From the earliest times, human beings have anticipated the spring season of the year with celebrations depicting the rebirth of life. For vast numbers of people during the Christian era, this expectation of the reawakening of vegetable life was radically transformed, infused with a new meaning. The Resurrection of Christ in the spring implied not only a rebirth of life but a total renewal of the spirit. The Resurrection announced a most astounding message and left a deep impression on the psyche and spirit of human beings. For all Christians, the celebration of the Resurrection is a central feast observed during the course of the liturgical year.

Among Rusyns, whether Byzantine Catholic or Orthodox, ancient Slavic spring traditions marking the rebirth of life in the mountain villages of what is now eastern Slovakia and western Ukraine have been intertwined over the centuries with their Christian celebration of the Paschal Feast. The Paschal ritual among Rusyn Christians thus has become truly "Rusynized." It is a genuine personal expression of the spirit, physically, emotionally, and intellectually. The mind is stimulated by the profound and mystical poetry of the hymns and readings, the spirit soars with the music under a midnight sky on the eve of the Feast, and the body is satisfied with the symbol-laden foods of the Paschal basket—bread, cheese, horseradish, decorated eggs—brought to the church for a blessing.

Traditional Easter eggs were dyed and hard-boiled since these eggs were usually eaten after being blessed. Many of the best eggs were taken to the church for a blessing. Traditions depend on our ethnic culture and to produce eggs with varying designs, but only in one particular country. Among Rusyns, whether Byzantine Catholic or Orthodox, ancient Slavic spring traditions marking the rebirth of life in the mountain villages of what is now eastern Slovakia and western Ukraine have been intertwined over the centuries with their Christian celebration of the Paschal Feast. The Paschal ritual among Rusyn Christians thus has become truly "Rusynized." It is a genuine personal expression of the spirit, physically, emotionally, and intellectually. The mind is stimulated by the profound and mystical poetry of the hymns and readings, the spirit soars with the music under a midnight sky on the eve of the Feast, and the body is satisfied with the symbol-laden foods of the Paschal basket—bread, cheese, horseradish, decorated eggs—brought to the church for a blessing. Traditions such as the last are what give the celebration its unique place in the universal Christian celebration of Pascha. And the persistence of such traditions is of prime interest to those concerned with the survival and transmission of ethnic culture in this country.

Not long ago I received a letter from a woman subscriber to this newsletter, Ms. Georgianna Kostak, who told me that she was an instructor in pysanky—egg decorating—an art linked to the Paschal celebration and highly regarded among Rusyns and Ukrainians in particular. She offered to write an article describing the process of pysanky, which is included in this issue, and told me not only how she herself first became interested in the art, but also some old legends connected to it. I would like to relate both of these last items in her words:

"The art of pysanky is very old and is usually passed on from parent to child along with the traditional patterns and hints for achieving special effects. In my case, this is only partly true. As a child, I learned to decorate eggs with wax and to produce eggs with varying designs, but only in one color and hard-boiled since these eggs were usually eaten. After being blessed, many of the best eggs were taken to the cemetery on Pascha and placed on the graves of our loved ones. Even today my family still adheres to this old tradition. It is a way of sharing the feast with loved ones that have gone on before us."

"As for my own interest in pysanky, I remember, as a child, sitting by the table with my sisters as we tried to make the designs that my mother described to us. My father had taught my sisters how to work with the wax and make the eggs. But since he died when we were very young, my mother would tell us what designs to put on the eggs. I had always wanted to be able to create the beautiful multicolored eggs that I had seen, but was unsuccessful since I used the wrong dyes and the wrong tools."

"About fifteen years ago during Great Lent, a close family friend, Father Nicholas Kraynak, brought me his tools, but most of all his skills and knowledge. The first eggs that I made I promptly destroyed and announced to my mother that it was hopeless and I would never learn. Both Father Nicholas and my mother urged me to keep trying. One of my proudest moments came while my mother sat alongside me as I worked on pysanky. 'I'm so pleased with your being able to make such beautiful pysanky.' Your father would be so proud of you.' It is a memory I will always cherish, for my mother always encouraged us to be proud of our heritage and to maintain the traditions of our people. She died the next morning, and the pysanky created that night were among the things that we placed in her coffin. Through the years I have been pleased to share this art with anyone that is interested by giving demonstrations and helping teach people in classes or individually."

