported that, “B.C Supreme Court Justice Brenda Brown ruled on (January 17) that former students’ compensation claims that have already been closed can’t be reopened if new evidence of abuse comes to light. According to the ruling, “A new hearing may be ordered

only where a palpable and overriding error is found.”

The legal battle, which has stretched over years, centres on the special Independent Assessment Process (IAP) created in 2006 to settle students’ compensation claims.

“The ruling has particular resonance” Mr. Ballingall wrote, for people who attended the infamous St. Anne’s Indian Residential School in Fort Albany, Ont., where students have said they were forced to eat their own vomit and children as young as 6 were shocked with an electrified chair.”

Many St. Anne’s students settled or had their claims rejected while the federal government withheld thousands of police and court documents relating to abuse at the school.

In 2014, an Ontario court ordered the documents released. Some students have since tried to reopen compensation claims that were closed at the IAP before these documents were released. The January 4 ruling will either block valid claims from being accepted, or encourage former students to bypass the special process and file lawsuits in court

In a statement by email on January 19, Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett said that the government is committed to ensuring “fair and lasting resolution” of claims filed at the LAP. She said Ottawa has followed all court orders “to the letter” and has released all required documents “without exception”. This would seem to exclude the documents covered by the January 4 ruling.

Apparently, “the integrity of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement” takes precedence over fairness.

New Democratic Party MP Charlie Angus called the ruling a “travesty”. “This was set up as a process to bring healing and compensation to child victims of horrific sexual assault and abuse, and it was anything but a good process for the survivors of St. Anne’s,” he said.

Another Departure from NIMMIWG

On January 11, the *Toronto Star* carried a report by Alex Ballingall that, after barely three months of service, Debbie Reid, Executive Director of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) had become the second Executive Director to leave, and the latest in a series of high-profile departures from the NIMMIWG.

Earlier resignations include one of the five original commissioners, Marilyn Poitras, a Métis professor from Saskatchewan, who left in July, stating that she was unable to work with the inquiry’s “current structure.”

Calvin Wong, Director of Operations, was named Interim Executive Director.

Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are among those who have expressed concern about the number of turnovers at the NIMMIWG; both have also indicated that the government did not intend to intervene.

Minister Bennett, in a statement, said, “While we share families’ concerns about the difficulties we have seen, the independence of the commission is crucial, and we aren’t going to interfere in internal matters.”

A CBC News report by Jorge Barrera included additional commentary, including the information that Arlen Dumas, Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, “repeated his calls for the re-

moval of the existing commissioners, a complete reset of the inquiry and the appointment of a Manitoba-specific commissioner.”

On January 18, Quebec Native Women (QNW) issued a statement of deep concern about the departure of Debbie Reid, Executive Director, and Alain Arseneault, who had left their respective positions at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The QNW wrote that “these resignations – in addition to what we observed during the week of hearings in Malotienam from 27 November to 1 December 2017 – suggest that widespread disorganization persists within the commission itself.

“The goals and objectives of the commission are unclear, often leaving families and survivors unsure of what the inquiry can and cannot do.

“On many occasions, QNW has reiterated the need for the inquiry to take a concrete look at the cases of disappearance and violence that are presented at the hearings.

“We want the core of the inquiry to be more legal. Families deserve to have clear answers to their questions, especially regarding police investigations or the lack of action in the case of reported disappearances,” said Viviane Michel, president of QNW.”

As the Ukrainian Canadian Herald went to press on January 22, the inquiry had public hearings scheduled for Yellowknife on January 23.

Current Eclectic

About Arms for Ukraine

Canada has passed legislation permitting the sale of certain kinds of lethal weapons to Ukraine, and the Congress of the United States passed legislation, signed by President Trump allowing the USA to provide lethal weapons to Ukraine as well. An analysis of this development, was written by Daniel DePetris, a fellow at Defense Priorities, a Washington think tank. While there are many debatable assertions in the article, it provides food for thought.

(T)he Trump administration (has) agreed to send lethal defensive weapons to Ukraine. The order, packaged by the State Department as an affirmation of Ukraine's right to defend itself against Russian-backed aggression, was greeted on Capitol Hill as a logical step in confronting what many lawmakers view as Vladimir Putin's expansionist foreign policy.

Proponents of this recommendation argue that the bloodier Russia's nose becomes, and the higher the death toll for Russian soldiers on the battlefield, the more pressure Putin will be under to cut ties with the outgunned and outmanned separatists.

The prevailing logic, however, is based on a hopeful

theory of how they hope Putin will respond. Moscow's conduct over the three-and-a-half years of combat in Eastern Ukraine, however, should lead to the exact opposite conclusion — when push comes to shove, the Russians have proven to be willing to withstand the financial, political, and military pain associated with preventing the total military defeat of anti-Kiev forces.

