

Ukraine

Continued from Page 20

loved the reverence for homemade food, clothes, embroidery, and folk crafts.

“Ukrainians highly value gardening and farm animals, just like me!” she said.

Then she met a shy and quiet Ukrainian man.

“I wasn’t interested at first, but he was stubborn, and won me over,” she said of the man she married.

Never imagined Russia would invade

“When I think back to the steps I made in junior high, and how I imagined my future, I would not have imagined living on a farm in Ukraine,” Baima said. “I also would not have imagined that the country where I had lived for five years would invade my new home.”

Many people have urged her to leave Ukraine, but she says “this is my home.”

“Does a wife leave her husband when he is in danger?” she asks. “Do I evacuate and leave Yurii alone to take care of his aging mother, family, and

‘I’m hoping the world will respond fast enough that the foot soldiers don’t come in.’



-Diane (Westphal) Baima, a 1989 Elk River Hlgh School graduate who lives in Ukraine

all of our animals and plants? I can’t.

“I’ve made my choice to remain with Yurii, my brave Ukrainian warrior. He’s ready to fight to keep Ukraine independent. In our eyes, the war right now in Ukraine is the battle to keep the world independent. Are people willing to be just a compassionate spectators as the world’s dictators choose their next target? Or will they fight? With their votes. With their money. With their protests.”

Lanny Westphal said it may only be a matter of days or weeks before Russian soldiers push past the core of Kyiv.

The news of war breaking out in Ukraine was particularly troubling to the Westpahls, who lost Glen Westphal to

COVID-19 on May 21, 2021. He was the brother of Diane, Lanny and Nancy (Shawn) Norton of Idaho. They and their mother, Florence Shebetka, of Elk River, have been mourning his loss while grappling with the onslaught of war.

Meanwhile, Baima’s husband has signed up with the local militia, the couple’s two sheep are almost ready to give birth and they have media on constantly and are witnessing a flood of love throughout the world, Baima said before going to bed on March 3.

“It seems like world news has invaded our family between COVID and the Ukraine,” Lanny Westpahl said. “That’s sad and worrying. We’re fortunate that so far Diane has been able to

communicate with us by internet and telephone. It’s comforting to hear from her.”

Baima’s and Potapenko’s farmstead is about an hour drive south from the center of Kyiv. The couple considers themselves lucky because where their house sits has not been the site of any invasions as the Russians come down from the north. However, Yurii’s sister lives in an area that was one of the first areas bombed.

“We can make contact with them so far, but we can’t go get them,” Baima said. “We picked up my husband’s adult son and his wife on Friday, Feb. 26. Yurii picked them up from Kyiv. Luckily we did because they live right where the bombing has taken place. They have been with us since.

“I’m hoping the world will respond fast enough that the foot soldiers don’t come in,” Baima said. “We constantly hear people saying we’re praying for you, we’re praying for you and I think that’s lovely, but we need weapons and action.

“Just thinking about us isn’t going to help at this point. We need action right now. My friends are



Submitted photo

Yurii Potapenko and his wife Diane (Westphal) Baima sporting winter hats.

still in Kyiv and Kharkiv. That’s why I started writing. I wanted something for my brother and brother-in-law who are pastors to be able to use for sermons to rally people.”

Baima has also asked people to give to organizations like the Ukrainian American Community Center, founded in 1964 by Ukrainian immigrants in Northeast Minneapolis, and others that they would be comfortable giving to that are providing aid to Ukraine. She also points people to the Kyiv International School, her

former school. Its website is: <https://kyiv.qsi.org/discover/stand-with-ukraine>.

Lanny Westpahl said he is distributing his sister’s story widely. The Lutheran pastor is also offering up his prayers.

“By prayer we align our thoughts and hearts and intentions with God’s,” he said. “Because of that, then, since God is a God of peace and values life, we are aligning ourself with that, which makes us more capable of taking action.”

ONLINE MARKETING MADE EASY

**Struggling to reach your target customers online?
WE CAN HELP!**

**Programmatic Online Display,
Email Marketing, Social Media Advertising,
Search Engine Marketing, Online Video & more!**

FREE CONSULTATION!

AGENCY LEVEL SERVICES!



For More Information Contact

STAR NEWS

Nicole Vadner
nicole.vadner@apgecm.com
763-241-3677

Tracie Wivoda
tracie.wivoda@apgecm.com
763-241-3659

LET’S TALK ABOUT HOW, WHO AND WHERE YOU WANT TO TAKE YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING!