

*“Where everyone is kin; with a sense of worth, over all the Earth”*

~ adapted from Robert Burns/Gordon McInally, RI President 2023-24

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### **WEEKLY MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday January 10, 2024

Hybrid Meeting

Frank Adamson, Paul Snack, Hugh Graham, Dave Schulz, Bob Eamer, Annie Holtby, Lance Wiebe, Mike Taylor, Carolyn Mullin, Ann Harrison, Mel Groom, Collins Acheampong, Sharon Pfeifer, Satoka Hiyashi, Beverley North, Michael Hrycusko

1. **Welcome Irene and Ron Newton; Irene is our guest speaker from Canada Ukraine Congress. F**

2. **Land Acknowledgement. Mike**

*We begin this gathering by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis and Inuit people and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.*

3. **Toast & National Anthem. Lance & Carolyn**

- a) To the King and Canada, To the Office of the President of the United States, To the President of Rotary International and To the Office of the Prime Minister of Japan.
- b) National Anthem

4. **4-WAY TEST. Lance**

Of the things we think, say, or do  
Is it the truth?  
Is it fair to all concerned?  
Will it build good will and better friendships?  
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

5. **Invocation. Frank**

*“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little”*

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt

6. **President's Report. Correspondence and Announcements.**

**Reminder about Dues are DUE.**

**5 Wednesdays in January.** Social Breakfast at Domenic's January 31. Please register.

Check Newsletters etc. January 26. Paddle fundraiser for Food 4 Kids.

There is **information** about **District Training** on our website.

**Auction survey Hugh. Survey has gone out.** 18 members participated in the auction. We're inviting everyone to fill out this survey to help us going forward. Thanks..

**Family Day Free Skate. Paul** we're sponsoring a Free Skate. February 19<sup>th</sup>. It's reserved for an hour. 11 –noon. We're accepting donations for Food4Kids.

**Home Show in April. Hugh.** We have enough coverage to participate. I'll keep you informed.

**Farm Fest feedback. Paul.** Gist of the feedback we received was that maybe we should pause. Paul's not as available with hip surgery 3 months apart.

7. **Introduction of today's Speaker. Ann Harrison introduced Irene Newton, born Irene Shumylo.**

She came to Canada in 1952 at the age of one and lived in St. Catharines all her life. Irene grew up in the Ukrainian community, sang in Ukrainian choirs, danced in a Ukrainian dance group and belonged to the Ukrainian Youth Association. She is married to Ron Newton, with 2 children and 2 step-children and now has 7 grandchildren.

After retiring from teaching in the public elementary system for 35 years, the last 6 years as a school principal, and working with the teacher's union on negotiating team, Irene managed the Ukrainian Black Sea Hall Cultural and Banquet Centre for 5 years. She volunteered with both the Ukrainian church and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress in St. Catharines.

Currently she is President of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, and has been President of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress-Niagara Region Branch for the last 10 years, as well as Vice-President of the UCC Ontario Provincial Council, and Vice-President of the League of Ukrainian Women in Canada-St. Catharines branch.

She also serves on the Niagara District Council of Women (strangely not Ukrainian).

Right now their efforts are all coordinated to help the Ukrainian people.

**Presentation by Irene. Irene** reminded us that this February 2024 marks 2 years of Ukraine's war with Russia and that the local UKRAINIANS and outer community haven't stopped helping, including Government, and continue to support. The first Rally in 2023 in Niagara Falls was asking for financial support. Putin's goal is to absorb Ukraine into Russia and get the other eastern countries back into Russia, 'We've' done everything we can to protest those eastern countries. The fear now is war fatigue. There is more conflict elsewhere and Russia is involved. St John's Ukrainian Church is now sending drones. Last year we sent generators, warm clothing. All through people helping – all volunteers. We help send things. There's a registered Niagara Ukraine Fund. It started with donations from a Doctor that gave us the means, through his will, to help Ukraine people in this area. Highest need is rent. Irene says to new arrivals that she'll try and get them a place, furniture, clothing. We've made arrangements with furniture companies. We're still doing all this work. Ron is so helpful.