Russian officials have, predictably, denounced President Trump's authorization of lethal equipment to the Ukrainians — including the likely delivery of Javelin anti-tank weapons, which could pulverize Russian armor— as an aggressive act meant to deliberately sabotage the Minsk peace process. While there is a possibility that Ukrainian forces could use U.S.-supplied heavy weapons in an offensive capacity as the Russians suggest, it is more likely that this assistance will be used by Moscow as an excuse to redouble its own support to Ukrainian proxies in Donetsk and Luhansk.

The Russians have demonstrated in word and in deed since they worked with proxies and invaded in April, 2014, that the Ukrainian government will not be permitted to win the conflict militarily and reincorporate the Donbas into the

Ukrainian state.

In the fall of 2014 and the winter of 2015, when Ukrainian troops and pro-government armed battalions were engaging Moscow's proxies in ferocious door-to-door, house-to-house fighting, Russia escalated and forcefully stepped in, supplying personnel, tanks, supplies, and reinforcements to beat back Kiev's advances. In Putin's mind, allowing Ukraine to retake strategic territory was an unthinkable prospect that would lead Kiev to believe that it could squash the rebellion militarily. The infusion of Russian troops stopped Ukrainian territorial advances in their tracks, at considerable human cost to Kiev.

In other words, whenever pro-Russian militants were losing ground or at risk, Moscow turned on the spigot of assistance to prevent a humiliating defeat or retreat. This is one of the biggest reminders to the world community that Ukraine's political disposition is ultimately far more important to Russia's strategic interests than it is to Washington's.

No amount of U.S. military equipment or heavy weapons systems is likely to eclipse what the Russians will provide to the other side.

To believe Russia will be intimidated into withdrawing its troops from Ukrainian territory or suing for a peace with a government Moscow sees as a puppet of the West, just because a few more of its soldiers have been killed, is to place hope over the reality of Putin's track record throughout the war.

Whether we in the United States or Western Europe accept it as legitimate or not, Putin is highly motivated to preserve Russian influence and freedom of movement in a country that shares a 1,426-mile border with the Russian Federation. To allow Ukraine to drift fully into Europe's orbit on his watch would be nothing short of a personal political humiliation for Putin and, more important, a geopolitical catastrophe for a Russia whose political elites remain incredibly nervous about a shrinking Near Abroad and any hint of political revolution in the former Soviet space.

President Trump's decision to increase U.S. military engagement in Ukraine's conflict comes at a curious time, just three months after Putin broached the prospect of an international peacekeeping mission for the very first time, and two days after Moscow, Kiev, and the separatists reaffirmed their intention to call a holiday ceasefire and proceed toward an "all-for-all" prisoner exchange. While dozens of ceasefires have come and gone in Ukraine and a Russian-drafted peacekeep-

(Continued on Page 4.)

The Russian Reaction

On December 14 of last year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation issued a "Comment by Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova on American and Canadian weapons deliveries to Ukraine".

We have to point out the continuing distortion of facts in the United States and Canada, which accuse the Donbas self-defence forces of artillery attacks that are in fact waged by the Ukrainian forces. The last time this happened was at the December 13 briefing at the US Department of State.

We have a strong impression that deliberate attempts are being made to shift the blame. Washington and Ottawa are clearly seeking a pretext to begin large-scale lethal weapons deliveries to Ukraine.

The Canadian authorities have announced that they may grant their companies licences for such commercial transactions, without thinking through

the possible ramifications of this decision. It has transpired recently that US concerns, in particular AirTronic USA, are delivering weapons to Kyiv with the covert permission of the State Department and the Pentagon, although the official US position is that there has been no final decision on this matter yet. (This has changed since the statement.-Ed)

We advise those who are pressing for and taking these decisions to stop and think about their personal responsibility. It is clear that supplying US and Canadian means of warfare to Ukraine is paramount to pushing Kyiv, which has been sabotaging a peaceful settlement in the east of the country, towards reckless new military decisions.

Washington and Ottawa should realise that there is no military solution to the Donbas conflict, which was caused by the state coup in Kyiv, and that those who deliver weapons to murderers will share the blame for people's deaths.

US Budget Deadlock

As we went to press, a deal: a three-week spending measure — until Feb. 8 — in return for a commitment from the Republican leadership in the Senate to address immigration policy in a bill to protect young immigrants from deportation.

It is said that turnabout is fair play. Be that as it may, as the "UCH" goes to press the US Congress is in the third day of a budgetary deadlock which has shut down all governmental services except those deemed essential. We are reminded of the tactics the Republicans often used to try to squeeze concessions out of President Obama.

Though the issues seem somewhat complex, it is unlikely that the deadlock will still exist when our readers get this issue of the paper — at some point, the voters will say "a pox on both your houses, with your political game-playing".

For the time being, however, both Republicans and Democrats profess a belief that their intransigence is gaining support. What they probably truly believe is that caving in would cost them their core support. Therefore, they are, for now, showing no interest in a compromise.

