FROM THE EDITOR

With this issue we begin our sixth year of publication. We have seen an increase in the number of subscribers and are certain that the materials selected for 1983 will attract and interest yet other readers. Among the various selections to appear is a series of outstanding articles on Carpatho-Rusyn folklore by the eminent Czechoslovak scholar Dr. Mykola Mušinka. We will also try to cover some previously projected subjects and follow up on readers’ suggestions. We have great energy and lots of hearty Slavic soul, but we are a tiny, scattered voluntary staff with a limited amount of time to devote to the newsletter. As always, your written responses and personal contacts are welcome and encouraging. They acquaint us with you, they bring us closer as a community, they nourish us.

Recently, I renewed one such acquaintance with a newsletter reader at a University of Pittsburgh Slavic Department gathering. He described his impressions while visiting the old country — specifically, villages in Eastern Slovakia — with such exciting and astonishing perception that even a fanatical ethnics, nor do we claim any one particular political community, they nourish us.

Folk festival Is your Carpatho-Rusyn ethnic heritage represented? We in the C-RRC are not fanatical ethnics, nor do we claim any one particular political or religious orientation. We have a high regard for intelligence, creativity, hard work, study, and everbroadening horizons. As for a direction, it is both outward and inward. First, it is outward, dealing with certain external realities. One example is that we ought not carelessly and thoughtlessly discard or ignore elements of our heritage passed on to us lovingly by parents and grandparents. By asking numerous questions, I’ve managed to learn something about Subcarpathian Rus’. Your newsletter has helped considerably.

Our direction is also inward, dealing with family life and personal psychological and emotional experiences. Why not, for instance, learn or relearn the meaning of rich family and community-centered folk and religious customs of our people (shared to a great extent with other Slavic groups)? Why discard those elements which nourish our bodies and souls, and which we surely can adapt to our lives today? Too often, I’m afraid, deeply significant rituals are passed over lightly, carried out — if at all — by meaningless rote. The symbolism seems to be lost forever, even though it may, in fact, be relevant and even necessary to us. An evening with PacMan will never replace the mystical joy of the svjatý večer — the Holy Supper at Christmas Eve. Today, extended families are scattered and may sometimes meet only once a year at the Christmas holidays. The svjatý večer shared by candlelight is a perfect way to focus on the real meaning of the holy day — and to rescue our souls from the wild commercialism of the season. For years now, the Carpatho-Rusyn Folklore to be run in the Carpatho-Rusyn American this year should help educate us in the folk customs of our people. Let us try to incorporate something of the past wisdom into our lives today.

In responding to a recent C-RA editorial, John Hudanish, a reader from Oregon, spoke to yet a deeper experience about which we all might meditate. While pondering the “inward” direction of our ethnic interests, I am certain many of us will find it well stated in John’s own words:

Dear Editor:

In the Fall 1982 issue, I read how you returned to Ruská Vol’a, met your kin, visited your great grandmother’s grave. You had, in your own words, come home. How I long to do what you have done! God grant that someday I shall. My father’s family comes from the area around Užhorod. My grandfather died two decades before I was born, and my grandmother died when I was just ten. She didn’t live with us, so I really had never gotten to know her well. My dad knew next to nothing about the old country and couldn’t have cared less. The same goes for his brothers and sisters. But I have always been curious about my roots. By asking numerous questions, I’ve managed to learn something about Subcarpathian Rus’. Your newsletter has helped considerably.

Why this interest? It is hard to explain. And the explanation would mean nothing to those who are insensitive to that sort of thing. It seems that in coming to the United States and becoming assimilated into the American mainstream, my family lost more than its native language, traditional cuisine, and old-world values. It also lost its identity. It lost its soul. I have always felt the loss, even though I had never really experienced what had been taken from me. It was gone before I came. And yet, when the old folks would gather at weddings and sing songs in the language (which should also have been MY language), I always had a strange stirring inside, as if I should be remembering those songs. Instead, I always felt like an outsider looking in.

Whatever its origins, the feelings, the interest is there. Most of the time it is dormant; it sleeps as I go out into the world each day to earn my daily bread in a strange land. It sleeps — until I read your editorials. Then it comes to life again — a bittersweet pain in my heart.
ANDREJ KARABELEŠ (1906-1964)

After Vasyl' Grendža-Dons’kyj (see biography in the CRA, Vol. V, no. 4), the best-known Carpatho-Rusyn writer during the first half of the twentieth century was Andrej Karabeleš. While Grendža-Dons’kyj was primarily concerned with the past glories and present socioeconomic plight of Rusyns, Karabeleš was more introspective and analytical of human emotions on an individual basis. And whereas Grendža-Dons’kyj wrote in literary Ukrainian, Karabeleš wrote only in literary Russian.

