FROM THE EDITOR

Spring and summer are travel months, and we Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background so often find ourselves drawn to our ancestral villages and towns. We want to embrace family whom we have never seen or renew ties with relatives and friends. We want to walk the paths of our grandparents, worship in their churches, eat their bread, dig our hands into the soil they once worked. We possess both a nostalgia for the past and a burning curiosity about the present, and only travel to the homeland can satisfy us. I should say homelands here because for Rusyn Americans the Carpathian homeland is divided among three countries, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Soviet Union.

Our feature articles in both the spring and summer issues are by Father Bryan Eyman who, together with Father Serge Keleher, toured places significant to Rusyn Americans in all the “homelands” last summer. Both have just now completed another journey to Hungary, Soviet Transcarpathia, and Poland. As Byzantine Catholic priests accompanied mostly by Byzantine Catholic believers, they have considered their tours pilgrimages, for they traditionally make church visits and liturgies a priority in the course of the trip. Orthodox priests have led similar tours in recent years. While the C-RRA is not normally a medium for advertisements, we will gladly announce such pilgrimages or cultural tours for Carpatho-Rusyn Americans in the future. Because of our schedule as a quarterly publication, substantial advance notice is necessary so that we can print your full information in time to meet your deadlines. It is clear to us that Rusyn Americans travel to the homelands seeking not only a physical and emotional experience, but a spiritual one as well, and for all these reasons we strongly encourage such travel.

Homeland journeys may also provide an opportunity for Rusyn Americans to attend folk festivals, and trips can be specially planned to coincide with these events. Members of the Friends Committee of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center were informed in a newsletter from Chairman John Haluska this spring that the Svidnik Festival was to be held on June 16-18 and that the 7th Annual Lemko Vatra would be July 21-23. To the surprise of some Americans, our contemporary friends and relatives in Europe do not go about their everyday lives decked out in folk clothing nor do they ordinarily go dancing and singing down the street. But these festivals provide them with the opportunity to display their cultural heritage in all its color and brilliance and to make a statement about their ethnic roots. The festivals also provide us with the opportunity to witness this unique beauty which belongs as well to us. To photograph and videotape it, to learn something of it, and to bring it home to the United States.

I suspect that an additional and extremely significant element in our journeys to the homeland to visit others or to attend festivals is the statement we can make to our Rusyn brothers and sisters — and this is that we have not forgotten them. We have not forgotten our roots, and that we are not caught in the past (although we may love the thought and memories of the past). Rather, by our presence we show that we are vitally interested in the present and that we have a common concern for the future of this shrinking world which we all share. This concern, along with our common roots in the past, will bring our personal lives and the destinies of our nations closer together. Our journeys to the homeland can draw us nearer to each other so that the homeland need never be far away again.

A Forum on Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage

CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

The Carpatho-Rusyn American (ISSN 0749-9213) is a quarterly publication of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Inc., a non-profit cultural organization whose purpose is to promote knowledge about all aspects of Carpatho-Rusyn culture through the publication and distribution of scholarly and educational material about the Carpatho-Rusyn heritage in Europe and America.

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Recent Events in the Carpatho-Rusyn Community
Robert Urich's religious upbringing reflects the interfaith development. His religious upbringing reflects the interfaith traditions of his parents. His father was Byzantine Catholic and his mother Roman Catholic. As a child, he attended two churches, St. Joseph's Byzantine Catholic Church and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, both in the town of Toronto. Although baptized in the Byzantine Catholic Church, he received his first Holy Communion in both churches with one ceremony just 24 hours after the other. The young Urich was educated by the Sisters of St. Cyril and Methodius, and he served as an altar boy at St. Joseph's Byzantine Catholic Church. He recalls what a profound effect his religious training had on him, offering him an appreciation of ritual, tradition, and closeness to God and to one's culture.

Family life, likewise, proved to be an important influence during Urich's formative years. The son of a steelworker, he learned the meaning of family, hard work, and prayer. It was in this context that Urich came to develop his strong sense of ethnic identity. Growing up with the languages, customs, and traditions of his Rusyn and Slovak parents, Urich also developed his penchant for good Slavic ethnic food. He mastered favorite family recipes and continues to serve up great dishes when time in his busy schedule permits. He fondly reminisces about his mother's reassurances to him when he was about to leave for college that a pot of steaming homemade soup is the best remedy for homesickness and all other ills.

Urich began his acting career after completing college at Florida State University and graduate school at Michigan State. He worked in a variety of films, television, and theatrical productions. It was while filming a commercial some 15 years ago that Urich met Heather Menzies, his future wife. Urich's first major role in a television series was as Dan Tanna in "Vega$." He also has starred in numerous television mini-series such as "Amerika" and the more recent "Lonesome Dove."

