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Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Fundraiser and talk marks fourth anniversary of Russia’s
2 invasion of Ukraine

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4 TEXT BODY:

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5 In recognition of the four-year anniversary of the Russian
6 invasion of Ukraine, Kerry Secrest, Honorary Consul of Lithuania
7 to Vermont, and the Windham World Affairs Council are co-
8 hosting a talk: “Reflections at the Four-Year Mark of Russia’s
9 Invasion of Ukraine,” by Gediminas Varvuolis, Ambassador of the
10 Republic of Lithuania to the United States, Thursday, Feb. 5, from
11 5 to 6 p.m., at Saxtons River Distillery, 155 Chickening Drive.

12 The event is free, and monetary donations toward care
13 packages containing essential items such as mini cookstoves,
14 protein bars, and hand warmers are welcome.

15 “This is a rare opportunity for the Brattleboro area to hear
16 directly from a European ambassador about issues that are
17 shaping our global future. I hope our community will come out
18 on Feb. 5 and show how engaged and mighty this small town
19 truly is,” Secrest said in a news release.

20 Ambassador Varvuolis will offer an inside view of
21 Lithuania’s unwavering support for Ukraine and what it will take
22 to achieve a durable peace in the region. He will offer his
23 perspective on the evolving Baltic security landscape, including
24 Lithuania’s model for burden-sharing, defense investment, and
25 energy independence at a time when resilience is essential. His
26 remarks will illuminate both the stakes for Europe and the lessons
27 that resonate far beyond its borders.

28 Ambassador Varvuolis has built a distinguished
29 diplomatic career spanning three decades, representing Lithuania
30 across Europe, Asia, and now the United States. His leadership
31 has shaped Lithuania’s role in global security and cooperation,
32 according to a news release a news release, from advancing
33 NATO integration and crisis management early in his career to
34 steering major initiatives such as the Three Seas Initiative and
35 deepening transatlantic partnerships.

36 Serving as ambassador in capitals from Paris and Brussels
37 to Tokyo and Washington, “he has consistently strengthened
38 Lithuania’s voice on the world stage,” organizers wrote.

39 “Lithuania knows from history that aggression left
40 unchecked does not stop at borders. Ukrainians are holding the
41 line — often in freezing darkness — on behalf of a democratic
42 world. Supporting them is an investment in global security and
43 freedom,” said Secrest.

44 Immediately after the talk on Feb.5, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.,
45 siblings Kerry Secrest and Christian Stromberg, owner of Saxtons
46 River Distillery, are sponsoring and holding a solidarity cocktail

47 hour and bonfire, "Warmth in the Cold: An Evening for Ukraine,"
48 to raise money for winter care packages. All proceeds from the
49 cocktail hour will be donated to the cause.

50 Together, they say their hope is to raise \$10,000 to send
51 200 care packages to Ukrainian soldiers through Blue/Yellow
52 USA, a nonprofit initiative to provide aid to Ukraine.

53 "Every day, Ukrainians are forced to survive below
54 freezing temperatures on the front lines and in their own homes,
55 as ruthless bombing continues to destroy their electrical grid.
56 Between unimaginable violence and brutal cold, the people of
57 Ukraine need our warmth more than ever," said Julianne Kaplan,
58 event volunteer.

59 Monetary donations for winter care packages can be
60 made at bit.ly/851-ukraine, or to lithuaniavermont.com.

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