"There are many legends associated with pysanky. One of my favorites is from the Hucul people of the Carpathian Mountains. The Huculs believe that the fate of the world depends on pysanky. The world will exist for as long as people continue to make pysanky. If the custom ceases, evil, in the form of an ancient vicious monster chained to a cliff, will destroy the world. Each year the evil monster's disciples keep a record of the pysanky made all over the world. When only a few are made, his chains loosen and evil spreads throughout the world. When many are made, his chains become tight and love increases and conquers evil."

"Another legend, also from the Huculs, links pysanky with the Virgin Mary. The legend relates that Mary decorated eggs to offer to Pilate in return for her Son's life. As she prepared the eggs, her tears fell on them and left dots of brilliant colors. When she came to Pilate, she fell on her knees in grief and the eggs fell from her apron and rolled over the floor to all the corners of the world. Thus, during Pascha, eggs decorated with pysanky are distributed in memory of Christ's teachings of peace and love. When you make pysanky, remember that the legends say that you are helping to hold back evil in the world and also to commemorate Christ's teachings."

Ms. Kostak also mentioned that she would welcome hearing from readers with questions about pysanky. Her address is: 7 Giard Drive, Apartment 6, Baltimore, Maryland 21207. I would like to add that people like Ms. Kostak are a great source of pride and provide us with models which we should try to emulate in the celebration and perpetuation of our ethnic culture.

Patricia Krafcik
The Carpatho-Rusyn Wedding: Conclusion

Following the church ceremony, the wedding party and some guests assemble at the home of the bride’s parents. In some villages each person gets a glass of vodka as they enter the house. The wedding party shares the bride’s wedding pascha, each member breaking a piece off by hand and passing the loaf on to the next. The bride is presented with a bed, linens, a hope chest, a peryna (leather tick quilt), perhaps a cradle, and so on. There is constant singing and joking and much happiness and excitement. The wedding party then packs the bride’s belongings onto a wagon. As they walk to the groom’s house, many articles are carried ‘za holovok’—on the head or balanced between head and shoulders. The wedding party and guests now make a procession to the hostyna, the reception and wedding feast at the groom’s house. Sometimes the hostyna is at a special picnic ground or hall or even at the korčma.

When the wedding party arrives at the hostyna, the mother of the groom greets them, saying “Slava Isusu Chrystu” (Glory to Jesus Christ) and they respond with “Slava na viky” (Glory forever). She offers them the traditional welcome of bread and salt which is placed on a wooden tray or dish covered by a beautiful cloth or ručnýk. The bread and salt is a sign of generous hospitality, bread being the basic sustenance of humanity and salt a valuable food preservative and spice. There are hugs and kisses and shouts of “vitaj, vitaj” (greetings, greetings). Soon the priest undertakes the Ceremony of the Common Cup in which the newlyweds share a cup of wine presented by him as a spiritual blessing. This symbolizes the sharing of marriage.

The peséj družba (best man) delivers his special vinčovanje—a wish or toast—and all respond with raised glasses saying “na zdravja” (to your health). In some regions, the toast may evoke the response of “tak da Bože” (may God grant it so). The feast then begins while the musicians serenade with song and dance music. Foods such as čorný chlib (black bread), halušky (fried cabbage and dumplings or noodles), kolbasy, makovnyky (poppyseed rolls), orichovnyky (nut rolls), bandurky (potatoes), kaša (rice porridge), pirohy, kolači (cakes), palenka (whiskey), and fresh cheese are served. Dancing and singing soon follow.

