Honored Guests, Dear Rusyn Brothers and Sisters!

As president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and as a citizen of the United States, it is an honor to be with you this morning in the context of a truly historic event—the opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce. Why do I say that this is a historic event?

First of all, it is no accident that this museum has been established in Medzilaborce and not in some larger city in Czechoslovakia. This is because Medzilaborce and the surrounding area which is inhabited by Carpatho-Rusyns is the birthplace of the parents of Andy Warhol, one of the most influential artists and cultural figures in the United States, whose fame has spread worldwide during the second half of the twentieth century.

Relations between Rusyn immigrants in America and their Carpathian homeland had been very close in the distant past. For instance, in 1918, when the end of World War I brought radical political change throughout Eastern Europe, it was our people in the United States who first proposed to the world’s leaders that their Rusyn brethren in the Carpathians join the new state of Czechoslovakia. The result was that Rusyns, alongside Slovaks and Czechs, were one of the three Slavic peoples who created the first Czechoslovak republic.

Contacts between Rusyns in the United States and Rusyns in Czechoslovakia remained close until World War II. Then, for the next fifty years—a whole half century—these contacts were broken. They were broken first by the tragedy of war and then by the descent of the Iron Curtain which artificially cut us off from our family and friends in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland.

Happily, the November Revolution of 1989 has made possible once again normal relations between the United States and Czechoslovakia, and therefore between Rusyns in America and Rusyns in what we have always called the “old country.” In this context, it is most encouraging to note that these renewed contacts have taken place primarily through visits between family and friends, and now through the establishment of a cultural institution—the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce.

The promotion of culture and understanding between peoples within Europe and between Europe, America, and the rest of the world are what all of us must promote as we approach the threshold of the twenty-first century. The Museum of Modern Art in the Rusyn-inhabited heart of Europe is both a symbolic and concrete step toward a future Europe without political and ideological barriers.

Therefore, on this happy occasion, we must all be grateful to those far-sighted Rusyns of Medzilaborce like Michal Bycko and Michal Turok-Hetes, who first conceived the idea of a museum linked to the artistic heritage of Andy Warhol; to the mayor of Medzilaborce and to the officials of the Slovak government who lent their authority and financial support to the project; and most especially to the Warhola family in America, including Paul Warhola who is with us here today, and John Warhola, who first initiated contact with cultural activists in Medzilaborce a few months after their younger brother Andy unexpectedly died in 1987. Finally, gratitude must be extended to the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York, which has committed itself to support a school of modern art in Medzilaborce.

Carpatho-Rusyns in America are truly proud of what you have done here not only for the people of the Medzilaborce region but also for the Europe of tomorrow.
FEDIR VICO

Since the Revolution of 1989, the Carpatho-Rusyns have experienced a veritable national revival in their European homeland. Within less than two years, they have been officially recognized as a nationality in Czechoslovakia, and they have created organizations in that country as well as in Ukrainian Transcarpathia and the Lemko Region in Poland, where new organizations are working to improve the cultural and political status of Rusyns wherever they may live. Not surprisingly, all this “political” activity has been carried out by self-appointed leaders who, perhaps more often than is necessary, take themselves too seriously. Fortunately, the Rusyn movement, most especially in Czechoslovakia, includes activists who know how to laugh at themselves and at others around them.

Among the best-known of the present-day Rusyn cultural activists in Czechoslovakia is the artist and caricaturist Fedir Vico. Vico was born in 1955 in Sapinec, a Carpatho-Rusyn village in the Prešov Region of northeastern Slovakia where both his parents functioned as village school teachers. Although his paternal and maternal parents both came from Rusyn villages (Vysné Čabiny and Krajná Bystrá), their profession as teachers required that they move often. Thus, Fedir and his older brother began their lives and schooling first in Rusyn villages, but later they moved to western Slovakia (Bratislava and Zvolen) and farther still to Prague.

As a young boy, Vico was always interested in drawing, and to perfect his natural talents he was trained at the School of Industrial Arts in Bratislava. Another of his talents was a sense of irony and ability to poke satirical fun at the contradictions between the claims of Communist propaganda and the harsh realities of life in Czechoslovakia. His first political cartoons began to appear already in the early 1960s, and from 1965 through 1970, Vico became extremely popular through his series, “Deres,” which appeared in the Slovak magazine, Rohác. This series featured the legendary Slovak Robin Hood figure, Janošík. In Vico’s hands, Janošík became an instrument to criticize the foibles of life in Slovakia.

Vico became best known among Rusyns through his series of political cartoons under the title, “Il’ko Sova z Bajusova” (Il’ko the Owl from Bajusov—an imaginary Rusyn village), which appeared weekly from the mid-1960s to mid-1980s in Nove žytta, the Ukrainian-language weekly newspaper published in Prešov. In fact, Vico’s cartoons with their incisive satirical dialogues were for many years the only texts in that newspaper which appeared in the Rusyn language.

After an early life of “wandering” with his teacher-parents, since the mid-1960s Vico has made his home in Prešov, where he works out of a modest ground-level studio located opposite the Rusyn Alexander Duchnovič Theater. From this base, Vico is known by his cartoons throughout Czechoslovakia and abroad. Since the 1960s, his work has been exhibited in all the major cities of Czechoslovakia as well as several times abroad, in Turkey, Greece, Canada, Japan, Belgium, and the Netherlands. He has also won several awards at art competitions in Yugoslavia. Since the Revolution of 1989, he has drawn political cartoons for the best Czech-language daily newspaper in the country, Prague’s Lidové noviny, and in 1991 he founded with his brother a satirical magazine, Bumerang, published in Slovak by the Rusyn Renaissance Society (Rusyn’ska Obroda) and distributed throughout the country in over 40,000 copies.