The stakes are higher than usual, because this is a congressional election year.

The Republicans are saying

that they will not negotiate while the government is shut down. The Democrats say they will agree to legislation restoring governmental operations once there is a bipartisan agreement to preserve protections against deporting about 700,000 immigrants (known as "Dreamers") who arrived in the US illegally as children.

President Trump has linked the resolution of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals to a number of issues, including support for the wall along the border with Mexico. However, he has been inconsistent in his demands, leading Democrats to say that, "Negotiating with President Trump is like negotiating with Jell-O."

While some sort of compromise can be expected very soon, it is most probably to be an agreement of limited funding to allow the government to provide relief to the employees who are not being paid and the voters who are not being served.

The Republicans want a breathing space of weeks, to give them time to make deals with Democrats who can be persuaded to pass a budget. The Democrats want a respite of only a few days, to keep the pressure on for a resolution on DACA and a budget which matches a proposed increase in military spending with a corresponding increase in non-military expenditures.

Donald Trump seems, at the moment, to be happy that the government is spending less money.

Canada's Labour Market

The employment report for December 2017 was released by Statistics Canada on January 5.

The highlighted news was that there was a net increase of 79,000 jobs in jobs in that month, making the third consecutive month of increases.

Receiving less attention was the information that 55,000 of those jobs were in part-time work. Other downplayed information was that the number of self-employed workers increased by 28,000, public sector employment rose by 22,000, and the number of private sector employees was stable.

Of those jobs 52,000 were taken by core-aged people (age 25 to 54). Youth (aged 15 to 24) gained 31,000 part-time jobs, but lost 37,000 full-time jobs.

The December results raised gains for the fourth quarter to 193,000 jobs. This report did not indicate the net number of part-time jobs created in the fourth quarter. Without considering the issue of full- and part-time jobs, this

is best quarterly number since the second quarter of 2010.

The unemployment rate, according to the report, continued on a downward trend, decreasing to 5.7%, the lowest since comparable data became available in January, 1976. Bear in mind that the definition of "unemployed" excludes many people who want work but do not meet certain criteria, that the underemployed are employed, and those who are involuntarily employed part-time are, nevertheless, employed.

The report says that results for the 12 months to December, 2017 show a net increase of 423,000 jobs, 394,000 of them full time. There was no indication of the growth of the work force in that year.

Of those jobs, 203,000 went to workers 55 years or more of age, including 110,000 to women in this age group. This age group (particularly the 20% aged 65 and up) had a higher participation rate. (That is, more seniors had to work.)

UKRAINIAN CANADIAN

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not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board.**Loneliness**

AN EDITORIAL by WILFRED SZCZESNY

It is probably true that loneliness has been present in society, affecting people to some extent, as long as we have had consciousness of our individuality. Separation anxiety in animals suggests that the consciousness of self need not be very sophisticated.

It is probably true, too, that social conditions affect the frequency and severity of loneliness. Loneliness may be less prominent in a society where several generations live together and many activities are done in groups.

It has been suggested that in our modern society loneliness is the norm, with people living in isolation in a room or an apartment with hundreds of other isolated individuals in the same building, being entertained through earphones, and communicating through variations of text messages. Many people, and an increasing number of us, probably, live in lonely crowds, surrounded by large number of people with whom we have little or no connection. It is very much like living in solitary confinement, which is widely recognized as very damaging.

For the most part, at least up to now, each individual was left on his or her own to cope with the loneliness. Different individuals have probably had different levels of skill in overcoming loneliness. Inadequate coping abilities have, no doubt led to negative outcomes (to use a bureaucratic euphemism), such as substance abuse, crime, and (in extreme circumstances) suicide.

We may be on the verge of a serious change in this picture.

Since it was announced that the United Kingdom has pioneered a Minister of Loneliness, media have been paying attention to the issue. Articles in print media, editorials, call-in shows, reports on research and a variety of other formats have been used to consider the topic. Aspects discussed range from forms of infant care to shaming on social media to isolation resulting from job loss to the plight of the elderly (whose friends and acquaintances — even families — have passed on) and everything conceivable in between.

It will be interesting to see how the Minister of Loneliness tackles the task, what sort of acceptance the Minister meets, what sort of initiatives are proposed and how requests for funding are received.

On the one hand, the first thought that came to mind was, "Is this a version of the CBC's 'This Is That'?" On the other hand, unlike the famous: Ministry of Silly Walks, loneliness often has tragic consequences and is hardly a laughing matter.

COMMENTARY**The Woman Card**

With the provincial election in Ontario only a few months away, Premier Kathleen Wynne appears to be in serious trouble. Up pops Bob Hepburn, a columnist in the *Toronto Star* to ask whether Ms. Wynne's main problem is that she is a woman.

Mr. Hepburn makes a number of assertions in his column on January 11, many of them questionable, helping him build his argument in the manner of a debater rather than contributing to rational thought.

