FROM THE EDITOR

Not long ago the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center received the following letter which is printed here along with a response from the center:

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed is a check for a book called Our People, which I saw advertised in the Eastern Catholic Life paper under “Comments on Rusyn Americans.”

Why don’t they call us RUSYNS? WE HAVE NO IDENTITY. I CAN’T SAY WHAT I AM! People ask me, and I have to say “Byzantine,” and they say that isn’t the answer. Are you Slovak, Polish, Lithuanian, German, Irish, Italian, or what the heck are you? I say I was raised as a Greek Catholic, and then the usual question: Are you GREEK from Greece? Oh BOY! WE SURE ARE A LOST TRIBE! Can you give me the answer PLEASE!

If those people or men who are so learned can’t tell me what I am, then they themselves don’t know anything. My parents came from Austria and they called themselves Rusnaks. Were they wrong? Why doesn’t our church say THAT instead of “Byzantine.” Byzantine is an art, NOT A NATIONALITY. Am I wrong?

Agnes Mahalage
Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania

P. S. I’m 76 years old and still don’t know what nationality I am. Can you please tell me before I die? Is it too much to know what I am??

Dear Ms. Mahalage:

Thank you for your recent note requesting one of the books we distribute, Our People by Paul R. Magocsi. We regret that the somewhat vague title of the book caused some initial concern. The book’s subtitle, however, is quite clear: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America.

By now you have received the book and will see that it confirms what you already know. Your parents called themselves Rusnaks/Rusyns because they derive from a distinct East Slavic culture. Therefore, when asked about your identity, you would be correct in responding with what you have always instinctively felt: that you are an American of Carpatho-Rusyn, or simply Rusyn, background.

While we cannot speak for the church to which you belong, may we share a few thoughts on the questions you raise. Yes, you are right: Greek Catholics are not ethnically Greeks, and Byzantine refers to an art style (as well as a once famous empire, circa 320-1453), and not to an ethnic group or nationality. The term Byzantine, as used by the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church in the United States, refers — or should refer — to a Catholic nite, not to a nationality. Quite simply, religion and ethnicity/nationality are not the same thing, and as you can see from reading Our People, there are in the United States Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background who are of Byzantine Catholic, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, even Protestant religious persuasions.

As for the church, it is true that at certain times in the past, its spokesmen may have suggested that in ethnic terms “our people” are Ruthenians (an imprecise anglicization of Rusyns), or Russians, or Slovaks, or in the case of the Eastern-rite Catholics, just Byzantines. However, secular leaders in the past also provided a series of answers that were just as confusing, and alas, there are still some today arguing that Rusyns are Russians, or Slovaks, or Ukrainians.

However, for the most part that is the past. Today, churches like the Byzantine Catholic Church are, in fact, doing what they should be doing — enriching the lives of their faithful by promoting Christian values on this earth and trying to save souls in preparation for the hereafter. As for the specific ethnic background of its members, church newspapers do publish regularly information about the work of scholarly research centers such as ours. After all, that is how you found out about the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

It is, moreover, our task, not that of the church, to be concerned with non-religious issues. We hope, therefore, that publications like Our People will reinforce what you already know and make it easier for you to identify yourself in ethnic terms both to yourself and to others.

Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Inc.

Hopefully, Agnes Mahalage now has the solution to her dilemma. Yet how many Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background are still wondering who they are, still grappling with terms such as Byzantine or “Slavish,” or still struggling to fit into some larger, well-known Slavic group? How many who already know who they are desire to learn more about Carpatho-Rusyn history, literature, art, and folklore?

In this issue (see the column FROM OUR READERS) many of you express repeatedly the enormous degree of satisfaction which you have experienced through reading the C-RA and other publications of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. You have not only found answers to your questions, but are passing this information on to your children and grandchildren. We are thoroughly gratified by your response.

At this moment, opportunities are growing for research, publishing, study in the homeland, and for supporting efforts in this country and in Europe toward both the preservation and the further development of Rusyn culture. It is important to remember that to take advantage of opportunities and to support efforts requires human energy and financial strength. Now, with the establishment of the Friends Committee of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, you have the opportunity to participate directly and personally in our mutual endeavor. By joining the Friends Committee as an associate member, a sponsor, or a patron, and maintaining your membership every year, you will receive not only a subscription to the C-RA and discounts on C-RRC publications, but also an invitation to symposia, receptions connected with our annual business meetings, and to other activities sponsored by the C-RRC. Keep in mind also that purchasing a membership for family or friends is a thoughtful and valuable gift.

