

Oksana and I are pleased to announce the birth of a daughter, Zoriana Melania Seibert, on September 7 weighing 3.7 kg and 54 centimeters long. Her middle name is in honor of her great grandmother, a Holodomor survivor still hanging in at 95.

It was a home birth with a practiced midwife and all of the backup mechanisms one could hope for. Easiest birth I as a father have ever been through. The due date of August 28 being ten days past, we were just about to go with induced labor. That morning Oksana had a long massage from her favorite masseuse, just returned from six months in the US, and her labor started about 3:00 PM. Sveta, the midwife, showed up about 4:30. She had me make myself useful – prepare special tea, fetch chairs and the like, and then closed the door to be alone with Oksana. Next notice I had was at 6:40 -- go upstairs and meet my daughter – briefly – before the women got back to the rest of their business.

I don't feel whatsoever deprived that the women reserved this quintessentially feminine event to themselves. I feel immense joy and relief that Oksana and Zoriana are healthy.

That's the announcement. This kind of communication is infrequent. The last time was almost six years ago, when our son Eddie was born. I'm taking this opportunity to catch you up on what's going on in our lives. Since not everybody is interested in every aspect, I'm doing it as hyperlinks.

We are raising [Eddie](#) now almost six, very differently than I raised my grown family of three children. There are multiple reasons: I'm retired, I live in a different country, Oksana's perspective on raising children is more in agreement with my own views, and it is a different culture. Lastly, Eddie is a different child.

[Oksana](#) and my social circle consists pretty much entirely of Ukrainians of her age and younger. Though I have a number of Ukrainian acquaintances of my generation, we generally don't get past the point of casual conversation. Our life at this juncture consists of raising children and helping educate other people's kids. My contemporaries' lives are those of retirees.

We bought 1/3 of an acre back in 2011, shortly after we married. We designed a home, took the plans to an architect, and got it built. We moved in July 2013. It is a small five-bedroom affair, more space than we need. Shortly after moving in, we invited friends Yuriy and Polina to live in the large guest room. They got engaged, married, and on July 30 celebrated their second wedding anniversary here. Two years ago as another friend, Marina, was splitting up we invited her to join us as well. Eddie is growing up in a house full of adults who love him, educate him, and aren't afraid to tell him what he needs to hear.

As you might have gathered from the very Ukrainian name we chose this time, we are committed to raising our family here. It is not without its risks. There are threats both from outside – Russia – and inside. The corruption that you read about is real. On the other hand, Ukraine, by virtue of its very backwardness, is not subject to the many threats that imperil the West. Taken all in all, this seems like the best bet.

Many of you have asked about our [travel](#) plans. When we are coming to the United States? Oksana was turned down for a visa twice, first when we were engaged and then again shortly after Eddie was born. I have to confess that my heart wasn't in it and we didn't press as hard as we might have.

Though Oksana would love to, we have not traveled much. With a new baby it will be a while before we get out. The trip that is on the drawing boards is by train to Germany. Traveling by train is slower, but less hectic and stressful than airplane. We have friends in Cologne and Berlin, and Oksana has a strong desire to go to Salzburg, Austria, the headquarters of the Orff music movement.

It will be a while before we think again about the US. We extend the invitation the other way. Most of you have not been to Eastern Europe. It is a delightful place, dirt cheap, and something you can talk about when you get home.

What [do I do](#) now that I'm not working at all? Aside from spending a great deal of time with Eddie, and now of course with the baby, I am active as an [Amazon reviewer](#). As I write this, my ranking was number 348. The books I review are just about entirely nonfiction. This year I have done quite a few on evolution, global warming, immigration and the social issues of the millennial generation. I am also active in Toastmasters. I long ago achieved their highest recognition as a speaker, and it is not my nature to push further by joining competitions. I speak on topics that interest me; you can find copies of my speeches [here](#).

My social life is divided between live conversation with Ukrainians half my age and email and Skype exchanges with Americans whom I have known since childhood, college, my army days, Vietnam, Germany, and my Washington DC acquaintances from church, work and Starbucks. I do not do well with Facebook. I use it to post photos, but I'm not very good with messages. The best way to communicate with me is by old-fashioned email. Please note the new email address. I love getting involved in Skype conversations, usually set up by email, and receiving US phone calls at 702-997-2134.

I look forward to hearing from anybody interested in sustaining this communication.

Graham

Former parishioner Graham Seibert and his wife Oksana announce the birth of their daughter Zoriana Melania Seibert on September 7, 2017. It was a home birth in Kyiv. Melania is the name of Zoriana's still-living great grandmother, a 95-year-old Holodomor survivor.

Graham is busy as a top Amazon reviewer, an active member of the Toastmasters public speaking club, and most of all, as the very engaged father of Eddie, who will be six in October.

Graham Seibert, ex-64, and his wife Oksana announce the birth of a daughter Zoriana Melania Seibert on September 7, 2017. It was a home birth in Kyiv. Melania is the name of Zoriana's 95-year-old great grandmother, a still living Holodomor survivor.

Oksana is a specialist in early childhood music education. She teaches at various schools throughout Kyiv and offers lessons in their home. Orff instruments and pedagogy are her major area of interest.

Their son Eddie, approaching his 6th birthday, is enjoying his second year of kindergarten. Already fluent in English and Russian, he is solidifying his future as a Ukrainian citizen by learning the national language. For six months Oksana has been addressing him fairly exclusively in Ukrainian, and by the time he enters school he should be reasonably fluent.

Graham is busy as a top Amazon reviewer, an active member of the Toastmasters public speaking club, and most of all, as Eddie's very engaged father.