One of the bold assertions in the article is that women are sometimes elected, but they are seldom re-elected. Within days the Letters-to-the-Editor set him straight, providing a list of women who have been re-elected. It is true, mind you, that he restricted his universe to women in Canada, whereas the universe of successful women was international.

Another bold assertion was that Ms. Wynne was elected as Premier in 2014. Actually

she went into that election as Premier of a minority government, and was re-elected with a majority. What is true is that Ms. Wynne became Premier the first time without being elected.

Mr. Hepburn says that voters have cause to be unhappy with Ms. Wynne, and lists several items. He then says that she "has launched some of the most popular and progressive programs in the country", and lists several.

The problem is that the first list, which includes the decision to sell a chunk of Hydro One, consists of unpopular moves made over the years of her government. The second list, including a higher minimum wage, is made up of items introduced within the recent past. Not only are they less than they seem, but they also leave her vulnerable to charges of political opportunism by bringing them in only to buy votes.

That does raise a matter which has not been raised in

this discussion, but which, at some level, must come into play in Ms. Wynne's unpopularity, which is her history of delivering far less than she promised.

An example is her history on car insurance. She promised that she would reduce rates charged by companies, which were the highest in the country. She did that, but the lower rates were for stripped-down coverage. If a consumer wanted the same level of coverage, it would cost more to buy the extra.

The insurance companies were delighted, because they could squeeze out more profit; many drivers were less than pleased, because they got less for their money.

Kathleen Wynne's problem is not that she's a woman, but that she is trying the game played by conservative Premiers like John Robarts, but she only has half their smarts. She knows how to take away after an election but is clumsy at giving a bit back before the next election.

Still, all is not lost. She may yet win the election, just because nobody really trusts the Progressive Conservatives, and the NDP doesn't seem to be making much headway.

Arms for Ukraine

(Continued from Page 3.)
ing proposal was far below the threshold of what would be required to actually implement an impartial peace in the Donbas, Putin's willingness to at least consider it left a slim opening for European diplomats and U.S. Special Representative Kurt Volker to explore options with their Russian counterparts.

Washington's move to provide U.S. lethal weapons stockpiles to the Ukrainians could have an adverse impact on all of these diplomatic processes. By throwing the United States deeper into the Ukrainian morass, President Trump has taken the first giant step toward further American involvement in the likely event that Moscow escalates and the Ukrainian government asks for more weapons.

This is a frightening possibility, particularly for Americans who would prefer not to intervene on behalf of a nation that is not even a member of NATO, and whose political direction is irrelevant to America's policy in Europe.

The unanswered questions are nearly endless, and there is no sign the White House has even begun thinking about them. What, for instance, is the U.S. objective in Ukraine other than simply trying to bleed the Russians in a proxy conflict? When — not if — Russia escalates, what would the Trump administration do to counter it? How far is the U.S. willing to go to frustrate Moscow's ambitions in a country it sees as an extension of its former Soviet glory? What if Putin, in his desire to respond to what he regards as

American aggression in his own back yard, seeks to expand the conflict by stirring up pro-Moscow sentiment among the Russian-speaking populations of the Baltics?

What would NATO do in that situation? Is NATO even prepared for such a contingency? And if they are not, how is any other Eastern European nation supposed to have any confidence in NATO when the transatlantic alliance can't even defend its own members?

When you get down to the core of the matter, the turbulent waters of Ukrainian politics have the potential to send the American ship of state straight towards the dangerous rocks of a geopolitical crisis of its own making. The smartest move for Washington is to stay in the harbour and cede the waters to captains who have more at stake.

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— Story photos: Amber Rain

Trembita Christmas Concert



Just under 150 spectators attended the annual Christmas Concert at the Ukrainian Centre on December 16.



The Trembita Choir performed five songs, including the welcoming song “Laskavo prosymo”, and festive Christmas songs.



The Young Kozaks presented a central Ukrainian character dance with swords.



The Trembita Children's Choir, with vocal soloists Lada Olaru, Elizabeth Shemchuk, and Dasha Lavrinenko, and accompaniment by Vlas Olaru, performed four songs.



The Lileya Dancers opened the concert with “Polissianka”.



Master of Ceremonies Winston Gereluk (left) introduced Edmonton AUUC Branch President Andrew Thompson.

AUUC Edmonton Branch held its annual Christmas Concert on Saturday, December 16, at the Ukrainian Centre, with just under 150 people in attendance. Performances included showcases from the Trembita Arts School and the Trembita Choir.

The program opened with the well experienced Lileya dancers performing the Polissian dance “Polissianka”.

The Trembita Choir followed with a selection of five songs, including (among others) the welcoming “Laskavo prosymo” and festive Christmas songs.

The Tiny Tot dancers performed “Malitka” and, as usual, stole the hearts of the audience.

The Young Kozaks, a new boys group, wowed the audience with their tricks and expertise as they danced with their swords in a character dance from central Ukraine.