Urich is perhaps best known, however, as the star of "Spenser: For Hire." Based on the novels of Robert Parker, Spenser is a tough yet compassionate detective who is as comfortable apprehending a convicted criminal as he is reciting poetry. The series, which was filmed on location in and around Boston, enjoyed tremendous popularity. Spenser became a regular guest in the homes of millions of Americans throughout the country. Currently, Urich is preparing for a new series scheduled to air later this year. Titled "American Dreamer," this situation comedy will feature the adventures of a father (played by Urich) raising his children with traditional values in southern California. Urich has already left his mark on Hollywood and has established himself as a serious and talented actor whose career has only just begun.

Off screen, Urich describes himself as very much a family man. He and his wife Heather have two young children, Ryan and Emily. Family life is paramount to Urich who has not allowed the Hollywood lifestyle or demanding schedule to interfere. In addition to work and family commitments, Urich maintains a genuine interest in helping others. Whether fund-raising for a local children's hospital, teaching catechism, helping out at his children's school, or marshalling a holiday parade, Urich has assumed an active role in the community. His contributions have touched the lives of many, young and old alike.

Central to all of this is Robert Urich's longstanding commitment to his Rusyn and Slovak heritage. He has integrated its rich history and tradition into his life and that of his family. In a world of rapid change and sometimes questionable values, Urich's Slavic tradition has served him as a source of comfort, meaning, and pride.

Mary Ann Gaschnig
Dracut, Massachusetts
The author of this two-part article, Father Bryan Eyman, is a priest of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma. A civil and industrial engineer before studying for the priesthood, he is now pastor of St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He and Father Serge R. Keleher undertook this journey in the summer of 1988 along with a small group of Byzantine Catholic pilgrims. — Editor.

No one could remember when such an ambitious tour of the Carpathian Mountain region had been attempted by a group such as ours. Two Byzantine Catholic priests and twenty-five adventurers would set off to visit the entire region, crossing the borders of several socialist countries in the process. No one really knew what to expect, but the hope of sharing in a great new experience seemed to inspire us all.

We started our tour in Vienna, the capital of the historic Austro-Hungarian Empire. We stayed at the Schoenbrunn Palacepark Hotel in the center of the city. Vienna is a captivating city, and I can understand why so many of the people from the Slavic mountains to the north tried to make their way here. At the historic Saint Barbara Greek Catholic Church, Father Serge and I celebrated the Divine Liturgy and were given some small Slavonic prayerbooks by the pastor to use on our journey. Later, we went to see the original icon of the Mother of God of Maria Poci in St. Stephan Cathedral. I recounted the story of how it was requisitioned by the Imperial authorities (today we would say stolen) and installed in the capital’s cathedral. The miraculous icon seemed lost in the massive building. It drew little attention of the many tourists there who instead looked on with curiosity as our group of pilgrims prayed and lit candles before it.

When we crossed the Austrian-Hungarian border, we were pleasantly surprised. The Hungarian border guards were most hospitable, and we entered Hungary with a minimum of difficulty. Travelling through the Hungarian countryside, we saw many beautiful towns and villages and were generally impressed by what appeared to be a very lovely and prosperous land. In Budapest we met our Magyar tour guide Agnes who answered many of our questions with the preface “Hungary is different” — and we came to see that this really was true.

Budapest is a delightfully bustling city and was experiencing a heat wave at the time of our arrival. After settling in at the Spanish-operated Hotel Flamingo, we visited the Great Heroes Square in the heart of Habsburg Budapest and saw the statues of various Hungarian heroes. A walking tour of Old Budai put us in contact with much of the historic life of this city. At a restaurant that served wild game from the forests around the city, we were entertained by dancers who performed several Carpathian-style numbers, as well as Gypsy and other Magyar dances.

Highlighting our trip to Budapest was a visit to one of the oldest Greek Catholic churches in the city. There we participated in Morning Prayer and Divine Liturgy. The icon screen was beautiful, and traditional icons filled the interior of the structure. We met Fathers Laszlo and Gregory, the latter of whom had visited the United States and spoke very good English. He had served as the secretary to the late Bishop Imre of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Hajdudorog and was glad to tell us about the hopeful state of the church in his country. When we told him that we planned to go to the Dormition pilgrimage at Maria Poci the next day, he told us that we could meet the new bishop if we went to the Greek Catholic church in the town of Satoralmajhely, near the Czechoslovak border.

On the Feast of the Dormition (new calendar), we travelled to Satoralmajhely for the blessing of the new icon screen in the Greek Catholic church there. We met the Eparch of Hajdudorog Bishop Constantine Keresles (Svyarid, in Hungarian). There we joined a huge congregation that overflowed into the churchyard. Our group heard, some for the first time, the Divine Liturgy sung in Hungarian. The music consisted of Carpatho-Rusyn plainchant melodies. Hundreds of people of all ages participated in the patronal procession around the church. The large number of young people active in the service displayed the great commitment that the Greek Catholic church has made in bringing its young people to Jesus Christ. No one in Hungary seemed to be concerned with the atheistic tenets of their government. We saw the faith proudly and openly practiced in Hungary.