An article in this issue (FRIENDS COMMITTEE FORMED) outlines the progress of the committee in its present state of development. Information on how to become a member of the committee is reiterated, along with a list of the present members. You may see familiar names, perhaps friends or relatives. Would you not also like to join in helping us reach the Agnes Mahalages and others who are seeking to learn more about their ethnic roots? Would you not like to see your name in this list? Become a member of the Friends Committee. Allow yourself to feel the satisfaction of making a commitment now.
PETRO LINTUR (1909-1969)

Folklorists have long been strongly attracted by the Carpathian region. Already in 1550, Jan Blagoslav recorded the historical song, “Dunaju, Dunaju, čomu smuten tečeš?” (Danube, O Danube, what makes you flow so sadly?) about Stefan the Voivoda (ruler) of Venecija, a small Carpatho-Rusyn village located in the Presov Region of present-day northeastern Czechoslovakia. Later in the nineteenth century, several Carpatho-Rusyns, including Mychal Lučkaj, Andrij Deško, Jevhen Sabov, and Anatolij Kralyckij, collected and published thousands of folksongs, legends, tales, anecdotes, sayings, and proverbs from among their people.

But the most systematic work of collecting, editing, and publishing the gems of folk creative talent was undertaken in the twentieth century by Petro Lintur. Lintur was born in 1909 into a peasant family in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Horonda, Bereg county, now in the Transcarpathian oblast of the Ukrainian SSR. From early childhood the boy was reared in the wonderland of folk tales, magic songs, and folk rituals.

While a student at the Mukacevo gymnasium (1923-30), Lintur was instructed by his teachers to record folklore. The young man understood only too well that a folksong, tale, or anecdote served as an important medium among the then almost totally illiterate peasantry, containing an accumulation of the experience of preceding generations. Folklore clearly appeared to him as an effective means of moral, ethical, patriotic, and esthetic education. An even deeper understanding of the role of folklore in the life of the people came Lintur’s way when he was a student at Charles University in Prague (1930-36) and when he worked as a visiting student at Belgrade University (Yugoslavia). There he attended lectures on the Russian folksong, as well as a special course in Serbian folk tales. It was also there that Lintur met with Ukrainian, Slovak, and Czech folklorists and studied their scholarly works.

After he completed his studies and became a teacher at the Chust gymnasium, Lintur took to collecting local folksongs, Christmas carols, and in every way encouraged students to record rural rituals in the countryside. During World War II, when Hungary occupied his native land, Lintur recorded vocal and epic material from the family of Olena Romanyj in the village of Nankove, not far from Chust. In particular, the scholar observed and recorded old folk narrations dedicated to the people’s heroes and avengers. These acquired for him a special meaning during the war: “Even fairy tales, with their fearless heroes overcoming nightmarish monsters, multi-headed serpents, and dragons, became easier to understand; they seemed to echo some of the events of the period.”

After the war, the scholar became totally immersed in folklore studies. In the summers of 1945 and 1946, the theater in Užhorod became on his initiative the venue of regional “Olympiads” highlighting local folk narrators. The aim of these competitions was to detect and promote folk talent. A complex folkloristic and ethnographic expedition of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow was dispatched to the districts of Chust and Mizhirja, led by Petr Bogatyřev, the renowned Slavic ethnographer who in 1929 had published an influential book in Paris on Subcarpathian folklore. For a number of years, Lintur supervised teams of practicing students who collected folk narratives across the villages of the Transcarpathian Region.

During subsequent years of fruitful research, Lintur discovered dozens of excellent folk-tale tellers whose renditions were marked by an individual approach to the events being described and by a penetrating insight into the inner world of every character portrayed, and which were supplemented with a variety of dramatizing techniques.

Lintur discovered most of his folk tales and gifted amateur narrators among the residents of the village of Horincove. The folklorist even decided to record every single story known by the villagers. He began working along precisely these lines and prepared for publication the collection, Folktales From a Single Village, published only after his death.

Lintur should be credited not only with discovering numerous folk narrators and recording their stories, but also with achieving an insight into the creative manner of each and every one of them. He described this in the concluding remarks of a collection on folk tales drawn from his archives and published a few years ago, Začaravani kazkoju (Bewitched by a Folk Tale, Užhorod, 1984).

Lintur recorded and published approximately 1500 folk tales in Transcarpathia in the course of three decades (compared to only 1200 published by all of his predecessors), along with several hundred ballads, and various other stories handed down by word of mouth. He adhered to a principle which he formulated in his own words: “That which has been borrowed from the people must be returned to it.”

Petro Lintur left behind a sizeable legacy of published materials and manuscripts. Some of the folk tales and ballads recorded by him still appear in newly published folk literature collections much to the delight of readers, children and adults alike.

Pavlo Čučka
Užhorod, USSR
GREETINGS ON OUR TENTH ANNIVERSARY

It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to acknowledge your diligent efforts in research in behalf of the Carpatho-Russian community in the United States. On this tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, we offer the promise of your prayers that you successfully continue the good work already in progress.