The Trembita Children's Choir, with vocal soloists Lada Olaru, Elizabeth Shemchuk, and Dasha Lavrinenko, and accompaniment by Vlas Olaru, performed a medley of four songs celebrating winter and Christmas.

The Kalyna Dancers showed off their new Transcarpathian costumes as they performed “Bereznyanka”.

Kimberly Cochrane, Olesya Nazarenko, Heather Escov and Marina Lavrinenko, with accompaniment by Blyth Nuttal and Lawrence Danyluk displayed their beautiful voices with two numbers.

The program concluded with the ever-popular “Hopak”, performed by the Lileya Dancers.

The concert was followed by a lunch for performers and attendees.

Santa Claus paid a visit to wish everyone happy holidays and hand out treat bags to the children.

Thank you to everyone who assisted in making our Christmas Concert a huge success. This includes, among others, children's dance instructors Maria Vorotilenko and Jordan Onyschuk, children's choir director Marina Lavrinenko, Trembita Arts School accompanist Svetlana Romanov (who, also accompanies the Trembita Choir), and Trembita Choir conductor Olesya Nazarenko.

(Continued on Page 8.)

Ukrainian Miscellany

Threatening Ukraine

Diane Francis, a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council, effectively the civilian arm of NATO, has usually written articles which are very much in line with Ukrainian governmental positions. In mid-January, however, she wrote an article which was in stark contrast to her usual fare.

Perhaps reflecting a rift which appears to be growing between the government of Ukraine and its international bankers, Ms. Francis warned that, "2018 is starting to shape up like 2013. President Petro Poroshenko consolidates his power by foot dragging on reforms promised to Western donors, then by harassing opponents."

She continues, "Like the

Yanukovich era, there is no rule of law, no parliamentary accountability, and no effective pursuit of corrupt officials..." This is a harsh evaluation indeed of the regime which was previously treated with the deference due to an anti-Russian flag-bearer.

Though noting that "conditions resemble those that led to the 2004 and 2014 'street' revolutions," Ms. Francis also notes some differences.

"... Ukraine is armed to the teeth," she writes, with the USA sending Javelin anti-tank missiles and sniper rifles to Ukraine's military. She suggests that these arms will be a factor in "any future street revolution should the current regime refuse to fully reform

the country before the 2019 elections."

With the elections due in just over one year (in spring, 2019) Ms. Francis is not giving the government much time to accomplish a massive job: to eliminate corruption in Ukraine.

"Another difference," she writes, "is that the West, its governments and institutions, are solidly behind Ukrainian aspirations for a real democracy and just society."

Reading all the anti-Yanukovich and anti-Russian propaganda in 2013-14, we are surprised to learn that this would be different this time. However, Ms. Francis clarifies the issue for us. She writes, "Another difference, should change come about through elections or otherwise, is that Ukraine would not be left in chaos as happened in 2014."

The suggestion is certainly that the West would be even more overtly and directly involved than it was in 2014. The people and institutions for such intrusion into Ukraine's affairs are already in place, it seems, for Ms. Francis tell us, "Ukraine has developed stronger financial institutions, important Western allies and expertise, and an 'infrastructure of governance,' consisting of hundreds of honest parliamentarians, executives, financiers, lawyers, activists, international donors and ben-

(Continued on Page 7.)

Note: Readers may detect inconsistencies in the spelling of some words transliterated from Ukrainian, particularly names. Our general rule is not to change spellings that appear in quotations, but to use our preferred spelling outside of quotations. —Ed.

Ukraine "Partly Free"

On January 16, UNIAN reported that Ukraine had been listed as a "partly free" country in the report *Freedom in the World 2018* by Freedom House. Freedom House is identified as an "international non-governmental human rights watchdog engaged in the support and research of the state of democracy, political freedom and respect for fundamental human rights".

On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being most free and 7 being least free, Ukraine was rated a 3.

According to the Freedom House report, "Ukraine continues to recover from the disorder that surrounded the ouster of Viktor Yanukovich from the presidency in 2014, as well as the related crisis sparked by Russia's occupation of Crimea and military support for separatists in Donbas area of eastern Ukraine.

The report says that "political pressure and attacks on journalists have threatened freedom of the press".

The report also noted that efforts to fight widespread

corruption stalled, and in particular that "the independent National Anti-corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) faced political interference, and the chair of a key parliamentary anti-corruption committee was dismissed. New disclosure requirements were imposed on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that focused on combating corruption. A much-anticipated anti-corruption court had yet to be established at year's end. It is also reported that corruption remains a serious problem, and there is little political will to combat it despite strong pressure from civil society."

"...in May, new sanctions restricted Ukrainians' access to popular Russian social media platforms and news outlets. Authorities continued to censor some Russian news sources and ban individual Russian journalists from entering the country."

Freedom House said that the report on Ukraine does not reflect conditions in Crimea, which is examined in a separate report.