In the Rusyn wedding, the final ceremony is the čepčovanje, the capping of the bride. As tradition prescribes, this is the final step toward completing the recognition of the newlyweds’ married status. While singing special verses for the čepčovanje, the svaška (matron of honor) take the wreath off the bride’s head and put in its place a čepec—a woman’s cap. The starosta (senior spokesman) and starša svaška (matron of honor) join the bride and groom and call everyone to dance with the bride and to give a contribution. Here some people say “ješce naša, ne jest vaša, daž taljara, bude vaša” (she’s still ours, not yet yours, give some money and she will be yours). The starosta and starša svaška start the bridal dance, sometimes called the rjadový, by singing ‘tota krasna nevista, lem pre tebe vrosla, vozmi ji ku ko sobi, a miluj ju do smerti’ (this beautiful bride has grown up especially for you, take her and love her, until death do you part). The term rjadový designates waiting in a row, and in the dance by this name one waits in a line to dance with the bride. The groom goes first, then the family and guests take their turn. Everybody contributes to help the new couple get a good start in life. Finally, the bride’s mother ties a scarf over the čepec and kisses her daughter. The groom then returns to dance with his bride.

After the bridal dance, the Carpatho-Rusyn wedding continues, frequently for three days and three nights. This continuation from the second day is called the popravyna. Usually the day after the wedding, the people who worked to prepare the wedding area are invited and treated by the bride and groom’s family. The popravyna is considered a time for talking, eating, dancing, and singing in a relaxed informal atmosphere. People go home and sleep, then come back. Sometimes the length of the wedding depends on the wealth of the bride’s parents. At the same time, even the poorest Rusyn family would sacrifice a great deal to have their daughter married well. In times of great plenty, the wedding celebrations might last as long as a week. After the celebration, everyone goes home to start work the next day.

In an otherwise difficult political and economic environment, Carpatho-Rusyn weddings greatly enriched the lives of the people. For a thousand years, the customs and traditions of Eastern Rite Christianity enabled Carpatho-Rusyn civilization to survive physically and culturally. That the Carpatho-Rusyns have survived is a testimony to their resiliency, their ability to enjoy life, and their deep faith in God.

Jerry Jumba
Music Director and Choreographer
Slavjane Folk Ensemble

CORRECTION

In part 1 of the Carpatho-Rusyn Wedding article that appeared in issue 3 (1978), lines 22—25 in column 2 should read: The young women wear nice clothes and a special vinec or floral wreath in their hair. The young men wear a bugrejda or floral arrangement on their hats and carry two walking sticks tied with ribbons. One stick to represent each family.
The word *pysanka* comes from the verb *pysaty*, to write. And that is how these beautiful eggs are created. The designs are actually written on the egg. Of course, it is not quite that simple, but it is really not as complex as most people think. In this article, I shall attempt to give you some basic hints and aids to help you create your own beautiful *pysanka*.

To get started you will need a few items, most of which can be used over and over again. *Egg dyes*—not the regular ones available in stores each spring, but special ones available from ethnic stores such as Hanusey’s in Philadelphia or Surma and Ark in New York City. These dyes can be kept in sealed jars and used from year to year. I use one cup peanut butter jars and they are ideal. *Kistka/stylus*—used to apply the wax to the egg. These are also available from the above mentioned stores or can be hand made. It is good to have a fine one and a heavy one. *Straight pens*—remember the old writing pens? Not speedball but regular pens. These are especially helpful in writing the really fine lines and can be used in place of the kistka. *Rubber bands*—some wide and some narrow, to be used as guide bands to help in making straight lines. *Beeswax candles or cakes*—if you can get candles it is easier, but if not, the cakes can be used and are also available from the same stores. Beeswax must be used because of its high melting point, better covering ability, and greater resistance to dyes. I get the ends of candles used in church and they are perfect. *Soft cloths*—to dry the eggs and also to hold the eggs to prevent oils from your hand getting on the eggs. An old white glove will serve the same purpose. *Eggs*—clean white raw eggs. If it is necessary to wash the eggs, do not use soap, just water. Eggs should be blemish free and room temperature. Cold eggs will cause the wax to break off and will ruin your patterns. Boiling the eggs removes some of the oils from the egg and the dyes will not adhere as well. Soap also removes these oils. The eggs can be blown out after they are decorated, but this is not necessary since they will eventually dry out. *Thinned shellac*—to use as a glaze on the finished egg. The shellac is thinned with alcohol and applied with a lintless cloth. *Spoons or egg dippers*.