Since my recent visit to villages Čečehov in Eastern Slovakia, and Ivanovci and Kaľnyk in the Ukrainian SSR, villages from which my parents' ancestors emigrated, I am strongly convinced of the importance of unbiased historical and ethnic research.

Wholeheartedly supportive of your efforts, and pledging my energy and time to be of assistance, I remain most sincerely yours in Christ.

Bishop Nicholas
The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center I wish you new and productive achievements in your work. The activity of your center in research, scholarship, and the affirmation of Carpatho-Rusyn culture provides an example for institutions in other parts of the world to emulate.

By bringing together our scholarly and cultural resources, the contemporary world will to a large extent come to know of the value of our culture. In this way our knowledge of civilization in general will also be enriched. Heightened still will be an awareness of the relationship and interdependency of individual national cultures. It is this concept of work that must inspire the contemporary world and the future of humanity.

May the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center maintain an honored place among those organizations which are engaged in enriching the essence of our lives.

Ljubomir Medješi, Director
Ruske Slovo Publishing House
Novi Sad, Yugoslavia

Thank you for the opportunity to send greetings on the tenth anniversary of your center. As a son of the Lemko nation and a subscriber to your quarterly publication, I follow with personal interest your activities toward strengthening the memory of our small homeland's past, in protecting its cultural wealth, and handing it on to the present generation.

My own society, which is celebrating its one hundred fiftieth year, also strives to do this.

In greeting you and your research center on its tenth anniversary, I ask you to accept our best wishes and our expressions of high esteem.

Jaroslav Padoch, President
Shevchenko Scientific Society
New York, New York

Our Front Cover

Rusyn Easter eggs (pysanky) and Palm Sunday pussywillows.

Congratulations to you and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center as you observe the tenth year of its foundation. I especially am interested in retaining that rich cultural and spiritual heritage that the Byzantine Catholic dioceses of Uzhorod and Prešov engendered. Amidst the problems encountered in our Americanization, these facts are at times lost and confused.

With best wishes for the future, I remain sincerely in Christ.

Bishop Thomas V. Dolinay
Byzantine Catholic Diocese of Van Nuys

It is a pleasure to extend congratulations to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. Our society has been impressed with both the scholarly ways and ethnocultural base of your center since its inception. It could well serve as a model institution for any national group in North America, but especially those born of peoples submerged in their homeland, seeking to recover and assert their shared history and pride without resorting to hyperbole, filio-pietism, and questionable partisan scholarship. We have, as you know, particular reason to be aware of the healthy alliance between learning and community among Carpatho-Rusyns on this continent. As publishers of Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America, we have benefited from that alliance and marveled at the community support for academic scholarship and hunger for heritage information as the several printings and perennial sales of the volume testify.

The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center has played a central role in making the public and the experts aware of Carpatho-Rusyns, their history and their will to persist as a people in Central Eastern Europe. Recognition as a nationality in the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups and in the U.S. Census, as well as acknowledgement as a distinct historical and ethnocultural group in a recent special millennium issue of Polphony that focusses on Ukrainians in Ontario will help ensure the group's place in North American immigrant history. Each of these successes can be directly attributed to the good reputation and influence of your center.

If I may, as one who has spent a quarter of a century directing university and government centers for ethnic and immigration studies, be allowed a personal note. This letter is a source of special pleasure to me. As a boy, some of my playmates in the greater Salem, Massachusetts area came from families who mysteriously identified themselves as Rusnaks and Rusniaks. They and their parents were unfailingly kind to me and introduced me to some of the religious and folk traditions which were the way of their humanity, and incidently kindled some of the interest in ethnic studies which has been my career. As an adult scholar, I have had the good fortune to see firsthand and to share in the fraternity with which Lemkos and other Carpatho-Rusyns greeted the visit of your president, Paul R. Magocsi, to Krakow and Budapest. The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center represents for me, then, not just an attractive alliance of scholarship and community, but all that is best in the pluralism and richness of origin and culture which is or should be North America. Keep up the good work.

R. F. Harney
Professor and Academic Director
The Multicultural History Society of Ontario
Toronto, Ontario
The Reverend Monsignor Basil Shereghy, S. T. D., pastor of Holy Transfiguration Byzantine Catholic Church, McKeesport, Pennsylvania, died on June 16, 1988, at Presbyterian University Hospital in Pittsburgh from complications resulting from a stroke. In fitting tribute to a priest who touched so many, 350 faithful, 49 cantors, 70 priests, and 3 bishops were in attendance for the third and final Byzantine Rite funeral service and liturgy on Tuesday, June 21. The principle celebrant, His Grace, Archbishop Stephen J. Kosciak, delivered the eulogy, and internment followed at Calvary Cemetery, Mount Saint Macrina, in Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

Father Basil was born on March 5, 1918, in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Dorobratovo, in the former Bereg county of Subcarpathian Rus', now the Transcarpathian oblast of the Ukrainian SSR. His parents, Father Andrew Shereghy and Isabella Jaczkovicz, traced their family line back to two hundred years of priests, and their son Basil was to be the last son of nine consecutive priests whose sons also joined the clergy. Of his parents and his early years in Subcarpathian Rus', incorporated into the first Czechoslovak republic in 1919, Father Basil always held only the fondest memories. The simplicity and spiritual devotion of the people and the beauty of nature in the Carpathian Mountains were key elements in the shaping of his own life and religious career.