Andrej Karabeleš was born in 1906 in Tybava, a Carpatho-Rusyn village near Sviľava, in former Bereg county of Subcarpathian Rus’, now the Transcarpathian Oblast of the Ukrainian SSR. After completing elementary school in his native village, he attended the gymnasium (senior high school) in Mukacevo beginning with the 1918/1919 school year, a time when the language of instruction was still Hungarian. After 1920, when Subcarpathian Rus’ became part of the new republic of Czechoslovakia, the young Karabeleš was able to complete his gymnasium studies in Carpatho-Rusyn and Russian. By that time, Russian was being taught by recently-arrived emigres from the former tsarist Russian Empire. And therefore he was able to learn in his own homeland the otherwise foreign literary language of Pushkin and Dostoevsky. As a result, Karabeleš was able to write correctly in Russian, unlike some of his nineteenth-century Carpatho-Rusyn predecessors, who at best composed in a strange mixture of Russian and Carpatho-Rusyn dialects.

With a desire to serve his Carpatho-Rusyn people, Karabeleš thought he could best do so by becoming a priest. Therefore, he completed the Greek Catholic seminary in Užhorod, although he was never ordained. Moreover, his growing interest and belief that Carpatho-Rusyns were part of one Russian cultural sphere stretching “from the Carpathians to the Pacific Ocean,” led him to convert to Orthodoxy in 1932 and to become, at least spiritually, closer to the East. After completing his studies, Karabeleš taught in several Subcarpathian elementary schools (1934-1937) and then during the last full school year under Czechoslovak rule (1937-1938) at the Mukacevo gymnasium. He also helped other young Carpatho-Rusyn authors writing in Russian by editing the Mukacevo student literary journal Naši stremlenja (1935).

Karabeleš began to write while still a gymnasium student, and his earliest efforts were almost all in poetry. His talents were remarked by others and at the age of 22 his first collection of poetry appeared — Collected Verses (Izbrannya stichotvorenja, 1928). Just one year later, a second major collection appeared as well — In the Rays of the Dawn (V lucah razsveta, 1929). Both works attested to Karabeleš’ command of the Russian language and his respect for the great figures of Russian culture, while at the same time several poems were dedicated to the beauties of nature in his Carpathian homeland as well as to the achievements of local Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and national leaders.

Yet surrounded by the poverty of his homeland and imbued with a deep sense of pessimism (probably enhanced by the Romantic inclinations of a youth still in his twenties), Karabeleš conveyed an attitude of negativism in a large number of his poems. In answering a rhetorical ques-

tion “Where is Happiness?” (Gde ščast’?), he lamented despairingly:

We were born to be happy
But all of us are without happiness
It is shrouded in eternal sleep.
It is buried in the lifeless grave.

That 1929 poem seems in retrospect to have been a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, because after Germany and Hungary destroyed Czechoslovakia in 1938-1939, the life of Karabeleš was anything but happy. After the Hungarians occupied his Subcarpathian homeland, he fled westward to German-occupied Bohemia. But his love of Russian culture and connections with the Czech underground made him suspect to the Nazis, so he was imprisoned in a concentration camp from 1941 to 1945.

Following the conclusion of World War II and his release from prison, Karabeleš moved to Presov in order to be closer to Carpatho-Rusyns still living in postwar eastern Czechoslovakia. He was able to participate as a university professor in the cultural rebirth of the Prešov Region, and he also managed to publish a reportage about his concentration camp experiences — On the Edge of Death (Na smerťnom rubeže, 1953) — as well as another collection of poems — In the Carpathians (V Karpatach, 1955).

But these few years of relative happiness proved to be shortlived. Karabeleš had never become a member of the Communist party, and he did not accept the official Ukrainian nationality policy imposed on the Carpatho-Rusyns of Czechoslovakia during the 1950s. As a result, he was relieved of his teaching post and his membership in Prešov Region cultural organizations. He went once again to Bohemia in 1957, where he remained until his death. Yet, despite his own unhappy fate, Andrej Karabeleš has remained through his writings one of the leading poetic voices of Carpatho-Rusyns in the twentieth century.

Philip Michaels
This past year I returned once again to Cleveland. Although there to give a lecture, I was also determined to see a few aspects of the city that recalled the past of the many Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants and their descendants who have inhabited the city since the early decades of this century.