St John's Church is our biggest support. 5000 cargo packages have been sent to Ukraine, first through air to Poland, and then trucked into Ukraine. We hold rallies, candlelight ones for mothers, soldiers on the Front. Casa Dante has done fundraising as has the Vietnamese

community and the Philippian community. It's very heartwarming but it looks bleak – it's two years now. We can't let it go.

Any questions?

**Bob.** Has the flow of people out of Ukraine slowed? **Irene.** A bit but not a lot. Jobs are good in the tourist season. Most are coming from eastern Ukraine. Lots of children. All sign up at the food bank.

**Frank.** How many families? **Irene.** Well over 500. There are a lot of asylum seekers from Chile, Mexico, Haiti, Syria, and Pakistan. I work with great companies who will take them on.

**Paul.** What are your immediate needs? **Irene.** RENT! At Christmas we bought 1000's of Gift Cards for Walmart, Food Basics, and No Frills. Through Amazon, WE were gifted \$25,000 of gift cards to be distributed to families at Christmas. We've also been getting deals on mattresses, furniture.

**Mel.** Do you have storage? If a house is being cleared out? **Irene.** No Warehouse.

**Lance.** Question about ESL. **Irene.** No. At beginning it was easier. Now more people need it so longer line ups. It's harder to get in and takes a 3-4 months' wait. There are daytime and evening classes. Evening classes are for workers.

**Ann.** Do you help them get into the schools? **Irene.** Yes, we connect with secondary schools with ESL.

**Collins.** Did you work with government agencies? **Irene.** We work with Multicultural Centres, and the Niagara Refugee Organisations. There are no direct links with government. Ukrainians are not refugees – they don't get status. They receive \$3000 per adult and \$1500 per child and that's it. They do receive OHIP plus a SIN number plus a work permit through government. We know who our partners are locally. Long term drivers from Ukraine have to do driving tests. It's not a government organisation, it's a 'money grab.' Every province is different.

**Carolyn.** Thank you, **Irene,** for this update on the work you're doing. It's all vital! We have on line applications and one came through from the Canadian Ukraine Congress. We awarded them \$1500 and would like to present that cheque to Irene now.

**Also, in honour of you speaking today Irene,** we make a donation in your honour to Pelham Cares for their New Comer Program.

8. **Happy Loonies. Annie. Thanks for great notes, Lance!**

**Mike.** Thanked Irene. I'm, glad to see how they are helping so many people.

**Collins.** Happy to be here and interested in helping out in the future with other folks coming to Canada

**Sharon.** Happy to pay it forward, appreciative of family, glad kids back at school. LOL

**Bob** went to Willy Wonka with Grands had fun ate lots of popcorn, message in movie.

**Paul** With pending hip surgery, I'm looking for a walker. .

**Annie.** Thank you, Irene. Peter's Grandparents came over from Ukraine to Sudbury many years ago when they settled in Canada after the WWI.

**Hugh.** Appreciated the presentation and remembers getting his driver's license. Playing Hockey again and only fell 3 times!

**Frank.** Thanks to presenters for motivating topic and the work they are doing.

**Mel.** Very inspiring presentation and tragic how this is playing out in Ukraine.  
Heading for a trip to Costa Rica.

**Lance** Happy Nylander signed with the Leafs and fun to watch Leafs win 7 to 1.

**Ann.** Appreciate energy of Irene and the work she does! I'm excited my daughter is coming home to celebrate Ukrainian Christmas.

**Satoka** is happy to be back at school with her friends.

**Carolyn.** Dad at home now; still in a lot of pain.

**Bev (on zoom)** Thanks for presentation. On my way to a meeting

**Irene.** Happy to be involved in our activities. Thanks, Rotary, for the monetary contribution.

**January 17<sup>th</sup>** Julie Andrews, Lincoln Pelham Library

**January 24<sup>th</sup>** Board Meeting MCC Concession area. Everyone is welcome.

**January 31<sup>st</sup>** Breakfast at Dominic's. Please sign up!