In Miskolc we stayed at a spa outside the city. Our request to the desk clerk as to the location of Holy Trinity Greek Catholic Cathedral met with a curious stare, but soon the telephone operator came out to give us the necessary directions. She was a Greek Catholic and was overjoyed to meet our group of Byzantine Catholic Americans and Canadians. Holy Trinity, the cathedral church of the Exarchate of Miskolc, is on the center square of the city along with two other churches representing the faiths prevalent in the region: Roman Catholic and Reformed. Miskolc is the religious center for the Greek Catholics of the Eparch of Presov who are now in the Republic of Hungary. Holy Trinity Cathedral is a huge structure dominating the center of this second largest city in Hungary.

On our second day in Miskolc, Father Serge and I celebrated the liturgy at Holy Trinity. We were surprised to be joined by a priest and a group of young people from the Eparchy of Presov. We served the liturgy in Church Slavonic and the young men and women of the group made up a most impressive choir. Later, we took them on our bus to the icon museum operated by the Hungarian Orthodox Church in Miskolc. They told us of their pilgrimage from the Presov region to the shrine at Maria Poci, sharing with us some of the difficulties that they experience as Greek Catholic believers in Czechoslovakia — difficulties that we ourselves were soon to experience.

The icon museum in Miskolc, located in a former residence next to the Orthodox cathedral, was impressive. Many of its icons are of the classic Greek style of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most of the Orthodox in Hungary came from the Greek communities in the Ottoman Empire and were mainly merchants and traders. The decorations of the cathedral, which is under the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate, reflect what clearly must have been a prosperous Greek community. We were told that a priest came frequently from Budapest to serve in the cathedral, but it really appeared that the cathedral did not receive much use. The icons and icon screen, however, were truly jewels to behold, perhaps a bit dusty, but nonetheless jewels.

Even speaking with our Presov friends in Hungary could never have prepared us for what we faced when we crossed the frontier into Czechoslovakia. We had cleared Hungarian
were very interested in any of the literature that we had with us. The border guards had assured us that the kinds of personal items and books we were carrying would not be problematic. We discovered, though, that Cédok was not to be trusted for providing honest information about customs regulations or about assisting foreign tourists who encounter difficulties in their country.

The border guards rummaged at length through the luggage of the members of the tour. We had the impression that they were basically looking for things that could be sold, perhaps on the black market. Among other items confiscated as "subversive" matter were Time, U.S. News and World Report, personal papers, address books, icon postcards purchased forty-five minutes earlier in Hungary, prayerbooks, other personal religious material, and gifts bound for relatives in Poland. They threatened us with their weapons by resting their hands on them and releasing the safety clips on them. One of the members of the group had to submit to a strip-search, and they threatened to expel us back into Hungary if we continued to protest. I reached the conclusion that these border guards were nothing more than state-supported thieves who preyed on those people who unfortunately had to cross their border. If we had not already had plans to enter Poland at a certain crossing, I would have taken their offer of expulsion as a more pleasant alternative to their criminal action.

When we finally arrived in Prešov five hours late and very hungry, we met our Cédok guide Marta Szentirmaiova. Marta claimed that such a sad crossing must have been a figment of our imagination. Our several demands to contact our embassies were met with a stoney silence and later with assurances that our stolen goods would be returned. Alas, except for the address books, none of the items were ever returned. We could tell right away that Marta was not going to be of any help to us, but in fact like the border guards was a loyal member of the Czechoslovak regime.

We stayed in the Hotel Šariš on Prešov's main street. Many of the hotel rooms have no bathrooms, although it is reportedly the best hotel in the city. We met large groups of people from the Soviet Union who were on what appeared to be major shopping vacations. They filled their buses with everything from pots and pans to wheelbarrows from the stores in Prešov to take back to the Soviet Union.

On our walking tour of the city that evening, we viewed the sights of the city at night. It had rained that day, but we could still see the grim of what is an industrial city. It seems quite true that now Czechoslovakia has the most polluted air in Europe. We saw this also in Košice, where industrial plants near the city spewed forth thick clouds of black smoke. Marta pointed out the various locations of "important Socialist history" in the city. She seemed to forget to mention the Greek Catholic cathedral as we passed it and mentioned the historic church of St. Nicholas only when pressed.

There was a large number of people on the streets that evening and the local pubs seemed to be doing a banner business. During this walk Marta was accompanied by a friend of hers whom she appeared to keep reminding not to say certain things to me during the tour. If this was a case of people censoring themselves, then it was a very real sign of the oppressive activity of the Czechoslovak government.

On our second day in Prešov, Father Serge and I, along with a group of our adventurers, went to the Greek Catholic cathedral for the Divine Liturgy. This early morning liturgy was surprisingly well attended and was in Church Slavonic rather than in the usual modern Slovak so we participated in it with ease. The cathedral appeared to be in a good state of repair, with the iconscreen soaring in all of its Baroque splendor. Several priests met with us that morning and shared with us the difficult state of religious believers in Czechoslovakia. I was amazed at the faithfulness of the believers in the Prešov Eparchy. They appear to be living the Byzantine Catholic and Orthodox faiths with a great expectancy and sincerity. At the same time, Marta was more than a little upset with us for "disappearing" that morning. It was clearly her responsibility to see that we did not have contact with the local people in an unsupervised surrounding.