In the 1930s, Father Basil as a seminarian witnessed the world-wide economic crisis and increased political tension throughout Europe, including his own homeland. On March 29, 1942, while Europe suffered in the midst of World War II, and Subcarpathian Rus' was occupied by Hungary, Basel was ordained to the holy priesthood by Bishop Aleksander Stoika in Uzhhorod. After ordination, he held teaching positions in elementary schools and later at the diocesan seminary in Uzhhorod where he became the spiritual director. He was among a group of Greek Catholic priests and teachers at the Uzhhorod seminary who represented the last bulwark of native Carpatho-Rusyn patriotism which favored self-determination and an autonomous Rusyn nationality.

In October 1944, when Stalin’s troops entered Subcarpathian Rus', people of Shereghy's political and cultural orientation were considered unacceptable to the new Communist leaders. The new local authorities had already begun the process by which this territory would be annexed to the Soviet Ukraine and in which the Greek Catholic Church would be persecuted and liquidated. The lives of Father Basil and his fellow priests were in danger, and thus during the month of October, he left for Olomouc, Czechoslovakia, where he began post-doctoral study at the seminary. In 1946, with a Czechoslovak passport, he continued his studies at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Later in 1946, Father Basil emigrated to the United States where his new bishop, Basil Takach, assigned him as an assistant priest at Saint Nicholas Greek Catholic Church in Detroit. During his sojourn there, from 1946 to 1948, he studied English intensively, partly by watching John Wayne Westerns at Detroit’s Iris Theater. In 1947, he authored in Carpatho-Rusyn Pakunok iz Ameriki (A Package From America), a St. Nicholas play in three acts, which he then translated into American English.

From February 1948 to October 1950, Father Basil was professor of liturgy, Rusyn language, and pastoral orientation at St. Procopius Seminary in Lisle, Illinois. In January 1949, he was instrumental in establishing the Pittsburgh Byzantine Diocesan Press which published his brochures: “What are Greek Catholics?,” “The Greek Catholic Church,” and “Your Liturgical Year.” Meanwhile, he was the temporary administrator of SS. Peter and Paul parish in Chicago, as well as director of the Diocesan Cantor’s School in Lisle. It was also in 1949 that his father, like many other Greek Catholic priests, was imprisoned in Uzhhorod by the Soviets, dying a martyr’s death in 1950.

In October 1950, Father Basil was assigned by Bishop Daniel Ivancho as a professor and spiritual director for the new SS. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. In 1951, Shereghy and Father Vladimir Vancik published the Greek Catholic Dictionary. From 1954 to 1957, he was pastor of Holy Transfiguration parish (Hungarian) in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, during which time he became a founding associate editor of the Byzantine Catholic World, the official bi-monthly newspaper of the Byzantine Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh. Between 1957 and 1966, Father Basil served as pastor at St. John the Baptist parish in Minneapolis, but then he returned to McKeesport where he was to serve again as pastor of Holy Transfiguration for the next twenty-two years. He also continued as a professor at SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary until 1973, publishing "The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom," a well-researched and rich commentary on liturgy. While serving in a number of important capacities at the seminary, he also became editor of the United Societies' monthly fraternal newspaper Pros vita — Enlightenment, a position he held from 1970 until his death.

A beloved occupation of Father Basil was his directorship of the Byzantine Archdiocesan Museum from its inception in May 1971. He enriched its holdings with items from his personal collection. Besides this, his own rectory at Holy Transfiguration contained a large and valuable library and was itself carefully decorated like a miniature museum. Moreover, Father Basil’s cultural interests were not limited to art. As Bishop Dolinay recalled, Father Basil’s "expertise in coins qualified him as a consultant and appraiser of rare coins at Pittsburgh’s Carnegie Museum." Some of his books and coins were listed in catalogues of rare collections in the United States. Many a visitor gasped at the beauty which reflected his love for culture, the phenomenon which he believed crowned human life. "Culture," he would often say, "helps us make something out of ourselves as human beings in the image of God."