IMF Pans Pension Law

On January 18 UNIAN reported that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had criticized Ukraine's pension reform.

According to the report, Gerry Rice, a spokesman for the IMF, at a Washington briefing, said that, "Ukraine's pension reform does not provide for the forming of a fully fair and sustainable pension system in the country."

Along with some important provisions to modernize the pension system in Ukraine, the reform adopted by the Verkhovna rada (Ukraine's parliament) on October 3, which came into effect on October 11, also has some shortcomings.

"It does not fully ensure a fair and sustainable pension

system, so we think a bit more work is needed to be done there," Gerry Rice said.

The IMF wanted the pension provisions to include incentives for later retirement and, consequently, a larger volume of contributions to the Pension Fund.

The IMF noted that, to receive the fifth tranche of IMF support, Ukraine needs to ensure that the pension reform is consistent with the objectives of cooperation, including long-term financial sustainability of the Pension Fund; as well as pass a law on privatization, bring gas tariffs in line with import parity, adopt a budget for 2018 with a deficit of no more than 2.5% of Gross Domestic Product,

(Continued on Page 7.)

Privatization Law

On January 18 Ukraine's parliament (the Supreme Council) adopted a law on privatization, one of the conditions placed by foreign bankers on additional aid from the International Monetary Fund. It is expected that the law will make easier the privatization of more than 3,000 state-owned companies, most (but not all) of them operating at a loss,

It comes as Ukraine is seeking to reassure investors and foreign backers of its commitment to tackle corruption and modernise the economy. Billions of dollars worth of new IMF loans are held back due to Ukraine's perceived backsliding.

Speaking before the vote, Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman said, "This law gives us the opportunity to create tens of thousands of

jobs in the near future in Ukraine, and create conditions for serious economic growth."

According to the government, sale of public assets as a result of this law could generate 21.5 billion hryvnia (\$746.79 million) in 2018.

The law spells out some procedures to follow, including the requirement that international advisers be invited through a tendering process to participate in organizing sales of larger firms.

The law will allow assets to be sold at fire-sale prices, though a series of auctions with decreasing asking prices.

In his remarks, Prime Minister Groysman tied the law to the war on corruption. "The largest sector of corruption today is state-owned enterprises," he said, "which have been used for decades to create corrupt schemes."

Tackling Corruption

(Continued from Page 1.) \$800 million of loan guarantees which the WB was expected to provide shortly.

"It should be recalled," Mr Suslov wrote, "that both the IMF and World Bank are not simply international financial institutions. These are organizations that express the so-called collective will of the West, primarily the United States. The U.S. dominates the IMF and has the right to veto its decisions. It is no coincidence that the IMF's position was publicly supported by U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie L. Yovanovitch..."

Furthermore, Mr Suslov writes that, "As we know, the program of cooperation between Ukraine and the IMF is on the verge of failure. Last year, Ukraine managed to get only \$1 billion from the IMF. At the same time, Kyiv paid the Fund \$1.3 on its debt. The negative trade balance is increasing, as is the pressure on the hryvnia, which has started to fall. So Ukraine desperately needs this IMF money."

Ukraine has failed in other ways to meet the demands of

the IMF under the Extended Fund Facility. It failed to raise gas prices to the public, and it has not created a free market in farm land.

According to Mr. Suslov, the greatest concern is the level of corruption is not decreasing, but growing. The financiers are concerned that the money will be "wasted and stolen, as the probability increases that these loans will never be paid off."

The National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC), is self-admittedly loyal to the authorities, and consults with them on whom to target in anti-corruption investigations.

The National Anti-corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) turned out to be mostly beyond their control, launching real investigations against high profile officials and politicians. The Special Anti-corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO) is also fairly independent. This has led to conflict between the NABU and the Prosecutor General's Office, between the NABU and the Ministry of Internal

Affairs, between the PGO and SAPO, and so on.

The work of NABU is largely undermined, as "its cases are forwarded into courts dependent on the authorities". An independent Anti-Corruption Court is required for progress in combating corruption.

Among the demands of the international financiers, is the alignment of the jurisdiction of the HACC with those of the NABU and the SAPO. They also want to participate in the selection of HACC judges.

Mr. Suslov writes that the choice facing Ukraine is to comply with Western demands, thereby conceding that the country has given up its sovereignty in exchange for foreign money, or to reject the foreign demands and lose the money, incurring a host of economic and social problems.

UNIAN reported that President Poroshenko's administration responded to the IMF criticism by asserting that the "draft law on the High Anti-Corruption Court was developed in accordance with the Constitution of Ukraine and in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission".

Pension

(Continued from Page 6.) as well as meeting other demands. The pension fund budget foresees with UAH 139 billion deficit.

The reform introduced a requirement of a minimum insurance period for retirement, and raised pensions for 9 million pensioners by UAH 200 to UAH 1,000.

