

To build and broaden the existing network

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TWG President (1993-1995)

(reprint from 2004 Leadership Conference Booklet)

While democracy continued its struggle to gain a secure footing in the countries of the former Soviet Union, TWG was settling comfortably into its role as the premier forum for sharing ideas and opinions. Among our chief objectives was to increase the public visibility, both here and abroad, of Ukraine and Ukrainian-Americans and to take our community beyond our insular mindset.

We strove to develop long-term relationships with influential local institutions, co-sponsoring panel discussions and presentations with the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Center for Strategic and International Studies, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Freedom House and Meridian House, all the while continuing to strengthen ties with the newly established Ukrainian Embassy, which had by this time found permanent quarters in a historic edifice in fashionable Georgetown.

Buoyed by the challenges and hopes of a newly independent Ukraine, TWG leadership during this period focused on presenting to the American public academic, political and cultural representatives of the new Ukrainian nation. The annual TWG Leadership Conference continued to be the bellwether of Ukrainian issues. Among the noted guests who addressed both Ukrainian and American audiences under the TWG banner during my tenure included:

Leonid Kravchuk, former president of Ukraine; Roman Popadiuk, first U.S. ambassador to Ukraine; William Green Miller, the second U.S. ambassador to Ukraine; Oleh Bilorus, first Ukrainian ambassador to the U.S.; Victor Pynzenyk, Ukraine's deputy prime minister; General Kostiantyn Morozov, Ukraine's first minister of defense and U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D – NY), representing a large Ukrainian constituency.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security advisor to President Carter, who had addressed the first Leadership Conference in 1986, was a special guest

at the inaugural TWG reception at the new Ukrainian Embassy preceding our annual Conference in 1994. Also present at that reception were two wide-eyed youngsters, fresh from their triumphs at the 1994 Winter Olympics — Oksana Baiul and Viktor Petrenko.

TWG's 1993 Friend of Ukraine Award was awarded to philanthropist George Soros for the work of his International Renaissance Foundation in Ukraine. The award was accepted on behalf of Mr. Soros by IMF executive, Oleh Havrylyshyn, at the Conference banquet.

Besides politicians and policy makers, TWG also welcomed a flood of other visitors passing through the Washington gateway, representing a broad spectrum: journalists, business leaders, artists, students, and academics.

With a performance by Lviv's Les Kurbas Theater, we launched the TWG Cultural Fund, now in its 10th year under the tireless guidance of its founder, Laryssa Courtney, bringing Ukrainian art and culture into the Washington mainstream.

Behind the public curtain, TWG representatives began to be included in private briefings conducted by Clinton administration officials for the Ukrainian and other ethnic communities.

During the state visit of Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, November 22-24, 1994, I was honored to represent TWG at the welcoming ceremonies and press conference. The president's chief of staff, Dmytro Tabachnyk, made a stopover in advance of the state visit, meeting with TWG officers at a private dinner / roundtable discussion.

At TWG's farewell reception for Ambassador and Mrs. Oleh Bilorus at the Ukrainian Embassy in September 1994, we celebrated TWG's tenth anniversary.

Working toward accomplishing TWG's mission, steps were taken to build and broaden the existing network of Ukrainian-Americans. At the same time, TWG was intricately involved in examining ways to integrate the global Ukrainian community into a common effort. This became a common theme of our panels and forums, then and in the future.

A new tradition began — the Independence Day Picnic — in conjunction with the Baltimore hromada and the Ukrainian Embassy staff and families.

Employing the example of our Canadian neighbors, TWG provided the impetus for the February 1994 launch of a Federation of Ukrainian-American Business and Professional Associations. Charter member organizations included TWG, as well as the Bs&Ps from Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit/Windsor, NY/NJ, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Rochester. Former TWG President Lydia Chopivsky-Benson was named head of the new Federation. TWG was also called upon for assistance in establishing sister organizations in California and Poland, as well as in Washington State, where the fourth wave of immigrants from Ukraine would soon take up residence.

At the infancy of the Internet age, through the foresight of a cadre of individuals, most notably Max Pyziur, TWG published a *Directory of Internet Resources* as a supplement to its own Member Directory. Max would later become one of the principals behind the Ukrainian website venture, BRAMA. TWG's Internet guide was an early tool encouraging use of the Web for communication among Ukrainians around the world.

Only through the energy, dedication and initiative of its members, has TWG rightly established its place as the premier organization among Ukrainian Americans. My special thanks go to the talented people with whom I was privileged to serve: Auditing Committee: Steven Boyduy, Andrew Charchalis, R.L. Chomiak, John Kun; TWG News Editor: Yaro Bihun; Board of Directors: Sophia Caryk, Lydia Chopivsky Benson, Laryssa Courtney, Orest Deychakiwsky, Michael Drabyk, Yuriy Holowinsky, Martha Jarosewich, Adrian Karmazyn, Maria Kulczycky, Ksenia Kuzmycz, George Masiuk, Sofika Nakonechna, Orysia Pylyshenko, Ihor Procinsky, Bohdan Radejko, Natalie Sluzar, Richard Smith, Roman Stelmach, Michael Terpak, Marta Zielyk, and, especially, my vice-president Andrew Bihun.