During the forty-two years of his priestly life in the United States, Father Basil was, as the Catholic Golden Age World wrote in April 1982, a “human dynamo of information” to which one might add — a human dynamo of energy. He was an outstanding communicator who understood the importance of using every available media to convey God’s word. His prodigious writings included editorials, homilies, historical articles, instructional pamphlets, and books on theology, liturgy, history, art, and numismatics. He was a guest on television and radio programs; he directed the famous Byzantine Catholic Pilgrimage at Mount Saint Macrina; and he led pilgrimages to the Holy Land. His three-year archdiocesan lecture series in the 1970s attracted students from a wide variety of ethnocultural backgrounds and faiths. He had...
a great thirst for knowledge, and his ability to share what he knew with a variety of people was outstanding. He could lecture and truly communicate whether at the seminary, a university, a Saint Nicholas Day banquet, or for the local Kiwanis Club.

Most importantly, in the midst of all of these activities, Father Basil always had time for people. In 1983, when the steel mill closings in McKeesport had caused a serious wave of unemployment, Father Basil bought large crates of apples, potatoes, and oranges at wholesale prices and called many unemployed to take what they needed for their families. Edward M. Boyko, an Allegheny County official and parishioner at St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church in McKeesport, who provided this information, stressed that Father Basil had undertaken this service quietly, desiring no special attention to be paid to himself. It is also known that Father Basil sent many stipends to priests in Europe who were in need.

Betty Kiska, a cantor, parishioner, and long-time friend of Father Basil, describes those day-to-day qualities that we who knew him will always remember. "He was such a link to a wide variety of activity. There was movement, interest, and excitement. People valued his closeness and friendship. He had a way of holding people together. He was very generous in lending his display items, and was always courteous, never forgetting a thank-you for even the smallest things."

I first met Father Basil in July 1971 on Byzantine Catholic Rusyn Day at Kennywood Park in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania. My Rusyn folk ensemble had just finished a performance and we were all basking in the applause when Father Basil approached me with fifteen minutes of serious constructive criticism. He ended with these words: "You and your young people carry within you the culture of the Rusyns. You have the capacity to achieve much. I will help you in any way that I can. God bless you." I was overwhelmed by his intensity and kindness, and indeed found that I could always turn to him for help.

From so many to whom you gave the word of God and unending pastoral care, thank you, Father Basil. As a priest, teacher, and cultural patriot, your example of kindness and sacrifice are not forgotten. Grant him, O Lord, blessed repose and eternal memory. Všchna jemu pam'jat'.

Jerry J. Jumba
McKeesport, Pennsylvania

FROM OUR READERS

Many months ago I received my copy of Our People, and ever since then I've been meaning to write to you to express my appreciation and to tell you of the effect your book had on members of my family.

When the book first arrived, I flipped through and was quickly moved to tears when I saw my mom and dad looking back at me from the picture of the mock wedding at St. John's in Perth Amboy. I took the book to show to my mom, who is eighty-seven and an invalid. She rarely shows strong emotions anymore, but when I opened the book to her picture, she gasped and cried and showed more feelings than I've seen in a decade. To think that she and my late immigrant father are immortalized in a book! My little girls were so impressed that they took the book to school to "show and tell."

For myself I would like to thank you for such an informative book. My brothers and I have so often questioned who and what we are, and we've been given different answers by different people. Even today, there is such confusion among otherwise well-informed people. I often bite my tongue when I hear my college-educated fellow parishioners say that we are "Slavish." I hope that they read your book!

Even your list of credits makes for interesting reading! Mike Logoyda was a friend of our family for years! And I've often wondered if Brian Keleher ever became a priest. You've also identified for me some of the photos in my attic trunk!

I was chatting with a friend about Our People, and she suggested that I order one for each of my children. It's a
lovely book that each grandchild or great-grandchild would benefit from.

Thanks again for clearing up my many, many questions.
Elizabeth Chechur Short
Union, New Jersey

Not only does reading the many and varied articles in the Carpatho-Rusyn American take me back to my youth in Whiting, Indiana, but it also is an open window for my children and grandchildren. The articles and pictures help them gain a better understanding of their family, its roots, and the sacrifice our ancestors made in their behalf.

Thank you, and kindest regards to your entire staff.
Michael Kozak
Escondido, California

As a second generation American Carpatho-Rusyn, I and my children have enjoyed this newsletter! It is a way for us to maintain contact with our roots and we are most appreciative of all your efforts.
Barbara S. Edwards
Vienna, Virginia

....I am longing for facts, the truth about my people and how they got so confused. Your articles about the Lemkos hit the spot! My grandparents could have been Lemkos, but never mentioned this to their children except that the Lemko newspaper my grandmother read was read only for the “variety” section and not for the political philosophy. She was from Galicia. Austria ruled the area when she left. She could not understand all the political fuss. They were farmers, and they never had it easy.

I made it back to Poland, but without any facts I could not ask the right questions, could not insist on seeing the right places, and could not get together with my people.