Despite his fame throughout Czechoslovakia and his widespread popularity in Prešov (there was even talk that he should run in local elections because he would probably be elected mayor of the city), Vico remains a Rusyn patriot committed to the current national revival. In a recent interview with a leading Czech magazine (MF Dnes Vikend), Vico responded to a question about his Rusyn origins: “A lot of people in Slovakia don’t even know what the word Rusyn means. Until now it was thought that we were Ukrainians... however, there is a difference between Rusyns and Ukrainians. They are by no means the same.”

When in the summer of 1991, it was decided to publish a newspaper, Narodný novinky (The People’s News), in the Rusyn language of the Prešov Region, it came as no surprise that the publisher, the Rusyn Renaissance Society, turned to Fedir Vico for the masthead design. Nor did he disappoint them. The Rusyn-language Narodný novinky is today one of the most attractive newspapers on stands in Czechoslovakia. And, of course, each issue is graced with a cartoon that pokes fun at current problems that face Rusyns: inflation, unemployment, displeasure with post-Communist political life, and conflict with the local Ukrainian intelligentsia. Through it all, Fedir Vico makes his readers laugh at themselves and thereby helps them get through another day.

Philip Michaels
“I’d prefer to remain a mystery. I never like to give my background and, anyway, I make it all up different every time I’m asked.”

That statement reflects both the honesty and success of Andy Warhol, for until and even after his untimely death in 1987, few people had ever penetrated into the origins of the world famous artist and American cultural figure. At best, writers would take his own autobiographical references to Czechoslovakia as the birthplace of his parents and simplify that fact by describing him as a Czech. But after his death, an enormous interest in his career and background began not only in the United States and other centers of western culture, but also in eastern Europe (see “Czechoslovakia Discovers Andy,” C-RA, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1989, pp. 4-7).

Not surprisingly, Warhol has in the past four years become the subject of several major biographies issued by leading publishers in the United States and Europe. For the first time, most of them are clear and correct regarding the Carpatho-Rusyn origins of his family. In fact, it is only the sketchy biographical introduction by Kynaston McShine to the Museum of Modern Art’s otherwise beautiful retrospective catalog that seems entirely unaware of the new information about Andy’s background. It simply repeats the old incorrect data: “Born of immigrant, Roman Catholic Czech parents at the beginning of the Depression, Warhol grew up near the mills of Pittsburgh.” (Andy Warhol: A Retrospective. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989, p. 13).

Among the first of the full-scale biographies is one by Fred Lawrence Guiles, the author of several popular books about movie stars like Marilyn Monroe, Tyrone Power, and Jane Fonda. Guiles begins on the right track, but he is still confused, describing Andy’s mother as “a tough-spirited Czech,” who “spoke Czech in the home,” even though “both of Andy’s parents were from the Rusyn village of Miková in the Prešov Region of northeastern Czechoslovakia.” (Fred Lawrence Guiles, Loner at the Ball: The Life of Andy Warhol. London and New York: Bantam Press, 1989, pp. 7, 9, 13).

Fortunately, the other biographers of Warhol no longer repeat the old misinformation that Andy himself had systematically encouraged. The following excerpts from two extensive studies have this to say about Warhol’s background:

“According to family members and school records, he was born in Pittsburgh on August 6, 1928. Christened Andrew Warhola, he was the youngest of three sons of Ondrej [Andrew] (1888-1942) and Julia Zavacky Warhola (1892-1972).

“Both parents were Czechoslovakian immigrants who came from farming families in Miková, a Carpatho-Rusyn mountain village in the Prešov region of northeastern Slovakia near the Polish border.

“Carpatho-Rusyn, in its Prešov region dialectical variant, was the official language at home, For Mrs. Warhola, English was a fiendishly difficult second language whose grammatical subtleties constantly eluded her. Andy goaded his mother to read the comics to him in English, but her thick accent so mangled the words that he often couldn’t follow the story. He fully understood his parents’ Rusyn dialect but preferred to communicate with them in English.” (David Bourdon, Warhol. New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1989, pp. 14, 16-17).

“Andy obscured his childhood in lies and myths from the moment he received any public attention.”

“[The Warholas] first son, Paul, had been born on 26 June 1922, their second, John, on 31 May 1925. The Warholas were Rusyns who had emigrated to America from the Ruthenian village of Miková in the Carpathian Mountains near the present-day borders of Russia [more precisely, the former Soviet Union—PRM] and Poland in territory that was, at the turn of the century, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.”

“Religion played a large role in the Warhola house. They were devout Byzantine Catholics who observed the calendar of their faith....”

“The Byzantine Catholic church was also the center of all Ruthenian social activity. This removed the Warholas further from the majority of their neighbors, who were Roman Catholics, but this isolation from the rest of the community was offset considerably by the extended Warhola and Zavacky families.”

“These descriptions fitted the Warhola family’s neighborhood. Like blacks, who were the only ethnic group below them on the social scale, Eastern Europeans, contemptuously labelled ‘hunkies’, were dismissed as incapable and untrustworthy. Their religion, language and customs seemed strange to native Americans; their children were ridiculed and abused in school. They were given lower-paying jobs, and those with professional skills, like the doctors, were confined to practicing among their own people. Among hunkies themselves there was social stratification depending on their religion and country of origin. Because of the terrible treatment the Ruthenians had received at the hands of their neighbors, the Ukrainians, poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Moldavians and Slovaks, they had become isolated and suspicious, kept to their own people and their own language, po-našemu (‘in our own manner’), a mixture of Hungarian and Ukrainian.