We travelled next to the beautiful town of Bardejovské Kúpele in the Carpathian Mountains. There we ate a magnificent meal in this Carpathian spa's main restaurant. We then toured the open-air Museum of Folk Architecture located at the spa. In this truly breathtaking landscape we viewed the precious wooden architecture of the region. Stepping into the seventeenth-century Three Holy Hierarchs Greek Catholic Church at the museum helped me to remember the deep faith of these people which is still alive in their communities today. It was disturbing to see this small and simple house of God silently standing in a secular museum. As a group of us stood before the peasant-style icons in the iconscreen, we began to sing softly the "Dostojevo jest..."
which seemed to restore this church to its proper use. The icons seemed to speak of a reality that socialist society is never going to be able to overcome. Elsewhere in the museum the homes of the simple peasants and even of a local landowner and tradesman evoked a much more pristine moment in our people’s history. Some of the visitors to the spa appeared surprised that a group of North Americans could be so interested in their people’s past.

Towering over the spa’s tennis courts is the Greek Catholic Church of St. Michael the Archangel. The clockfaced main tower appears beautifully against the forested background. When Marta understood that we were interested in seeing the inside, she said that she would go off and get the key. While she was away we walked up to the church and could see that the lock on the door had not been opened for many years. What a contrast! The small church that was permitted to function at the spa was constantly being entered by worshippers the whole time we were there, but this beautiful gem of a temple sat empty overlooking it on the hillside.

Travelling to the medieval square in the city of Bardejov was for several of our group a trip into their families’ history. It was exciting to be perhaps at the same spot where their ancestors had bid farewell to their own families and friends. The square is wonderfully preserved, somehow having escaped the ravages of World War II and the grime of pollution. Restoration work seemed to be going on at the Roman Catholic church on the square, and unable to see its interior, we separated and started to explore on our own.

A few of us made our way over to the Greek Catholic Church of SS. Peter and Paul which faces a small park several blocks from the city center. This magnificent Baroque church exhibited a delightful play of black and white contrasts. Twin onion domes loomed above the trees and seemed to speak of the great strength of the community that worshipped within. The resident priest was at a funeral of another priest, and the parish sexton admitted us to the church which reminded me of Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in Cleveland, Ohio. The same hands could have carved the iconscreen and painted the icons. How sad it is that so many of our Byzantine Catholic churches still do not have proper icon screens in the United States. This iconscreen spoke volumes as it silently stood guardian of the worship and faith of the people. We were told that the temple is shared by both the Greek Catholic and Orthodox communities in the city.

As we proceeded along the road to Svidnik and the Dukla Pass, which we would cross the next day, we drove past the village of Jedlinka. Marta mentioned in passing the seventeenth-century church that is now a national landmark. Over her protests we instructed our driver to turn towards the village because we wanted to see the church. Marta was persuaded to ask one of the local women working in the spa to go and get the key. While she was away we walked up to the church and could see that the lock on the door had not been opened for many years. What a contrast! The small church that was permitted to function at the spa was constantly being entered by worshippers the whole time we were there, but this beautiful gem of a temple sat empty overlooking it on the hillside.

When we entered the church I was immediately struck by the smallness of everything inside. I am 6’5” tall and I could not have walked upright through the Royal Doors of the iconscreen or any of the other doors of the church. The iconscreen was blue and gold with lovely wood carving and excellent iconography of the period. Father Serge and I explored behind the iconscreen and found both a L’vov altar liturgy icon in Church Slavonic and an antimensia of the Orthodox bishop of Prešov. No one seemed to be sure or even to care with which jurisdiction the small church was aligned. Our group marvelled at the beautiful icon shrines that surrounded the natural wooden interior of the church. Marta quickly left as we started to sing a few hymns in Church Slavonic much to the delight of the local populace. From the cemetery one could see a full view of this unique church, topped by three different three-bar and cross-crescent crosses. I could not imagine why Čedok would wish to deprive us of such a unique experience.

As we continued toward our evening in Svidnik, Marta seemed to be very curious how I as an engineer could be so interested in churches. She felt that all scientifically-minded people naturally were atheists or else they could not be true scientists. I explained to her that it is in science that we find the reasons for knowing that there is a God, and that “all wisdom comes from the Lord and with Him it remains forever” (Sirach 1:11). I never told her that I was a priest as well as an engineer.