There might be a second chance in my future, so I need information. Your publication is a help. Keep up the good work!
Susan Hartwigsen
Maple Grove, Minnesota

A short note to say that I love the newsletter! I have discovered so much about my heritage. At least, I believe it’s the answer to why I’m different from Slovaks and Czechs in this area. Unfortunately, I did not know these distinctions when my parents were alive.

J. Bartos
Endwell, New York

I feel that the newsletter is a very professional publication and I’ve been very pleased with its format. One idea: what is the feasibility of an annual Carpatho-Rusyn American-sponsored annual tour of the Rusyn homeland?
Gary Onufrak
Arlington, Virginia

I would like to see the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center sponsor a guided tour to the Rusyn area of the Soviet Union for those of us who do not know the language and would otherwise hesitate to go. This is my top priority.
Elaine P. Abbott
Rochester, New York

RECENT EVENTS

Lyndora, Pennsylvania. In conjunction with the 75th anniversary of St. John’s Byzantine Catholic Church, a series of events was organized throughout the year by Peter Baycura that deal with the history of the early Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants to Lyndora and the development of the local Byzantine Catholic parish. Mr. Baycura set up a detailed historical panorama of the community and he organized a lecture at Butler County Community College, where on September 30 over 200 people came to hear Dr. Paul R. Magocsi speak on the topic, “Our People: Their Roots and Their Future in America.”

Toronto, Ontario. On October 28-30, 1988, a conference was held at the University of Toronto to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Czechoslovakia. Among the scholars who delivered papers was Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, who spoke on the evolution of the Magyars and Carpatho-Rusyns in Czechoslovakia from 1918 to the present.

Uniontown, Pennsylvania. On October 30, 1988, St. John’s Byzantine Catholic Church sponsored a “Carpatho-Rusyn Celebration.” Entertainment included slide shows by Andrew Huzinec of Perrypolis and Jerry Jumba of McKeesport. St. John’s choir sang folksongs, and the Slavjane Dancers of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in McKees Rocks performed. Carpatho-Rusyn traditional foods, embroidery, pysanky, and cookbooks were available for sale.

Honolulu, Hawaii. On November 18-21, 1988, the 20th National Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies was held in Honolulu. At this largest annual gathering of Soviet and East European specialists, two sessions were devoted specifically to Carpatho-Rusyn topics. One session dealt with the twentieth century Ukrainian-language Subcarpathian belletrist, Vasyl’ Grendza-Dons’kyj. It included a general survey of his work by Alice Danylyk (Minneapolis, Minnesota) and an analysis of his plays for children by Dr. Helen N. Sanko (John Carroll University).

Another session focused specifically on the Lemko Region in Poland with presentations by Paul J. Best (Southern Connecticut State University), “The Lemko Question, 1900-1947”; Peter J. Potichnyj (McMaster University), “The Lemkos in the Ukrainian National Movement During and After World War I”; and Paul R. Magocsi (University of Toronto), “Nation-Building or Nation Destroying?: Poles, Lemkos, and Ukrainians in Present-day Poland.” The papers, which provoked a spirited discussion, were followed by commentary from Oksana Grabowicz (Harvard University) and Andrzej Zięba (Jagiellonian University, Poland).

McKeesport, Pennsylvania. On December 10, 1988, pupils of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic School performed a full-length bilingual version of the traditional Carpatho-Rusyn Bethlehem Play (Nativity Play) at the St. Nicholas Day Patron Dinner. The performance was arranged and directed by Jerry Jumba who has spent several years researching and preparing an English version of the play. The Bethlehem Play has counterparts throughout Europe and traces its origins to St. Francis of Assisi in the early thirteenth century. Audience response was so enthusiastic that the play was performed for a second time at the school on December 21. A fine fifty-minute video-cassette of the performance on December 10 is available for $25, which includes postage and handling. Please make out a check to St. Nicholas School and send it to Maryann Kostrubanic, St. Nicholas School, 407 Shaw Avenue, McKeesport, Pennsylvania 15132.

Johnstown, Pennsylvania. During the month of December 1988, the Carpatho-Russian Folk Dancers of Christ the Saviour Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Cathedral (Johnstown Diocese) participated in an Ethnic Festival at the University of Pittsburgh in Johnstown. The youth dance ensemble, under the direction of Tamara Evanisko and Debbie Lai-chak, staged a number of traditional ethnic dances for the audience. Christ the Saviour Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Helen Spanovich, also performed Orthodox liturgical hymns and Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas carols in a performance recorded in the cathedral by University of Pittsburgh Television and aired in the Johnstown area as part of a community Christmas program.