“Paul, John and Andy were brought up speaking po-našemu.” (Victor Bokris, Warhol. London: Frederick Muller/Century Hutchinson Ltd., 1989, pp. 15-17, 20).

Perhaps the most authoritative of the new biographies is the 500-page book by Warhol’s longtime collaborator and co-editor of his journal, Interview, Bob Colacello.

“Of course, it’s very American to put your past behind you. On one level, Andy embodied the American dream: the immigrants’ son who made it to the top by dint of hard work and new ideas, like some Horatio Alger of the avant-garde. Yet he also consistently subverted that dream, in a wry and disturbing way. The same hand that glamorized fame also delineated its emptiness. This ambiguity at the core of his work
reflected the deep contradictions of his personality: Andy was innocent and decadent, primitive and sophisticated, shy and pushy, the eternal outsider at the center of a series of self-created crowds. And the key to his personality, and perhaps his work, can be found in that past he so cleverly hid. Like many very American stories, Andy’s really began in the ‘Old Country.’

‘I come from nowhere’, Andy once said. And, for once, he wasn’t lying. Ruthenia, the Eastern European land of his parents and grandparents, was nowhere. It can’t be found on any maps—it’s in the Carpathian Mountains, just north of Transylvania, at the point where the present-day boundaries of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and the Soviet Union meet. Its rulers—the Austro-Hungarian Empire until World War I, Czechoslovakia and Russia since then—have systematically denied the identity of its people as a distinct nationality. (The Hapsburgs liked to think of their Ruthenian subjects as ‘Highland Hungarians’, the Czechs called them ‘Eastern Slovaks’, and the Russians called them ‘Western Ukrainians’ or ‘Little Russians’.) It has always been somebody else’s backyard, in constant danger of disappearing into the cracks between clashing powers and cultures, and its people were always made to feel like aliens in their own country. As one of Andy’s relations put it, ‘In Europe, the Ruthenians were the poorest of the poor. We never even had a flag’.

‘They barely had a language. Until 1914, school was taught in Magyar, the language of the Hungarian rulers. Ruthenian itself was a goulash of archaic Ukranian and modern Slovak, with many Magyar, Polish, and even German words thrown in. It was sometimes written in Cyrillic letters, like Ukrainian (and Russian), and sometimes written in Roman letters, like Slovak (and English). Most Ruthenians didn’t go to school, and couldn’t read or write in any language. At the beginning of this century, the illiteracy rate in Ruthenia was between 70 and 90 percent, and there were many villages without a single literate person. Ruthenian literature was pretty much limited to folk plays performed by amateur troupes. According to Professor Paul Magocsi, one of the most popular plays tells of the Ruthenian ‘everyman and anti-hero, David Schrapnel, who like his more famous Czech counterpart, Hašek’s Good Soldier Schweik, undermined the operations of the Austro-Hungarian army by his ironic and seemingly innocent stupidity’. (That sounds a lot like Andy.)’

‘When Andy was born, the Warholas lived in Soho, a working-class neighborhood overlooking the Monongahela River and the belching steel mills that blocked both its banks. Pittsburgh was the steel, aluminum, and glass capital of America then, and so polluted that the street lights had to be turned on at noon. Soho was a rough place to grow up, particularly for the children of the Eastern European immigrants who were pushing out the more established Irish factory workers, and perhaps most of all for the Ruthenians, who found their identity crisis made all the more acute in a country where the first question most people asked of newcomers was ‘What are you?’

‘We didn’t know what we were’, a Warhola neighbor says. ‘B-a-s-t-a-r-d-s’, adds her husband, ‘is what I always refer to our people as’. Most Ruthenian-Americans seem to define their nationality in negatives: ‘We’re not Polish. We’re not Hungarian. We’re not Slovaks. We’re not Ukrainian.’ When I asked the Warhola brothers what nationality they considered themselves when they were growing up, John without hesitation said, ‘Always Slovak’. But Paul said that if he used ‘Slovak lingo, Mother criticized me. She said, ‘What’s the matter with you? You’re talking like a Slovak.’ We always figured we were Slavish, and Slavish was a little different than Slovak.’” (Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990, pp. 10-11, 14.

Thus, it seems that the question of Andy Warhol’s background has been resolved in the minds of his most recent biographers. The symbolic significance of this Carpatho-Rusyn background has also been recognized by the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York, which has not only created a Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh but also has given its support to establish a School of Modern Art in memory of the artist in the small town of Medzilaborce, just a few kilometers from the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Miková, the birthplace of Andy’s parents.

Paul Robert Magocsi
University of Toronto

A REQUEST FOR CONTACTS

The Andy Warhol Fan Club in Czechoslovakia would like to make contact with other organizations of young artists and admirers of Pop Art and Andy Warhol in the United States. The Fan Club is interested in corresponding, and exchanging experiences, views, and informational materials. The club is involved in audiovisual programs and video projects on Andy Warhol. It also organizes discussions and gatherings of artists and admirers of Pop Art and Andy Warhol, as well as conversations with Warhol’s relatives and young avant-garde artists and friends of the creative arts. The club responds to all inquiries. Address letters to Josef Keselica, ul. Dr. Goldbergera M15, 08901 Svidnik, Czechoslovakia.