Once your supplies are assembled, you are ready to begin. A prayer to God for help in creating the egg is usually offered. And that is how these beautiful eggs are created. The designs are actually written on the egg. Of course, it is not quite that simple, but it is really not as complex as most people think. In this article, I shall attempt to give you some basic hints and aids to help you create your own beautiful *pysanka*.

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The first dye bath is always the lightest color and you should then proceed from the lightest to the darkest colors. After the egg emerges from the first dye bath, then write on the portions of the design that you wish to remain that color. The wax actually seals in the color and prevents dye from adhering to that spot. If small areas of blue or green are to be in the design, paint them on the white egg and then seal them in with wax. This will be the best way to achieve your effects with those colors because blue and green are hard to dye after other colors and sometimes come out differently. If you want to use two colors of the same intensity—or have large areas of blue or green in your design—you must “bleach” out the preceding color. For example, if you want to use a large amount of green and have just used bright red, you can dip the egg in sauerkraut juice to “bleach” out the red. You can even “bleach” the egg after the last dark color to end up with a very light background. Another effective bleach is a solution of baking soda and water or a gentle commercial bleach. Care must be taken not to damage the wax lines.

After you have applied all your designs, you will end up with an egg that is all wax covered and usually very dark or black. At this point your pattern is sometimes discernible, but usually not. You are now ready to remove the wax. This can be done most easily by placing the egg on a soft cloth or tissue in a low oven—about 250°—and when the wax begins to melt rub the egg very gently with the cloth until the wax is removed. Another method is to hold the egg next to, but not directly in, a candle flame. As the wax begins to melt, wipe with a cloth or tissues. Repeat until all wax is removed. This is the most exciting part of the whole process, for it is at this point that you finally see the rewards of your efforts. The end product is a beautiful *pysanka* ready to be shellacked for a permanent high gloss and to be taken to church on Pascha to be blessed and then either taken to the cemetery or given to someone special.

Georgianna Kostak
Some examples of traditional *pysanky*
the remainder of Czechoslovakia was transformed into a federal state, with Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus' receiving their long awaited autonomy. By November 1938, an autonomous government in Užhorod, and later Chust, was led by local Ukrai

nophiles, Monsignor Avhustyn Vološyn and Julijan Revaj who renamed the province Carpatho-Ukraine. Elections were held to a Subcarpathian parliament in February 1939, and on March 15, 1939 this parliament declared Carpatho-Ukraine to be an independent state. These achievements were not to last long, because that same day the Hungarian army, with the approval of Hitler, attacked Carpatho-Ukraine and reunited the area once again with Hungary. The 100,000 or so Rusyns in the Prešov Region remained under an administration governed from Bratislava, which became the capital of a separate Slovak state. This was basically the situation for Carpatho-Rusyns during the years of the Second World War.

Meanwhile, Czechoslovak president Edward Beneš set up a government-in-exile in London and gained the approval of the Allied Powers—the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union—that after the war Czechoslovakia should be reconstructed according to its boundaries before the Munich conference, that is, it should include Subcarpathian Rus'. It is interesting to note that in the United States Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants who in the 1920's and 1930's had become disillusioned with Czechoslovakia and protested its control of the homeland, now objected to the Hungarian occupation and looked forward to the return to Czechoslovak rule.

But the real decisions in this matter were being made in Moscow, and by late 1944, when the Soviet Red Army crossed into Subcarpathian Rus', it had no intention of giving it up. Arguing that the local population was Ukrainian, a conference was organized in a theater in Mukáčevo on November 26, 1944. The delegates sent a petition to Stalin asking that the Subcarpathians be united with "their mother Ukraine." This wish was fulfilled in June 1945, when a treaty signed between Prague and Moscow recognized the region as the Transcarpathian Oblast of the Soviet Ukraine. Again, the Rusyns of the Prešov Region in eastern Slovakia remained within the reconstituted state of Czechoslovakia. This is the political situation that has lasted until today.

Paul R. Magocsi

Rare photograph of Subcarpathian political leaders on the eve of autonomy. Photographed in Prague, October 5, 1938.

