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The Bloor West Village Toronto Ukrainian Festival is the largest Ukrainian Street Festival in North America, and includes a parade, different forms of entertainment and a film festival.

The objectives of the Festival are to: Promote and foster Ukrainian culture and traditions as integral elements of Canada's multicultural mosaic; provide a venue for Canadians of Ukrainian heritage to reacquaint themselves with their rich roots; introduce Ukrainian culture to the general Ca-

nadian public and tourists thereby encouraging tolerance, understanding and goodwill between all segments of Canadian society and create a free event that's fun for the whole family and across all age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Toronto is the centre for Ukrainian culture in Eastern Canada. By the early 1950's, approximately 84,000 Ukrainians resided in Ontario, and Toronto became the new "Ukrainian capital". As they have done all across Canada, Ukrainians made significant

marks in every facet of Ontario life by contributing to the local communities. The Toronto Ukrainian Festival is a celebration of the Canadian Ukrainian cultural contributions in Toronto.

The Festival started in 1995 as the result of the twinning of Toronto and Kyiv, and then came under the umbrella of Ukrainian Canadian Congress

Toronto Branch as one of its projects. Attendance in the first year was estimated at 3,000; however the Festival has grown to



Peter is shown here with the very Reverend Ihor Kutash formerly from Bellis, Alberta and his son Andriy Kutash at the Bloor Street West Ukrainian Festival.



attract audiences of 350,000 and more.

The Festival gives an opportunity for contemporary professional and amateur artists and performers of Ukrainian heritage who celebrate Ukrainian culture through music, dance and visual arts to showcase their talents to the Ukrainian community and the wider community as well.

One of the focuses for this year's festival was the 120th anniversary of the arrival of the first Ukrainian immigrant to Canada. As well, this year marks the 21st anniversary of Ukrainian Independence.

The performers – dancers, vocalists and musicians – came not only from the Toronto area but also from across Canada and the USA. Included were well known artists such as Auresia, Zhyto and, from Ukraine, Oleh Skrypka & VV.

It was a return to familiar places for Mr. Goldring, who was born in Toronto and spent his childhood in the area the Festival is held, including attending Keel Street Public School and as a child playing in High Park.

When he addressed the crowd Mr. Goldring talked about Ukrainians in Canada, the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Group and current Canada-Ukraine relations.



As Vice Chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, Peter is asked to bring greetings and speak for the committee.

"I am pleased to once again be here with you all and bring greetings and best wishes from the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group.

"Today we wrap up celebrations of Ukrainians' settlement in Canada. Celebrating settlers such as that of my wife Lorraine's family, the Taschuks, who came to western Canada in 1905 to farm. I had the occasion,

on one of my many trips to Ukraine, to marvel at the rich deep farming soil of the Poltava region – marvel, because I immediately saw the similarity to the rich deep soil of Northern Alberta, and recognized why many Ukrainians settled there.

"Canada was the first western nation to recognize Ukraine's independence from the Soviet Union in

1991, and our two great

countries have been close friends ever since. Certainly 120 years of Ukrainian history in Canada is something worth celebrating. That small trickle of immigrants who first landed in Halifax in 1891 became a giant wave that has grown to 1.2 million Ukrainian-Canadians today.

"Since 1991, Canada has invested considerable effort and resources in support of Ukraine's democratic transformation and



political and economic reform as well as its integration into Euro-Atlantic and international structures and institutions. These efforts have further accelerated since the “Orange Revolution” of December 2004. Canadian election observers have helped ensure free and fair Ukrainian presidential elections in December 2004 and parliamentary elections in March 2006 and September 2007. Canada welcomed Ukraine’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in May 2008 and supports Ukraine’s aspirations for eventual North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership.”

In 1999 Mr. Goldring was first to call Holodomor a genocide in Parliament. Mr. Goldring has been a long-time proponent that the Holodomor was the Ukrainian holocaust, as it was not an act of nature but an act of man.

In 2008, at the annual Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Astana, Kazakhstan, he spoke forcefully against a Russian attempt to re-write the history of the 1932-33 Holodomor.

“The more than 8 million who perished in Ukraine in this planned famine, the Holodomor, did not die from the ravages of nature, nor the scourge of pestilence, nor by the obliteration of war, but by the hand of man.

“Seventy-five years ago, the world took no action against such a tragedy. There were no commemorations. Since then, with every horrible incident of a people killed by their own government, we are painfully reminded of the high costs paid by future generations for past inaction against the horrors and genocides inflicted by the human race on itself.

“By adopting this resolution and commemorating the Holodomor, we will take an important step forward in stopping this cycle. We remember the victims of the Holodomor, of the dark side of humanity, and by remembering we help the world guard against those who would repeat such genocide.

“In May of 2008, the Parliament of Canada recognized the Holodomor as an act of genocide.

“I wish to make one more point that is salient to this issue. Media in Montreal reported that the Holodomor may have been crop failure. I grew up on a farm that had very poor soil, more clay than loam. Growing crops was a challenge even with good weather. I envied farmers with good land.

“When I first visited my wife-to-be’s family farm in Northern Alberta, I was struck by the rich deep soil. They have farmed that land for more than 100 years without crop failure,



Peter, a former member of the Royal Canadian Air Force, with Luba Goy of the Royal Canadian Air Force and Member of Parliament Wladyslaw Lizon.

coming to Canada from Ukraine in 1905. Last year I was election monitoring in the Poltava region of Ukraine, 300 Km east of Kiev. I was struck again by the richness of the land and similarity with Northern Alberta. I even commented to local citizens about this similarity.

“Rich land such as this is not subject to catastrophic crop failure by pestilence or drought. Ukraine’s famine was diabolically man-made.

“Those that believe that the Holodomor was simply a famine are wrong. The word Holodomor comes from two words: starvation and murder/kill. A famine is mostly created by

“nature”; by weather, by insect infestation, by poor soil. The Holodomor was created by one “man”.

Recently Mr. Goldring called for the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development to conduct a study of the Canada-Ukraine relationship, with a historical review of the past 21 years since independence and projections for the future, focussing not only on the geopolitical landscape of the region but also on trade, human rights and the regional economy.

UPDATE: In October 2012, Peter travelled to Ukraine with CANADEM, accredited as being an official election observer. He took note of transparency issues at the polling station in Volyn where he was assigned, and publicly spoke out about such electoral transgressions upon his return home.

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This brochure series is intended to highlight special issues that Member of Parliament, Peter Goldring, has been involved in. If you wish to comment, please take a moment to fill out the survey below, write or call to the address above.

Your Opinion Matters...

Question #1 Did you follow the 2012 Ukrainian Parliamentary election?

Yes

No

Question #2 Have you ever visited the Bloor Street West festival, or any similar festivals celebrating a specific culture?

Yes

No

Comments: _____

Name: _____
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