OUR FRONT COVER

The logo of the Andy Warhol Fan Club in Czechoslovakia. (See the announcement, A REQUEST FOR CONTACTS, in this issue).
REVOLUTION OF 1989 UPDATE

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. In June 1991, the Office of Statistics of the Slovak Republic announced the preliminary results of the decennial census conducted throughout Czechoslovakia in March of this year. The census form had three related questions: 11. State Citizenship; 12. Nationality; and 13. Mother Tongue. Individuals could respond to questions 12 and 13 with the term Rusyn, which was listed as one of the possibilities under question 12 (narodnost': rusinska) and question 13 (materinsky jazyk: rusinsky). However, in the summary on the front page of each census form, the names Ukrainian, Rusyn (ukraininska, rusinska) appeared together as one category for the nationality question. This caused confusion in many people's minds.

Information on Mother Tongue is not yet available. The preliminary data on nationality is as follows: in Slovakia 16, 937 persons identified themselves as Rusyns, and 13, 847 as Ukrainians. Together, this is 7,000 less than the 37,000 persons who were classified as Ukrainian (regardless how they may have identified themselves) in the 1980 census. Thus, the vast majority of the estimated 120,000 Rusyns living in the Prešov Region continue to identify themselves as Slovaks.

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. On June 20, 1991, the Slovak Ministry of Culture informed the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidnik that according to a new law (no. 518/1990), its name has been changed to the Svidnik Regional Museum (Vlastivedne Muzeum Svidnik). The former Museum of Ukrainian Culture was established in 1956 in Krásny Brod and was transferred to Svidnik in 1964. Since that time it has specialized in collecting and displaying materials on the history, culture, and ethnography of the Carpatho-Rusyns in the Prešov Region, and secondarily on Ukrainian emigrés in Bohemia and other parts of Czechoslovakia. On June 16 of this year, the museum opened a stunning new exhibit of Carpatho-Rusyn history within an expanded building paid for by the government.

Despite its achievements, criticism has mounted since early 1990 among organizations like the Rusyn Renaissance Society that the museum should not carry the name Ukrainian. Responding to such criticism, the Slovak Minister of Culture, Dr. Ladislav Snopko, issued the new decree on April 1, 1991, although he did not announce it until late June. Accompanying the decree is a new statute, which specifies that the renamed Svidnik Regional Museum should concern itself with the indigenous Rusyns and Ukrainians in the Prešov Region of eastern Slovakia and not with Ukrainian immigrants and their descendants in other parts of Czechoslovakia. Not surprisingly, the ministerial decision has prompted the pro-Ukrainian intelligentsia to claim that their people are being "de-Ukrainianized." Spokespersons for the Rusyn Renaissance Society would have preferred that the new name indicated in some way that the museum is Rusyn. Nonetheless, they welcome the ministerial move as well as an earlier decision in December 1990 that changed the name and cultural orientation of the Ukrainian National Theater to the Aleksander Duchnovš Theater (see the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. XIV, No. 1, 1991, p. 7); and they look forward to how the government will deal with the remaining Ukrainian-oriented cultural institutions, such as the Prešov radio station, publishing house, and university departments.

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. On June 29, 1991, the Interregional Committee of the World Congress of Rusyns held its first bi-annual meeting. All five heads of the component organizations of the World Congress were present: Dr. Vasyl Turok, Rusyn Renaissance Society (Czechoslovakia) and coordinator for the World Congress; Vasyl Sočka, Society of Carpatho-Rusyns (Soviet Transcarpathia); Andrej Kopča and Petro Trochanovšik, Society of Lemkos (Poland); Ljubomir Medžiš, Ruska Matka (Yugoslavia); and Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (United States).

Among the main topics of discussion were the continual changes in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union and the question of how the World Congress should respond. It was reiterated that the World Congress is comprised of cultural organizations and that cultural, not political activity should be its primary concern.

The Interregional Committee was informed that Slovakia's Ministry of Culture has provided a reasonable budget to support a Rusyn-language press. Extensive discussion was held with Oleksander Zozuljak (until recently editor of Nove žytja, who with his staff has accepted the editorship of two Rusyn-language publications. The magazine Rusyn will continue to appear every two months as the organ of the World Congress and, therefore, be concerned with Rusyns in all countries where they live. A new bi-weekly newspaper, Narodny novynky (The People's News), is intended specifically for Rusyns in Czechoslovakia.

Užhorod, Ukraine. In July 1991, after nearly half a year, the monthly newspaper of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns, Otčýj chram (The Home of Our Fathers), has begun to appear once again. Unlike the first issues that appeared in 1991 in Ukrainian (see the C-RA, Vol. XIII, No. 3, front cover), the newspaper is now published entirely in Rusyn. In the words of its editor, Ivan Kerča: "Since our goal is the renaissance of the Rusyn language, we will publish material in the speech of the Rusyn population of Transcarpathia... Until a final decision on the codification of the Rusyn language, we will follow the rules set out in the [Rusyn] grammars of Mychajlo Lučkaj, Ivan Harajda, and Ivan Pan‘kev{č." Although we do not have concrete information on the cost of Otčýj chram, we suggest you send $10.00 (US check or international money order) to: Ivan Kerča, redaktor; Otčýj chram, holovna počta, skr. 43; 294000 Užhorod, Ukraine.