ROOTS SEEKERS

A new storehouse of information has surfaced to assist those interested in searching for their family roots. The Historic Emigration Office of the Museum for Hamburg History contains records of the five million persons who passed through the port of Hamburg between 1850 and 1914. Opened in 1984, the HEO is one of the only facilities in Europe with extensive records of emigrant data. Information stored on microfilm includes the emigrant's name, marital status, number of children, and home city.

Anyone who wishes to trace his or her European roots needs only to provide his/her ancestor's name and approximate date of emigration. Requests for tracing emigrant data can be made by contacting the Historic Emigration Office, Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, Holstenwall 24, 2000 Hamburg 36, West Germany; telephone 040-300 500 50.

RUSYN BOOK CORNER


This richly illustrated publication is a translation of Pavlo Markovyc's book which was originally published by the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidnik in 1972. Markovyc researched the art of Easter eggs (pysanky) in many locations throughout Eastern Slovakia, but especially in his native village of Čertížňe in the Humenne region. This area is presently the best known center for Easter egg painting in Slovakia and provides pysanky for Slovakia's outstanding folk art industry.

In individual chapters the author deals with the history of Easter eggs, the origins of pysanka ornamentation, and the place of Easter eggs in the annual cycle of folk life and folk customs. He explains and analyzes the compositional elements of the art of the pysanka, the structure of the motifs used, and the link between Easter eggs, embroidery, and other types of folk art. Finally, he examines the techniques used, the symbolism of colors, and folk games played with the use of Easter eggs.

While emphasizing the aesthetic aspect of pysanky, Markovyc explores as well their magical function in the daily life of the people. Easter eggs play a role, for instance, in the bathing of children, the spring plowing and sowing of grain, the herding of cattle out into the pasture, in house building, at baptisms, weddings, funerals, during illness, and so on.

Likewise, Markovyc enumerates individual symbols on Easter eggs. Here he does not restrict himself only to verbal descriptions, but depicts each motif graphically. His descriptions of Easter eggs are supplemented with texts from folk-songs, proverbs and sayings, and Fortunetelling, provided in the Rusyn original as well as in English translation. Furthermore, he describes the techniques of painting eggs so precisely that his book could be used as a practical handbook for contemporary enthusiasts of this genre of folk art.

The author provides a structural analysis of Easter egg symbols and designs, for which he constructed a lengthy table enumerating occurrences of individual motifs. In his structural examination of these symbols and designs, he determined ten groups of Easter egg motifs: cosmic, phytomorphic (plant types), zoomorphic (animal types), anthropomorphic (human types), everyday household objects, ritualistic, genre scenes, personal, ideological-symbolic, abstract-geometrical. He then divided these groups into sub-groups, of which there are 178. In the accompanying chart, he notes the significance of each sub-group, whether folk-medicinal, symbolic, customary-ritualistic, superstitious, cultic, Christian, or Socialist, as well as the culture to which each belongs: pastoral, agrarian, industrial.

This fine book is supplemented with a large bibliography in which are represented above all the relevant works of Czech and Slovak authors. The amount of illustrated material is more modest compared with the original, but the quality of the photographs, especially of color photos, is far superior. The book also includes a map of Eastern Slovakia, prepared by Paul R. Magocsi, which accurately defines Rusyn...
Ail in ail, the work is a solid scholarly effort which offers many fascinating discoveries to anyone interested in Rusyn folk art and culture.

Mykola Mušynka
Prešov, Czechoslovakia

This small, beautifully produced and illustrated book inaugurates a new series of monographs on Carpatho-Rusyn culture published under the aegis of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in Fairview, New Jersey, founded in 1978 to promote knowledge of the history and cultural traditions of the Carpatho-Rusyns. This people — known in different places and times also as Rusyns, Ruthenians, Carpatho-Russians, Rusnaks, Carpatho-Ukrainians, Greek Catholics, and Orthodox Greek Catholics — comes from a homeland that also has had many names: Podkarpatska Rus' (Subcarpathian Rus’), Carpatho-Russia, Carpatho-Ruthenia, Carpatho-Ukraine. Cousins to the Ukrainians, the Rusyns’ ancestral homeland, now divided between three countries, lies on both sides of the Carpathian Mountain range in northeast Czechoslovakia and southeast Poland, where the two countries touch, and in the Transcarpathian oblast of the Ukrainian SSR which the Soviets took from Czechoslovakia after World War II.

The author is an artist and professor from Prešov, the chief city of Eastern Slovakia and long a center of Slovak and Rusyn cultural and religious life. The book was first published there in Ukrainian in 1972.