Svidnik, located near the site of the battle of the Dukla Pass, is a town that suffered terribly in World War II. The city...
has a large Soviet cemetery and a war memorial to the
Soviet troops which were engaged in the battle. Oftentimes
Soviet tourists and delegations from the Soviet army visit the
memorial and then go to pray at St. Paraskeva Greek Catho-
lic Church that overlooks the cemetery. Surrounded by
beautiful trees, the church sits on a majestic rise near the
memorial and the new apartment complexes that make up
much of Svidnik. The church is in the local Baroque style and
inside is adorned with a majestic iconscreen that fills the
entire archway before the altar. The iconscreen is a nearly
solid wall painted a light brown with gold leafing throughout.
The icons once again appeared to be the work of master
iconographers. Only a few pews were found on the women's
side of the church.

Father Serge and I met with several believers that night
and had confirmed for us the inhuman oppression of believ-
ers by the Czechoslovak regime. They told us of the dis-
crimination against believers in employment and housing
and how their children were constantly harrassed by school
officials for church attendance and religious instruction.
Since the advent of glasnost in the Soviet Union the oppres-
sion of religious believers on the part of the government
appears to be increasing rather than decreasing. They were
not the least bit surprised at our reception at the border,
referring to it as a common occurrence.

In this discussion it became clear to us that the government
appears greatly afraid of the flow of information from the West.
The believers that we spoke with had little idea about what was
happening in the churches beyond their immediate area, not to
speak of the church in the United States. In Hungary and
Poland, furthermore, people had little idea about what was
really happening in Czechoslovakia.

Before leaving Svidnik we visited the famous Outdoor
Museum of Folk Architecture located on a hillside overlook-
ing the city across the valley from the Soviet war memorial.
The museum was closed for repairs when we arrived, but
with a little persuasion we were able to enter the compound
and see the restoration of a Carpathian Mountain village.
The Three Holy Hierarchs Greek Catholic Church in the
museum stood as the focal point of the village. The Church-
yard was entered through an unusual side entryway topped
by a three-bulbed tower. Inside the temple was again seen an
iconscreen adorned with peasant-style iconography. At the
risk of sounding disrespectful, I can only say that Our Lord
and the Mother of God looked like sumo wrestlers in these
images. It was apparent that the iconscreen had not been
faithfully reproduced, but constructed only as a background
on which to display this interesting religious treasure.

On the way to our border crossing at the Dukla Pass, we
stopped at the small village of Ladomirova to see St. Mi-
ichael's Greek Catholic Church. Marta was again clearly
upset at our desire to stop there. When the parish priest
returned from a funeral nearby, he graciously showed us the
inside of this centuries' old wooden church. The church had
been damaged during the war and the upper section of the
right side of the iconscreen had been clumsily covered by an
oversized portrait of the Agony in the Garden. One of the
most unusual things I discovered on the iconscreen were the
icons that were painted on the posts of the Royal Doors and
the Deacon doors. This church, along with many others in the
Presov Region, had an icon of the Holy Protection of the
Mother of God attached to the back of the Holy Table similar
to a reredoes in a Western Christian church.

Crossing the border to get out of Czechoslovakia was not
any easier than getting into the country. Marta had on sever-
al occasions promised us that the items stolen from us by
the border guards would be returned as we left. They were
not. Our attempts to file written complaints were again re-
buffed. They refused to permit us to see a higher ranking
official of the Border Service until the Polish customs offi-
cials asked that such a person be sent.

Even though I treasure the new friends we met in Czechoslo-
vakia, the indignities suffered at the borders of this nation
at the hands of government officials were inexcusable. I will
never take another group into Czechoslovakia until it is clear
that such episodes will not happen again. The Czechoslo-
vak government had better make sure that its border guards
stop acting like highway robbers before they try to increase
their tourist ties with the West. (To be continued in next
issue.)

IN REMEMBRANCE:
FATHER ORESTES KOMAN
(1894-1988)

The Reverend Orestes Koman, one of the oldest Rusyn
journalists in this country, died at the age of ninety four on
December 24, 1988, at the Alexian Brothers Nursing Home
in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Along with his life work as a parish priest, Father Orestes
had written the series "Po-Nezomu" in the Rusyn language
for the Greek Catholic Union Messenger, the official publi-
cation of the Greek Catholic Union, a fraternal benefit soci-
ety serving Carpatho-Rusyns and others in America. He
also wrote a feature series entitled "As I Remember It" for
the Eastern Catholic Life, the weekly newspaper of the By-
zantine Catholic Diocese of Passaic. New Jersey. His arti-
cles appeared up until two months before his death.

Father Orestes was born on February 24, 1894, in Belo-
veza, Subcarpathian Rus', a son of Father Andrew and
Maria Kerekes Koman. He completed preparatory courses
at the Eparchial Seminary of Presov and then received a
bachelor's degree in theology at the Royal University in
Budapest, Hungary.

With the outbreak of World War I, he remained in Buda-
est as an elementary school instructor. In 1921, he came to
America and in September of that year was ordained a priest
by Bishop Nicholas Butka in Winnipeg, Canada. For two
years he served in Central City, Pennsylvania, and then for
sixty one years until his retirement in 1974 he was pastor of
SS. Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church in Elizabeth,
New Jersey.