Prešov, Czechoslovakia. On July 26, 1991, the newspaper Nove žytja, the official organ of the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia (SRUC), published a special insert entitled: "A Position Paper of the Ukrainian Creative Intelligentsia Regarding the Present Cultural and Political Situation in Eastern Slovakia." The basic argument put forth is that political conditions in post-Communist Czechoslovakia have since late 1989 made it possible to discuss and analyze more openly the nationality question, but at the same time individuals within Czechoslovakia and abroad have contributed to "destabilizing the Ukrainian community, especially in the Prešov Region. In short, these individuals have created what the authors of this position paper call "political Rusynism" (politickyj Rusynizm), an effort to create a "new nationality" distinct from Ukrai-
ians. The "Position Paper" rejects these efforts as unscrupulously and as a factor contributing to further Slovakization.

The "Position Paper" requests the following from different sectors of society: (1) that the governments of the Czech and Slovak Republics retain the term Rusyn-Ukrainian as the official term of the group; (2) that SRUC create a commission of specialists to analyze the present socio-economic and cultural-political status of the "Ukrainian minority in Slovakia"; (3) that the Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches respect the nationality interests of their faithful; (4) that the Ukrainian intelligentsia work to undermine "political ideologies and representatives of the Rusyn Renaissance Society" (Rusyns'ka Obroda), since the "idea of a distinct 'Rusyn people' is a fantasy inspired by political interests working against the people"; and (5) that "all Rusyn-Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia . . . unite behind the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia."

The "Position Paper" was initially signed by 52 pro-Ukrainian cultural activists and is likely authored by its first co-signers: the historian Dr. Ivan Vanat, the linguist Professor Mykola Štec; and the literary historian Dr. Fedir Kováč. Since its first appearance in July, SRUC has conducted a campaign to gain further signatures which are published each week in Nové žytтя.

Prešov, Czechoslovakia. On August 12, 1991, the RUCH Organization in Slovakia (Ob"jednannja Ruch Slovc'koji Respubliky) was established. Its primary goal is "to sustain and develop the national identity of the Rusyn-Ukrainian nationality on the territory of the Slovak republic." The organization takes its name RUCH (which in Ukrainian means: the movement) from a similar body founded in 1989 in Kiev to promote Ukrainian culture and patriotism throughout what was then the Soviet Ukraine. Like SRUC (the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia) and other pro-Ukrainian organizations in the Prešov Region, RUCH is very much concerned with the Rusyn national revival. Pro-Ukrainian spokespersons distinguish between what they consider "popular" Rusynism (narodnyj rusynizm), whose goal is to study and preserve the local vernacular speech and culture, and "political Rusynism" (polityčnyj rusynizm), whose goal is to "create . . . a distinct Rusyn nationality." The pro-Ukrainian organizations support popular Rusynism but are opposed to political Rusynism, since they believe that Rusyns are a branch of the Ukrainian nationality.

RECENT EVENTS

Johnstown, Pennsylvania. From August 30 to September 1, 1991, Johnstown's ethnic Cambria City neighborhood hosted the 53rd National Folk Festival. The event, in its second year of a scheduled three-year run in Johnstown, drew a crowd estimated at between 120,000-150,000. This year's festival included an extensive Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and informational exhibit, which was housed inside the school hall of St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church. Mannequins were used to display costumes from various regions of Carpathian Rus'. The exhibit also contained books distributed by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, ričinky (ritual clothes), icons, wood carvings, ceramics, axes, pysanky, and other Rusyn cultural items. The display items were borrowed from the private collections of Jerry Jumba of Herminie, Pennsylvania; Michael and Helen Ozmok of Seward, Pennsylvania; Pauline Florina of Bensenville, Illinois; and Mary Oldham of Windber, Pennsylvania. The display was organized and staffed by Dave Felix of Johnstown and Keith Koshute of Windber. In addition, videos pertaining to Carpatho-Rusyns were shown at the booth, and pysanky demonstrations were conducted by Keith Koshute. The National Council for the Traditional Arts serves as the festival's primary sponsor.

Medzilaborce, Czechoslovakia. On October 5, 1991, the recently-established Museum of Modern Art opened an exhibit of the works of the Warhol family. The highlight of the event was the unveiling of thirteen original works by Andy Warhol, donated for an indefinite period to the Medzilaborce Museum by the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York City. Also included in the exhibition are paintings by Andy's older brother, Paul Warhola of Pittsburgh, and the latter's son, John Warhola of New York. Particularly valuable display items are family artifacts, including the clothes in which Andy was baptized, the first camera owned by the future artist and film maker, and letters in Rusyn by his mother to the family in her nearby native village of Miková. Among those who spoke at the opening were Dr. Ladislav Snopko, minister of culture of Slovakia; John Warhola, vice-president of the Andy Warhol Foundation; and Alexander Franko, recently-appointed director of the Medzilaborce museum.

To enhance the historic occasion and to add an element of outlandishness that was so characteristic of Andy Warhol, Czechoslovak railways organized Warhol Tour '91, which provided a special 14-car railroad train that made the trip from Prague to Medzilaborce for the opening of the exhibit. Hundreds of passengers, including several Czech avant-garde artists and Andy's brother John Warhola, were entertained by three bands and four bars that functioned throughout the 14-hour trip from Prague to the Rusyn town of Medzilaborce in the far eastern corner of Czechoslovakia.