In March, 2015, the IMF approved a four-year lending program for Ukraine, the Extended Fund Facility, worth \$17.5 billion. Within the program's framework, the coun-

try has received four tranches from the Fund totalling \$8.7 billion.

Now Ukraine is learning the price of IMF assistance, as foreign moneylenders intrude themselves into all aspects of Ukraine's national life, from

selection of judges to pension arrangements to policy on use of land.

That is all standard IMF operating procedure; what's new in Ukraine are the recent threats of regime change from the Atlantic Council.

Threatening Ukraine

(Continued from Page 6.) efactors, and political leaders."

What does the Atlantic Council (or, at least, Senior Fellow Diane Francis) want from Ukraine?

Diane Francis tells us that President Poroshenko has "four pieces of unfinished business": one, he must "quickly revise his recent sham proposal to create the Anti-Corruption Court by making it truly independent in accordance with the wishes of Ukrainians and Western donors; two, he must stop the harassment of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine; three, he must strip parliament of immunity which perpetuates a 'Club of Crooks' culture ...; and four, he must ban political ads from all television stations during the 2019 elections to remove oligarchic influence."

President Poroshenko making a sham proposal? Harass-

ing anti-corruption fighters? Perpetuating a "Club of crooks" culture?

However, it does not stop there. The threats are made even more explicit. "... another street protest in the months leading up to the elections is likely, and it will garner mass international support. And with their military bulwark against Russia, Ukrainians may finally have a chance to overthrow their odious elites," Ms. Francis writes.

"Odious elites!" Such language with reference to Ukraine's oligarchs would not be a surprise in the *Ukrainian Canadian Herald*, but from someone associated closely with the Atlantic Council in a public forum, it is a definite shocker. Combined with the criticisms from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, it suggests that some major changes may be in the works before the spring of 2019.

Who, What, When, Where

Toronto — AUUC Toronto Branch will host a Valentine Luncheon at the AUUC Cultural Centre, 1604 BloorStreetWest, starting at **noon** on Sunday, **February 11**. Enjoy being with your friends for your choice of a wonderful Baby Point **hot roast beef or chicken lunch** "with all the fixin's" and refreshments. Call Nancy at **416-766-8895**, or email **nancy.stewart2@rogers.com**. Admission: **\$20:00**.

* * *

Readers of the Ukrainian Canadian Herald are invited to submit items of interest to the progressive Ukrainian Canadian community for free listing in this column. The deadline for material is the 10th of the month preceding the month of publication.



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Happy Birthday, Friends!



The **Edmonton AUUC Senior Citizens' Club** wishes a happy birthday to the celebrants of February:

Roy Piepenberg
Fanny Hruschak

May you have good health, happiness and a daily sense of accomplishment as you go through life.

The **Toronto Senior Citizens Club** extends best birthday wishes to February celebrant:

Patricia Dzatko

May good health and happiness be yours in the coming year!

The **Vancouver Seniors Club** wishes the best of health and happiness in the coming year to February celebrants:

Dianna Kleparchuk
Leona Levchuk
Dora Stewart

May you have good health, happiness and a daily sense of accomplishment as you go through life.

The **Welland Shevchenko Seniors** extend a happy birthday wish to February celebrants:

Joy Edwards
Nancy Ivanchek
Olga Young

May the coming year bring you all the best in health and happiness!

Era Ends at AUUC Welland Branch

— File photo: Jerry Dobrowolsky



Rudy Wasylenky emceed, conducted, sang and played — before announcing his retirement.

Every year, Welland's Shevchenko Seniors, based in the Ukrainian Labour Temple, throw a party to thank the many people who work every second week throughout the year to make the hundreds of dozens of perogies which pay the bills at the ULT.

Usually this event is held in December, with the Welland Ukrainian Mandolin Orchestra (AUUC) providing a concert with a Christmas theme. In 2017, however, with Christmas eve and New Year's eve both falling on Sundays, a suitable December day was not available; therefore the party was scheduled for Sunday, January 7, a date known by many names, including Little Christmas and Orthodox Christmas.

Thus it was that, for the first time in decades, the Shevchenko Seniors' Christmas Party was held on the weekend when many Ukrainian Canadians including some Branches of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, celebrate Malanka.

Of course, Malanka has its own rich traditions. These practices, many of which have their temporal roots in pagan seasonal celebrations, have slowly disappeared in some Ukrainian Canadian communities. What endures is the spirit of celebration, of fellowship, and of thanksgiving.

So it was in Welland. In the context of a rescheduled annual event, people came together to celebrate the season,

to share their friendship and common purpose, and to express their gratitude for successfully navigating another year.

The afternoon started traditionally — with the presentation by the orchestra. This is a performance which many of the musicians consider their favourite. The atmosphere is very informal, with constant banter between the players and the very friendly audience. Listening is only one option; people are encouraged to sing along and dance as the spirit moves them. With the variety of familiar music, the spirit moves them often.