During his pastorate he also served as spiritual advisor of
the Greek Catholic Union. He provided spiritual counsel to
the society's members through thousands of sermons, arti-
cles, and reflections, as well as personal counsel at the orga-
nization's conventions and national meetings.

Father Orestes is survived by his wife, Maria Danko, and
three children, Robert, Leo, and Eva.

The Service of Christian Burial for a Priest was conducted
at SS. Peter and Paul Church in Elizabeth with the Most
Reverend Michael J. Dudick, Bishop of Passaic, as the princi-
pal celebrant. Burial was in St. Michael Cemetery in Pas-
saic.
GREETINGS ON OUR TENTH ANNIVERSARY

It is with joy that I greet you on the tenth anniversary of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

This center, which is the only organization devoted exclusively to the cultural needs of Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background, serves a great need among the 700,000 people in the United States of this background. The center not only preserves the heritage of the Carpatho-Rusyns, it also serves to teach this culture to younger Americans more distantly removed now from their ancestral roots.

Please accept my sincere congratulations and best wishes as you observe your anniversary. It is my fervent wish and prayer that you will enjoy increasing recognition and success in the years to come.

With kind personal regards and every best wish, I remain sincerely yours in Christ.

Most Reverend Stephen J. Kocisko, D. D.
Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh
Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Province

It has come to my attention that in 1988 the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center celebrated its tenth anniversary. Congratulations!

You are doing a great job in promoting Rusyn studies worldwide. Other ethnic groups could learn a lot from your example.

Keep up the good work! Sincerely,

M. Mark Stolarik
President and Chief Executive Officer
Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

For many U.S. and Canadian citizens, their historical homeland lies in the current territory of the Ukraine. We feel extremely gratified to know that the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center has registered certain undeniable accomplishments in tracing its history and culture. Spreading this knowledge on a worldwide scale can only help instill in the younger generation a sense of pride in their ethnic background, just as it fosters their intensified involvement with the history of their ancestors.

We would like to use this occasion to extend our heartfelt congratulations on the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center’s tenth anniversary and wish you and yours the best of health and every success. May your ranks multiply! May your praiseworthy activity bring much gratifying results in the name of enhancing cultural contacts and better understanding and friendship between our nations!

Ukraina Society Board
Ukraina Society
Kiev, U.S.S.R.

ELLIS ISLAND MONUMENT

For the past few months, The Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., has been offering the descendants of immigrants the opportunity to honor an immigrant family or family member. By contributing $100 or more toward the national monument’s restoration fund, the name of a family or family member will be inscribed on the American Immigrant Wall of Honor which is to be erected at the new Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York Harbor. The name submitted will also be placed in a central computer at Ellis Island, along with the country of origin and the name of the donor. The wall will be located in the restored immigration facility adjacent to the Great Hall which was the registry room through which millions of immigrants — including Carpatho-Rusyns — entered into the United States. Donations of $1000, $5000, and $10,000 will receive special places of honor, and all donations are tax deductible. The Ellis Island Immigration Museum, scheduled to be opened during the course of this year, will be the nation’s leading museum dedicated to American immigrants. The announced official cut-off date is August 1, but names may be accepted after that date. For more information call the foundation at (212) 883-1986 or write to The Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, New York 10017-3808.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Due to a recent reshuffling of C-RA staff and a rearrangement of our working procedures, we have experienced some delays in the production of the C-RA. We apologize for this and wish to reassure our readers that by fall 1989 we should be back to normal in providing you with our quarterly issues in their proper seasons. Thank you for your patience.

A READER SPEAKS

This past year has been markedly different from all others in my life as a nineteen-year-old, for it was this past year that I truly discovered my roots. I remember back to a family heritage project we did in elementary school. All the kids were asked to find out from which countries their ancestors came. Of course, in the ethnically homogeneous region of south central Pennsylvania, most of the answers were the same: Germany, England, Sweden, with only a rare mention of Italy or Ireland. My answers were Germany and Wales on my father’s side and Austria on my mother’s side, that is, Austria being my mother’s interpretation of Austria-Hungary. So much for my adding any ethnic diversity to Pennsylvania Dutch country! My mother had mentioned previously that we were Greek Catholic, “different from Roman Catholic,” and that she learned to speak some “Russian” from her mother, but she never explained to me what this “Russian” was or what Greek Catholic meant. I always considered myself just Catholic, and our church had always been Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Church here in Palmyra.
But that part of my life was eventually to change forever. Mom found out that there was a Byzantine Catholic church in nearby Harrisburg, and she wanted to go there for Easter services back in 1984. All three of us went there that Sunday, and simply put, I had never experienced anything like it in all my life. I was completely mesmerized by the Old Slavonic language, the magnificent chanting, and the beauty of the Eastern liturgy. It was as if going to that church had opened something up inside me that lay dormant for a long time. Because of my requests, we returned to St. Ann’s more and more often until finally this year we became parishioners. Still, since St. Ann’s has parishioners of both Carpatho-Rusyn and Galician-Ukrainian descent, and also includes a good number of converts to the Byzantine Catholic Church, ethnicity is never emphasized beyond the use of the term Slavic.