Štišín, Czechoslovakia. From October 10 to 13, 1991, the New York-based Institute for East-West Security Studies held at its European Studies Center located in the castle of Štišín, just outside of Prague, a conference on "European Institutions and the Protection of National Minorities in East Central Europe and the Balkans." The twenty-eight invited participants included diplomats, parliamentarians, and government officials from eastern Europe as well as scholars from several countries in Europe and North America. The object was to review the present status of six national minorities in eastern Europe and for specialists in international law to suggest ways in which these minorities can be protected. Among the case studies chosen for analysis were the Carpatho-Rusyns. Dr. Paul R. Magosci, director of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario and president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, was invited to report on the present status of Rusyns. He also gave the conference's opening address on the future of national minorities in the new Europe.
THE WARHOL STORY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

It is a paradox that here in Czechoslovakia we have begun to discover Andy Warhol, an artist with an international reputation, only after his death on February 22, 1987. Nearly twenty years before, he had told a visiting relative from Czechoslovakia that he would make a trip to the homeland, but that was not to be. Andy’s ancestral homeland is the moutainous Rusyn lands of northeast Slovakia, the magnificent Carpathian region where to this day people speak his native language, Rusyn. Surely his personal world was as mysterious as the solitary mountains, and only now after his death has he at last come home by means of his creative legacy and a few unique personal items.

Andy’s brother, John Warhola, came to visit the homeland of his parents for the first time in September 1987. He travelled to Miková, a village near Medzilaborce which was the birthplace of his parents. On that occasion, Dr. Michal Bycko invited Warhola to a private viewing of an exhibition of paintings by a local artist, Zuzana Hapáková-Osávčuková, which he had organized in Medzilaborce. In the course of their conversations, Bycko and Warhola discussed the possibility of the acquisition of some of Andy’s works, at least two originals. At the time, Warhola suggested that there ought to be a gallery near Miková bearing the name of Andy Warhol, and he promised his cooperation to achieve such a venture. He was subsequently quoted in the newspaper Nove žijitia (October 16, 1987) as saying: “We would like to bequeath several artistic works of Andy Warhol to the Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidnik in order that a gallery be organized there which would carry his name.” Warhol had already become the vice-president of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in New York. But in those difficult days of Communist rule, neither the Svidnik museum nor other institutions and organizations which Bycko contacted had any interest in what they described as the “bourgeois pseudo-artist Warhol and that dull pop art.” Bycko tried in vain to find officials who might grasp the significance of this unique possibility. Although he found no understanding among Communist functionaries, he did not give up.

Bycko next initiated correspondence and telephone contact with the Andy Warhol Foundation and its vice-president, John Warhola. He wrote several articles about Andy Warhol for the Czech and Slovak press, and he distributed a great deal of informational material in order to support the founding of a gallery. Since there was no building to house a gallery and no one to whom to give the two promised paintings, he began working for the establishment of a new gallery in Medzilaborce, which is about 13 kilometers from the Warhola homestead in Miková. This was a difficult and time-consuming task.

In 1988, a construction company in Prešov was hired to renovate the old post office building in Medzilaborce as the Andy Warhol Gallery under the guidance of architect Václav Kolmajer. (See “Czechoslovakia Discovers Andy,” Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. XII, No. 3, Fall 1989, pp. 4-7). But this first plan failed. Nor did the name take hold, in Czechoslovakia after the Revolution of November 1989.

In order to promote the idea of a museum, Dr. Bycko proposed to the residents of Medzilaborce that an Andy Warhol Society (Spoločnosť’ Andy Warhola) be established. This, in fact, occurred on March 2, 1990. Vladislav Grešlík, an art historian and instructor in the Department of Creative Arts at the Faculty of Pedagogy in Prešov, became the society’s president. The very next month, the Ministry of Finance allotted funds to finance the renovation of the old post office building in Medzilaborce as the Andy Warhol Museum according to revised plans by the architect Štefan Pacák. The project received the substantial sum of 10 million crowns for this purpose.

In April 1990, at the invitation of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and with the financial participation of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, a three-man delegation travelled to New York City and Pittsburgh. Their visit was organized and subsidized largely by the Byzantine Catholic Church hierarchy and the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. The delegation included a Medzilaborce town official, Dr. Michal Turok-Hetěš; a Warhola family member, Vladimír Protivínák; and a representative of the Rusyn Renaissance Society, Dr. Ivan Bicko. (See the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. III, No. 1, Spring 1990, p. 11). Not included in the delegation was Dr. Michal Bycko, who was the driving force behind the museum idea. The group did meet with the Andy Warhol Foundation, but as New York’s Village Voice reported: the delegation came without concrete plans or any notion of how the museum should be organized and financed. The foundation itself was patient and understanding, but not much was accomplished. Meanwhile, several other cities in Czechoslovakia began to compete for the Warhol museum, among them Svidník, Humenné, Košice, Martin, Bratislava, and Prague.

Meanwhile, activists in Medzilaborce were not about to give up on the idea that they had initiated, and led by Dr. Michal Bycko they established in 1990 the Andy Warhol Museum Society. They planned to complete the museum by August 6 (the artist’s birthday), but instead of a grand opening there appeared a published announcement that the Andy Warhol Museum would not be established because an institution with that same name had already been founded in Pittsburgh. Bycko instead proposed a new name, “Art Studio of the Andy Warhol Society,” and sent to the president of the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York, Archibald Gillies, an eight-point project with the following goals:

(1) to organize an annual international art exhibit (Biennale);
The situation of the "Warhol Museum" also disturbed artists. The Prague painter, Michal Cihlář, together with the photographer Rudo Prekop said that the fate of the museum hung on a thread. The situation had become critical, especially since the Andy Warhol Foundation, which originally had offered two paintings for free, now spoke of making available fifteen originals (which would be exchanged for new ones approximately every five years) and about providing funds for various stipends and museum operational expenses. Cihlář and Prekop complained about the construction problems and bemoaned the lax approach of the Medzilaborce town authorities.