Everyone knows what an Easter egg is. Many will also know, or could easily guess, that the egg has been a natural symbol of new life from primitive times. Hence its use by Christians as a symbol of the new life brought to us by Christ in his rising from the dead, “trampling death by death, and bestowing life on those in the tomb,” as the Rusyns and other Byzantine-Rite Christians have chanted at Easter for centuries. Less well-known, perhaps, is the beautiful tradition of the intricately painted pysanky or Easter eggs of the Rusyns and Ukrainians. The present volume not only illustrates richly this tradition as practised especially in the Prešov Region of Eastern Slovakia. It also discusses artistic techniques, motifs, symbolism, folklore, and popular customs surrounding the preparation, meaning, and use of pysanky — in short, this is a book for all: practitioners of the art, students of the culture, and those who originate from or love this people and their ways.

This book is but one more indication that much has been happening of late in the field of Carpatho-Rusyn cultural studies. And much if not most of it is due to the dynamic initiative and leadership of Professor Paul Robert Magocsi, first occupant of the new Chair of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Toronto and President of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center that sponsored the English version of this book. As the center celebrates its tenth anniversary, one can only wish that its work continue na mnohaya lita! (Orientalia Christiana Periodica. Vol. 54/1, 1988)

R. F. Taft, S.J.
The Vatican
Rome, Italy

Copies of Rusyn Easter Eggs From Eastern Slovakia are still available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center for $25.00. We highly recommend this beautifully illustrated and informative book during the Paschal season as a valuable gift both for friends and family of Carpatho-Rusyn background, and for others — as a way of sharing with them a most colorful and fascinating part of our rich cultural heritage. To receive your copy, please send a check or money order ($25.00 U.S.) to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 355 Delano Place, Fairview, New Jersey 07022. — Editor.

1989 HOMELANDS TOUR

June 18-July 13 by air-conditioned coach from Vienna, visiting Budapest, Miskolc, Mărcișoara, Uzhhorod, Mukachevo, Jasinya, Lviv, Przemysl, Jaroslaw, Zalissja, Lancut, the Lemko Region (Komarnica, Zymbranowa, Krynica), Gorlice, Nowy Sacz, Cracow, and Częstochowa. For complete information, contact:
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EDITOR’S NOTE: Due to an oversight, the following should be noted in our Fall 1987 issue (Vol. X, No. 3). The last four lines on page 4 should read: "...participantes of this event which depicts the falling asleep of the Mother of God. Marked by an elevated moral atmosphere, this icon is a genuine hymn to the Mother of God enshrouded in charms of poetry and beauty." Also, on page 5 the icon plate #4 caption should read “The Saviour’s Image Not Painted By Human Hands, late fifteenth-early sixteenth centuries, from SS. Cosmos and Damian Church in Krompnij.”
RECENT PUBLICATIONS 1984


In 1988, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center was finally in a position to inaugurate its Friends Committee. Such a committee was often requested by many of our readers, and its formation was an appropriate highlight of our tenth anniversary year. The Friends Committee promises to strengthen the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center financially and to give members an opportunity to meet others who share a keen interest in the Carpatho-Rusyn people, history, and culture. Moreover, the committee will help the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center succeed in its several programs and to meet its obligations to the Carpatho-Rusyn people.

Those who have joined the Friends include long-time supporters from many States across the country — from New York to Hawaii — as well as notable recent newcomers from the European homeland such as Josyp Terelya, presently residing in Toronto, Ontario. Our Friends membership at the date of this issue is forty six. With our busiest renewal period yet to come, we are confident of the success of the Friends, success which will be extremely important to the work of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

A successful Friends Committee means that we can not only continue our work, but expand our activities in many areas, including:

- Sponsoring Carpatho-Rusyn area studies at home and abroad.
- Establishing a Chair of Carpathian Rus’ studies.
- Sponsoring cultural and academic exchanges.
- Publishing and distributing cultural videos.
- Strengthening ties with Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe.

We thank all of you who have joined the Friends Committee and we ask the rest of our readers to consider upgrading your status from that of ordinary subscriber to Friend so that you can be more a part of our work as we enter our second decade. It is easy to become a member under any one of the following three plans:

1) An ASSOCIATE level of membership — $30 per year — receives the Carpatho-Rusyn American, plus a 10 percent discount on materials purchased from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

2) A SPONSOR level of membership — $50 per year — receives the Carpatho-Rusyn American, plus a 10 percent discount on materials purchased from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, plus a gift subscription to Carpatho-Rusyn American to go to whomever you choose.

3) A PATRON level of membership — $100 per year — receives the Carpatho-Rusyn American, plus a 10 percent discount on materials purchased from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, plus a gift subscription to the Carpatho-Rusyn American to go to whomever you choose, plus a free copy of the recently published book *Rusyn Easter Eggs From Eastern Slovakia* (the first of many such offerings in the series Classics of Carpatho-Rusyn Scholarship) or an equivalent publication selected by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

To join, please send a check or money order, specifying your chosen level of membership to: Friends of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, P. O. Box 227, Cambridge, Minnesota 55008.

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A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

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