The first number on the 16-item program was the traditional Christmas carol "Silent Night". This group performs it with the musicians singing the part which they are playing. A pleasant choral effect is the result, with vocal soloist Margaret Card and conductor Rudy Wasylenky leading the singing.

The second number was also a seasonal favourite — "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer". The vocal, with appropriate visual effects, was by Wayne Hosick, who in other numbers also contributed on the mandola and the guitar.

(It should be noted that all vocal numbers were accompanied by the orchestra.)

The third song continued the seasonal theme, as Margaret Card sang "The Christmas Song", also known as "Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire".

The first of seven numbers not related to the season was the instrumental "Autumn Leaves". Acting as M.C. (as well as conductor and singer), Rudy Wasylenky announced that this was on the play list because it is one of his favourite songs.

Then it was back to the season, and Margaret Card, with "(I'm Dreaming of a) White Christmas".

A peppy rendition by the orchestra of "Pennsylvania Polka" brought the dancers



Margaret Card sang in 11 of the 16 numbers on the program, as well as the encore.

out of their chairs.

This was followed by a more sedate, but strongly stirring, "Golden Earrings", with Margaret Card.

Margaret continued with "Silver Bells", a seasonal tune originally arranged for the orchestra as an instrumental piece.

It was Margaret-three-in-a-row as "Hey, Good Lookin'" gave the versatile singer an opportunity to resort to a voice which, perhaps, is best described as raunchy. This selection included an interesting mandolin duet played by Natalie Silkiewicz and Rudy. Unfortunately, many in the audience may have been too distracted to hear it.

Wayne Hosick returned for his second vocal solo, "Jingle Bells".

The next vocal solo, by Wilfred Szczesny, was "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town", continuing the seasonal theme.

It was Margaret Card for three more again, starting with the smooth "Could I Have This Dance?", and ending with the plaintive "Oh, Lonesome Me". Separating them was a "Santa, Baby" which must surely have stimulated Santa's generosity.

The last non-seasonal tune was an arrangement of "This Land Is Your Land", featuring a vocal duet by Margaret Card and Wilfred Szczesny, with Rudy Wasylenky joining to make it a trio.

In recognition of the season, though a week late, the last number on the program was "Auld Land Syne". The orchestra played as Margaret led the assembly is song.

By popular demand — a

— File Photo: Jerry Dobrowolsky

standing ovation with prolonged applause — the orchestra played "Beer Barrel Polka" as an encore (solo by Margaret Card) providing a final opportunity for singing and dancing.

After the concert ended, Rudy announced that this would be his last appearance. After about a quarter-century of association with the orchestra, including about twenty years as the conductor, he was relinquishing his baton.

Joan Sitak, President of the Shevchenko Seniors, spoke words of gratitude to Rudy.

In the absence of AUUC Welland Branch President Wanda Lukan, who was in Sudbury with her husband, Bill, for serious personal reasons, Branch Vice-President Clara Babi expressed an emotional "thank you" to the departing conductor and presented a token of appreciation.

In his response, Rudy spoke about his heavy load of other activities, the growing burden of illness in his home, and his accumulation of years.

Rudy will continue his relationship with the community in Welland as part of the perogy-making operation and through his membership in AUUC Welland Branch. He has also indicated his willingness to provide any assistance which might be needed by a new conductor. He has also turned over all the musical arrangements he did, including scores for most of them.

The Branch has started the process of finding another conductor. However, the task of maintaining AUUC performing arts activity in the city will be made more difficult as a number of performers have

announced their retirement or indicated their intention to go to other orchestras. The difficulties notwithstanding, the Branch is examining its options.

The orchestra's performance did not end the afternoon. The traditional meal of veggies and dip, cheese and crackers (including an excellent cheese ball made by Joan Sitak), pizza and wings, with a variety of salads and desserts, with suitable libations to accompany the food was still to come.

While waiting for their meal, in the course of dining, and as the afternoon wore down, supporters spoke with Rudy to extend their best wishes, and members of the orchestra said their goodbyes in anticipation of the future.

An era lasting a quarter of a century came to an end.

— Carl Honor

Trembita

(Continued from Page 5.)

We are also grateful for the work of the stage team/food preparations/set-up done by Lionel Fruhbrot, Winston Gereluk (who also served as Master of Ceremonies), and Edmonton AUUC Branch President Andrew Thompson.

Donalda Cassel designed a beautiful printed program.

Yelena Koltunova, Sofia Lavrinenko, Leslie and Kelly Bibkevich, and many others also deserve our gratitude for the generous work they have done.

Best wishes in the new year to all!

— Tamara Krausher
Director
Trembita Arts School

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The Welland Ukrainian Mandolin Orchestra (AUUC) performed at the Ukrainian Labour Temple on January 7. Rudy Wasylenky announced his retirement, leaving the AUUC Welland Branch with a challenging rebuilding task.

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