On January 21, 1991, in a televised discussion following a documentary on Andy Warhol, Dr. Michal Turok-Heteš, director of the Medzilaborce cultural center and Andrej Čerevka, the town official responsible for the construction, tried to convince viewers that they were doing all they could in order to meet the June construction deadline. The following day, Dr. Bycko received a letter in which the New York foundation announced that in March or April they would send an architect to inspect the exhibition space. However, it was now clear that the construction firm, ATYPIK from Košice, would be unable to complete the reconstruction of the old post office even with the sufficient finances and substantial amount of time it had been allotted.

Then, on February 14, news of an alternate decision was announced. The Museum of Modern Art would be housed in the newly-built Cultural Center in Medzilaborce. Three days later, the architects Kríž and Pacák met with the Andy Warhol Society, proposed designing the plaza in front of the Cultural Center in an "Andy Warhol style," and announced June 6 as the completion date for the whole project. In early March, Dr. Bycko announced the changes to the public, stating in the press that it was the decision of the Medzilaborce city council to offer the Cultural Center for the use of the museum. With this new plan, the Andy Warhol Society wrote the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York, asking that an architect be sent to determine what preparations needed to be made to house the expected Warhol originals.

In the meantime, on March 23, the Cultural Center in Medzilaborce opened its doors for the first time to host representatives from five countries (Czecho-Slovakia, the USSR, Poland, Yugoslavia, and the United States) at the First World Congress of Rusyns. At that gathering, Henrie...
Blumenfeldová, manager of the Andy Warhol Society, proposed a bold and magnificent plan for broadening the activity of the Medzilaborce museum. To realize her plan, fifty million crowns would be necessary from the Slovak or Czechoslovak federal government, or from private sponsors. The plan included construction of a new hotel in Medzilaborce; a house of culture with a movie theater, casino, nightclub, Rusyn restaurant, and sauna; access to hunting reserves in the surrounding countryside; a golf course; a baseball team from Medzilaborce; the creation of an incorporated company; and connections with travel agents to organize excursions from the United States.

In late March, the foundation sent to Medzilaborce Helena Fierlinger, an American of Czech origin and a member of Charter 77, in order to check on the state of preparations for the museum. She was impressed with the new Cultural Center, built with extensive funding from the former Communist regime in what became known as the style of "socialist megalomania." The Medzilaborce authorities again promised they would do everything necessary, and she said that if all went well the Andy Warhol Foundation would give the museum ten Warhol paintings. During her visit Fierlinger also went to Miková where she saw the eighteenth-century church in which Andy's parents, Andrej Varchola and Julia Závacká, were married in 1909, and which some Americans had promised to help renovate with a monetary donation.

It was also at this time that Slovakia's Minister of Culture, Ladislav Snopko, noted that the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce did not fall under the jurisdiction of his ministry, but that it was the responsibility of the town of Medzilaborce and possibly the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York. Before it could become the responsibility of the Slovak Ministry of Culture, there would need to be a new legislative agreement between the ministry and the foundation, and that this would probably entail a long and complicated process. In the view of the ministry, the Medzilaborce citizens had taken on a project which they were incapable of completing. The ministry's proposal was that there simply be a memorial plaque or monument in the village of Miková; that in Medzilaborce there be a museum containing perhaps Warhol memorabilia; and that farther south in the large city of Košice there might be an Andy Warhol Gallery which would be dedicated, in particular, to avant-garde art.

Despite the various proposals and counterproposals, at last on Sunday, June 30, 1991, the long-awaited opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce took place. It featured an exposition about the Andy Warhol family. At this important event, minister Snopko stated in a television broadcast that it was his hope that by the end of the year the museum would come under the care of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. The guest of honor was Andy's oldest brother, Paul Warhola, whose own paintings were widely displayed as part of the new museum's permanent collection. Also present was Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in New Jersey. In an opening speech, Magocsi said that it was not by chance that the new museum was in Medzilaborce, because to this day the town is inhabited by Rusyns and Andy Warhol's background is Rusyn. The date June 30 was also not accidental, since it was chosen to coincide with the 29th annual Rusyn Festival of Culture and Sports in Medzilaborce in which many local and foreign folk ensembles participated.

Now that a Museum actually existed, it was easier for the Andy Warhol Foundation in New York to make available the long-awaited Warhol originals. With the Foundation's vice-president, John Warhola, acting as intermediary, a grand opening was set for October 5, 1991. Nearly 2,000 visitors from across Czechoslovakia and from abroad attended. These included artists, dramatists, and 300 journalists. Many came to Medzilaborce on a special fourteen-car Warhol Tour train from Prague, including Andy's brother John Warhola and Paul's son, the graphic artist James Warhola. The event received wide press coverage and was broadcast on Czechoslovak national television. Warhol posters and other memorabilia were offered for sale, and a lively cultural program created by artists, actors, and musicians was presented. Rusyn folk ensembles sang and danced their way around the large round kiosks in front of the museum which were decorated like Warhol's Campbell Soup cans. Actors dressed and coiffed in the style of Andy circulated through the crowd, while several avant-garde, rock, and punk bands performed late into the night, creating an atmosphere that led one observer to note: "This is the biggest shock to Medzilaborce since World War II!"

The Museum of Modern Art in Medzilaborce is now an established entity. All year (except Mondays) visitors can see originals and reproductions of the works of Andy Warhol, Paul Warhola, and unique personal items, documents, and photographs of the Warhola family. Exhibits of other avant-garde and Pop artists from Czechoslovakia and abroad are also on display.