First row, l. to r.: Dr. Stepan Fencik, Dr. Edmund Bačinskij, Dr. Ivan Parkanyi. Dr. Pavel Kossej, Andrej Brodij

Second row, l. to r.: Michal Demko, Petr Židovskij, Mykola Dolinaj, Dr. Ivan P eščak, Julijan Revaj
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

*Nova dumka (New Idea)*, Vol. IV, Nos. 9 and 10 (Vukovar, 1975), 120 and 104 p.

*Nova dumka* began in 1971 as the first serial publication for Rusyns in Yugoslavia that is not published in the Vojvodina, the traditional cultural center. This journal appears two or three times annually in Vukovar, a city in the Srem region of the Croatian Republic. It is also the first Yugoslav journal to represent two related, yet distinct national minorities, and as such is published by the Union of Rusyns and Ukrainians of Croatia. Nonetheless, the editor-in-chief Vlado Kostelnyk and most of the contributors are Rusyns, so that the majority of articles appear in the Vojvodinan (Bačka) Rusyn language. Some also appear in Ukrainian or Croatian, although articles submitted in Ukrainian from Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, or the United States are translated into Vojvodinan Rusyn.

All issues of the profusely illustrated journal-size *Nova dumka* contain popular-style articles about Rusyn and Ukrainian life and cultural activity in Yugoslavia (especially Croatia) as well as scholarly studies. Among the latter to appear in 1975 are: Aleksander Duličenko's linguistic analysis of the poetic language of Havryjil Kostel'nyk; an article on the fiftieth anniversary of the first Vojvodinian Rusyn newspaper, *Rusky novyny* (1934-1941), and Vlado Kostel'nyk's review of the writings of Aleksander Duličenko, the Soviet specialist (from Siberia) on Yugoslavia's Rusyns.


This is a collection of 22 short sketches by friends and colleagues of the young poet Dmitrij Vakarov, who was killed during the Second World War by the Hungarian regime and who has subsequently become a symbol of wartime resistance and heroism in Soviet Subcarpathia. Also included are two critical essays about Vakarov and a bibliography of his works and of writings about him.

Olík, Teodor. "Niekteré skusenosti a poznatky z výzkumu kultúry ukrajinskej národnosti v ČSSR" (Some Results and Notes from Research on the Culture of the Ukrainian Nationality in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic). *Stav a ukoly výzku mum narodnostni otázky v ČSSR*. Opava: Slezsky ústav ČSAV, 1975, pp. 325–337.

This article provides the results of a survey undertaken in the Rusyn-inhabited Prešov Region between 1971 and 1975. An important question was that of national identity, and this study, based on 300 respondents, provides a rare insight into the conditions which cause many Carpatho-Rusyns/Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia to identify themselves as Slovaks.


This is a brief, and perhaps the best, discussion of the early history of the Greek Catholic Church in the United States. The author analyzes with objectivity and sympathy the difficult relations with the American Latin-rite hierarchy and the deeply rooted causes for the existing divisions in the "Ruthenian" (i.e. Greek Catholic) community which eventually led to separate Carpatho-Rusyn and Galician Ukrainian church and secular organizations.


This volume contains a more or less verbatim record of a conference held at Harvard University in June, 1974. Six speakers presented outlines of proposed projects dealing with Carpatho-Rusyns in the United States. These included: Edward Kasinec (bibliography), Paul R. Magocsi and Walter C. Warzeski (anthology of historical documents), Míchaľ Kesiów (written language), Andrew Perejda (settlement patterns), and Stephen Reynolds (religious music). Nine other persons were in attendance and participated in an interesting discussion that focused on the problem of nomenclature and informational exchange.

The research proposal submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities is printed in an appendix and the whole volume is provided with copious notes by the editors. A preface written by the distinguished historian of American immigration, Oscar Handlin, stresses the significance of studying Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants. Hopefully, some of the projects discussed in this book will be realized. (Available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center for $5.00).


The kolomyjka is one of the most popular Carpathian songs and dances. The compiler has put together 3,252 lines of kolomyjkas collected in 126 villages throughout Subcarpathian Rus'. Also included is a brief analysis of the kolomyjka as an art form and 8 beautiful full-page color scenes from the Carpathians.

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**OUR FRONT COVER**

Wayside cross, Luh (Transcarpathian Oblast', Soviet Ukraine), photographed 1921.
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