Naturally, I was becoming more and more curious about my mother’s ancestry, indeed, my own ancestry. Mom really could not tell me much about it. She was the youngest in a very large family, and her father had died when she was very young. Her mother was the only link to Europe in the family. Economic concerns always came first: traditions were secondary. Mom grew up in Barnesboro, Pennsylvania, and attended St. John the Baptist Greek Catholic Church there. She married my dad in St. Mary’s Greek Catholic Church in nearby Johnstown, his hometown. Still, I knew nothing of the Greek Catholic Church, and the only Slavic culture I grew up with was the kolbasi and holupki that mom cooked once in a while. Sadly, my grandmother passed away several years before I became interested in my heritage.

Finally, two years ago I began a search myself. I read about the Eastern Rite Churches, about Russians, about Austria—those things that mom had referred to, but never knew exactly the right terms to use. All the bits and pieces of information came together at last when I found the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups in our high school library. The entry on Carpatho-Rusyns explained to me what it seemed no one else could.

Since graduating from high school two years ago, I have been attending Penn State University in State College, Pennsylvania. There I have met many other people of Carpatho-Rusyn background. A few are actively aware of their heritage, but some have only a vague idea of a “Ruthenian” identity at best. Still others consider their heritage to be Ukrainian, which I never have. But desiring to participate in East Slavic culture, I became a member of the Penn State Ukrainian Club. In this organization I have really enjoyed learning and performing folk dances and songs, and have also made some very good friends. Some of them still give that old “Rusyns are really Ukrainians” line to me occasionally, but belonging to this group has been overall a very positive experience for me.

One friend I made in the Ukrainian Club never gave me that line. However, because he too is of Carpatho-Rusyn descent and joined the club for reasons similar to mine. It is because of him, my good friend Keith Koshyte, that I have really felt like a part of the Carpatho-Rusyn community. At his invitation, last summer and fall we travelled together all over Pennsylvania to different Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and religious events, from the annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival in May to the pilgrimage at Mount Saint Macrina in September and St. John’s Carpatho-Rusyn Festival in Uniontown in October. At these events and others I have had the same feeling—an incredible feeling of belonging. Even though I have been an active participant in our community for only a short time, I am always proud to say that I am a Carpatho-Rusyn American.

In this past year, however, amid all the new and exciting experiences, I have felt the presence of a dark cloud over the community. As has been addressed in this forum many times before, the religious differences that divide us into Byzantine Catholics and Orthodox have kept our community from growing into a strong, united ethnic group in the United States. Our brother eastern Slavs, the Ukrainians, have managed largely to overcome their Catholic-Orthodox divisions in the spirit of ethnic unity. Carpatho-Rusyns have not. Our Byzantine and Orthodox communities tragically remain almost completely separated from each other. A small example: at a recent ethnic festival in Johnstown, a middle-aged Orthodox woman from the Johnstown diocese seemed shocked to learn that Byzantine Catholic Carpatho-Rusyns venerate icons, too! Such is the state of our community’s lack of self-awareness and knowledge.

As I look forward to the future, I pray that the Carpatho-Rusyn community will not fade away. I discovered my Rusyn heritage and will foster an awareness of it among the future generations of my family. For our community to survive, we must overcome our religious separation and the vague concepts many of our people have about their background. It is not our churches’ task to preserve our ethnicity. We ourselves must present our name and traditions to our children in a specific and accurate manner. The efforts of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center to promote an interest in things Rusyn have had a marked effect on our community, as will the eventual establishment of a chair of Carpathian Rus’ studies at a major American university. But the community as a whole must be responsible for the precious gifts we have inherited.

As for my future activities, I am hoping one day to visit my grandparents’ village in their Prjasevschyna homeland. Meanwhile, my Rusyn friends and I at Penn State now aim to foster a Carpatho-Rusyn ethnic awareness among students at the university and residents in the surrounding area.

Finally, to all those who are working for the good of the Carpatho-Rusyn community and to all our people in the United States and in the European homeland. I would like to wish na mnohaja i blahaja l’ita!