Thanks to the enormous effort of those affiliated with the Andy Warhol Society, much has been accomplished in a short time. Most deserving of praise is Dr. Michal Bycko, without whose efforts the museum and related activity surrounding Warhol would have been impossible. The preparation and design of the museum's interior and exterior was carried out gratis by Michal Cihlář and Rudo Prekop. The museum also contains an exhibit of works by both Cihlář and Prekop which relate to Warhol—Cihlář his graphics and Prekop his photographs. They also created unique posters for all the exhibits in the museum. Helping further to prepare the interior and the surrounding grounds were numerous enthusiastic volunteers and students from Medzilaborce high schools.

And thus has returned the son of simple, poor Rusyn peasants,
Who went into the world to swim in bigger waters, to look for work, to secure a crust of bread
And to find a better life.
Their son, who rose to international fame
And who made him mark in the world,
Became a glorious and renown artist in many spheres of art.
And as a millionaire, he became a glowing example of the fulfillment of the American Dream.

Andy Warhol will live on by means of the spiritual and material wealth which he has left not only in America and in the world at large, but also to us in the homeland of his parents—the Rusyn-inhabited region of Czechoslovakia.
GREETINGS FROM THE C-RRC

The following greetings were extended on May 23, 1991, to the Most Reverend Stephen J. Kocisko, D.D., recently retired as Metropolitan Archbishop of the Byzantine Ruthenian Rite Catholic Church in the United States.—Editor

It is, indeed, a privilege to be able to share with you these thoughts on the occasion of the Jubilee Celebration of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Stephen J. Kocisko, D.D., Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh, Byzantine Rite, marking the golden anniversary of his priestly ordination and the thirty-fifth anniversary of his episcopal consecration.

Many of you have certainly heard of or experienced first hand the pastoral and spiritual work that Metropolitan Kocisko has been engaged in for the past half century. For this alone tens of thousands of clergy and the faithful will forever be in his debt. But there is another side to Metropolitan Kocisko's career that is perhaps less well known but no less significant.

It is no exaggeration to say that Metropolitan Stephen J. Kocisko will go down in history as the outstanding patron of the history and culture of what for all too long has been prosaically described as "our people." Although most of the early Rusyn immigrants from the Carpathian Mountains were poor and had little formal education, there were nonetheless from the beginning religious leaders and secular cultural activists who left a rich legacy of Rusyn-American history.

By the last quarter of the twentieth century, that legacy was largely forgotten by the descendants of those early immigrants who had started coming in large numbers to these shores over one hundred years ago. In the end, that legacy was not lost, and much of the credit for this must go to Metropolitan Kocisko. He had the insight to realize the value of archival materials, newspapers, books, and other artifacts produced by Rusyn Americans. Most importantly, he expressed this insight not in words but in deeds!

Working closely with secular scholars at some of North America's leading universities, it was Metropolitan Kocisko who took the lead in preserving all the newspapers and journals ever produced by Rusyn Americans, regardless of religious or political persuasion. It was Metropolitan Kocisko who generously helped to underwrite the cost of scholarly monographs about Carpatho-Rusyns in Europe and America that have enriched thousands of our own people as well as fellow Americans, and which perhaps would not have seen the light of day were it not for him. Finally, when after forty years of repressive totalitarian Communist rule in the European homeland ended, it was the seventy-five-year-old Metropolitan Kocisko who took the initiative to lead a delegation of Byzantine Catholic hierarchs to show their support for the Greek Catholic eparchies of Mukachevo and Prešov from where the American church derives. This historic journey to a place he had never been before had an enormously positive moral and spiritual impact on the faithful and hierarchs in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland, who today are slowly but surely finding their way to a renewed life.

All such cultural acts have helped to enlighten an ever greater number of Byzantine Ruthenian Rite Carpatho-Rusyn Americans about their cultural and historical roots. This, in turn, has reemphasized the need for the continuing presence of a distinct Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church in America and of a Greek Catholic Church in Carpathian Rus' that serves living communities.

We in the secular world salute you, Metropolitan Archbishop Stephen J. Kocisko, for all you have done on behalf of the cultural and spiritual welfare of our people. You have been a model in the twentieth century. We hope your example will be continued by your successors in the twenty-first century. Vam mnohaja i blahaja lita.

Paul Robert Magocsii, President Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Inc.

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

Orestes Mihaly (Armonk, New York) has continued to make his annual matching gifts in the amount of $350 in 1990 and $350 in 1991. These donations have been matched each year by his employer, Merrill Lynch. At the request of Mr. Mihaly, these funds have been deposited by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center in a special account: Chair of Carpatho-Rusyn Studies Fund. To date the total of Mr. Mihaly's donations and matching gifts is $2,400.

Another major donor to the C-RRC is Helen Aldrich (Bend, Oregon), who in June 1991 donated $500 to the Rusyn Cultural Fund. Monies from this fund are being used to support cultural activity in the Rusyn homeland in Europe.

The C-RRC also extends its appreciation to the following persons for their donations in 1991:

John Baymor (Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania), $75
John Petro Garbera (New York, New York), $50
Mary G. Lucas (Hershey, Pennsylvania), $25
Ted Macosko (Berea, Ohio), $150
John E. Petrick (Brooklyn, New York), $25

Remember that donations to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center (a non-profit cultural organization registered in the State of New York) are tax deductible. Perhaps you might wish to follow the example of Orestes Mihaly and, if possible, take advantage of matching funds at your place of employment that can be put to use on behalf of Rusyn culture.

THE 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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