Richard D. Custer
Palmyra, Pennsylvania
RECENT EVENTS

Indiana, Pennsylvania. From February 14 to March 24, 1989, an exhibition entitled Narodna praca: Folk Art and Handicraft from Slavic Heritage was housed at The University Museum of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Guest Curator David A. Lear, a graduate student in Fine Arts at the university, collected materials for the exhibition from churches, various institutions, and individuals and included such items as icons, pysanky, wood carving, embroidery, glassware, and dolls and toys. Items of Carpatho-Rusyn culture were borrowed from the collections of Jerry Jumba and Keith Koshute. Special programs focused on Serbo-Croatian and Carpatho-Rusyn lifestyles. Folk artist Bonnie Balas from Uniontown, Pennsylvania, demonstrated the production of pysanky and other Carpatho-Rusyn crafts, and Keith Koshute of Windber, Pennsylvania, lectured on Carpatho-Rusyn folk and religious culture.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On March 5, 1989, the Czechoslovak Room Committee and the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences co-sponsored a celebration in honor of the 139th birthday of Tomas G. Masaryk and the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Czechoslovak Room in the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh. The program commenced with a performance by the Slayjane Folk Ensemble, followed by a presentation delivered by Dr. Paul R. Magocsi entitled “Masaryk, Rusyns, and Czechoslovakia.” The program, held at the Stephen Foster Memorial Social Room, was attended by approximately 125 people and concluded with a reception for Professor Magocsi.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On March 6, 1989, the Center for Russian and East European Studies of the University of Pittsburgh, the Czechoslovak Room Committee, and the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences co-sponsored a colloquium led by Dr. Paul R. Magocsi at the University of Pittsburgh on the problems and fate of Rusyns in the First Czechoslovak Republic and contemporary Czechoslovakia entitled “Who Are the Rusyns? The Rusyn Problem in Eastern Europe.”

Toronto, Ontario. On March 18-19, 1989, the Julian Revay Carpathian Research Center in cooperation with the Ševčenko Scientific Society in Canada held a scholarly conference in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the declaration of Carpatho-Ukrainian independence. Lectures were presented by a number of scholars, including Dr. Paul R. Magocsi who spoke on “Recent Publications on Carpatho-Rusyns: Achievements and Future Tasks.”

L’viv, USSR. The Ukraina Society of Kiev reports that the first general meeting of the Lemko cultural society, Lemkivs'chyna, which was formed under the auspices of the Ukraina Society in July, 1988, was held on April 1, 1989. The report provided on the meeting indicates that the main business dealt with was organizational in nature, though the quotes given indicate that some very frank and far-ranging discus-
Carpatho-Rusyn students perform at Pennsylvania State University's Slavic Folk Festival

Minneapolis and John Ryzyk, president of the Carpatho-Russian American Center (Yonkers, New York), both of whom represented their groups' interest in establishing a working relationship with the C-RRC. Other observers were Mrs. Mary Onufrak of McLean, Virginia, Dr. Richard Renoff of Nassau Community College, and George Wislocki of the Carpatho-Russian American Center. A reception was held after the meeting for the Board, observers, a number of invited guests from the local Washington, D.C., area, and all members of the Friends Committee of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

Legnica, Poland. Alex Klimkowski, our correspondent in Lemkivščyna, reports that on April 15, 1989, a meeting of Lemko-Rusyn activists from different parts of Poland was held in Legnica for the purpose of forming a Lemko Association. To a standing ovation by those assembled, Andrzej Kopcza announced that Polish authorities had recognized the Lemko Association, headquartered in Legnica, and granted it full legal status and rights to act throughout Poland. This historic moment was highly emotional for those assembled as their forty-year struggle for a Lemko-Rusyn identity had at last been won. The Lemko Association aims to bring together all Lemko-Rusyns regardless of their religious denomination; to preserve and maintain Lemko traditions; to provide educational opportunities in the Lemko-Rusyn language; and to disseminate the history of Lemkovyna and knowledge of the life and cultural activities of Lemko-Rusyns living in Lemkovyna and abroad.

The Chief Council of the Lemko Association consists of Andrzej Kopcza, President; Piotr Trochanowski and Stefan Kosowski, Vice-Presidents; Jarosław Horoszczak, Secretary. Members of the Board of Directors are Jan Kowalczyk, Alex Klimkowski, and Marta Plaskon.

The Lemko Association may be contacted through The Carpatho-Rusyn American until an official address is established.

Binghamton, New York. On May 6, 1989, The American Civic Association organized the city's annual Two Rivers Ethnic Parade and Festival. The event began with a colorful parade of floats and the approximately twenty-five participating groups in ethnic costume accompanied by ethnic music. Booths and performances were located in the Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena. Among the groups parading a float, hosting a display and food booth named the "Carpathian Platter," as well as performing was the American Carpatho-Russian Youth organization. The float was provided by Dan Maciak, and Tom Boback accompanied the parade and dancers on his accordion. This was the seventh year that the ACRY and "The Carpathians" have participated in the festival. The committee in charge of preparing Carpatho-Rusyn foods was headed by Sue Bisaha and Anna Sinchak. Booth organizers, Michael and Dolores Kundrat, were aided by Cheryl Dutko, whose ensemble, "The Carpathians," based at St. Michael's Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in Binghamton, demonstrated Carpathian folksongs and dances. Cheryl has also recently participated in the production of a PBS special on Eastern European folk embroidery in which she demonstrates the distinct Carpatho-Rusyn styles. The program, entitled "Threads to the Past," is scheduled to be aired soon on the local Binghamton PBS channel (WSKG), and may be aired more widely in the future.

OUR FRONT COVER

Hikers in the Carpathians.