One of these “Rusyn monuments” in Cleveland is St. Theodosius Orthodox Cathedral, located on Starkweather Avenue in an area of the city known as the Flats. Built in 1896 and attended by several generations of Carpatho-Rusyn faithful, St. Theodosius Cathedral was thrust into the national limelight a few years ago because the Academy-Award winning film, “The Deerhunter” (1978), used the structure for its “Russian” wedding scene. Actually, the film is about a group of Carpatho-Rusyn young men from Clairton, Pennsylvania, whose lives are brutally disrupted when they are called to Vietnam. While most people who have seen the film know it is about Slavs in America, few if any realize that it is about our Carpatho-Rusyns. The wedding reception (hostyna), for instance, was shot in the Lemko Hall, also located in Cleveland.

To be sure, I did expect the area around the inner-city church to be run-down, which unfortunately is typical of most blighted American downtown areas. I would have never believed, however, the necessity for the armed guard on permanent duty inside the nearby supermarket — that same small market where the “Deerhunter’s” Meryl Streep played the role of a cashier.

In fact, the only pleasant human experience in this area of the city was the chance encounter with a woman standing in front of her house next to the market. She asked if I had visited “our” church and if I knew that part of the “Deerhunter” had been filmed there. She proudly proclaimed that she was one of the “locals” used in the film, and that she was the woman who kissed Robert De Niro during the wedding reception scene. Less interested in her amorous and dramatic experiences, I inquired if she spoke “po-nasemu.” She said that she spoke Russian and “po-nasemu,” and that her parents were “Russians.” After further discussion, I discovered her parents had indeed come from Czechoslovakia, more specifically from near Svidnik, which is, of course, the Rusyn-inhabited part of that country.

The next stop in my excursion through the “Rusyn monuments” of Cleveland was at the so-called Cleveland Cultural Gardens, popularly known as the nationalities gardens, which are the part of Rockefeller Park that stretches south of St. Clair Avenue between Liberty and East Boulevards. Begun during the 1930s and set in an attractive and lush verdant landscape, the Cultural Gardens were intended to depict in some way (often through statues of national heroes) the cultural achievements of nearly two dozen immigrant groups living in Cleveland. I had heard that the Carpatho-Rusyns were represented and that supposedly there was a statue of our greatest national leader, Aleksander Duchnovyc. If this was true, it was probably the only such public statue of a Rusyn leader in America, and I just had to see it. Was I in for a surprise!

We picked up a brochure at the park’s office, and sure enough it listed as number 4 — the Rusin Garden. Our way was made somewhat easier because it seems that a few years ago the city put up brightly, if somewhat gaudy, colored signs, so that it was not long before we found one on East Boulevard marked Rusin Cultural Garden. At first glance, I saw nothing — just the sign. Looking further, there was still nothing to be found.

Having come so far, I was not willing to give up easily. So I walked down a hill toward Liberty Boulevard along a con-
necting road where I saw the Slovak Cultural Garden (of which there was only a sign and a few clumps of rock that looked like remains of statues). Beyond the Slovak Cultural Garden in a forested valley below East Boulevard, I came onto a beer-can and garbage-strewn clearing. And lo and behold, in the middle of this depressing setting I saw a granite column upon which must have once stood the bust of Duchnovyč. Off to the left were the remains of a staircase overgrown with weeds that seemed to lead up the hill to East Boulevard, where I first saw the Rusin Cultural Garden sign.

Realizing where I was — literally as well as figuratively in the jungles of urban America — I tried to block out mentally the graffiti (which at least was not crude or vulgar) and was able to read on the granite column inscriptions written in English and Carpatho-Rusyn. Indicated were the dates and places of the birth and death of Reverend Aleksander Duchnovyč (1803-1865) and a line from his poetry which subsequently became the national credo: Ja Rusyn byl, jsem i budu — I was, am, and will remain a Rusyn.

Yes, once there was a statue of Duchnovyč in America. Created by sculptor Frank Jirouch, it was formally unveiled in 1952. The gardens themselves had been dedicated as early as June 25, 1939, by the Most Reverend Basil Takacs, D.D., Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, and Reverend Joseph P. Hanulya, then president of the Rusin Cultural Garden Association. But how long did the statue stand, and what happened to it? No one seems to know — or care!

On reflection, I found it ironic, if not insulting, that Cleveland's park authorities recently went through the motions of putting up large new signs, behind which, in most cases, there are only weeds and decaying walls and pedestals. And there is even a handsome new color brochure published in 1981 and signed by city officials, headed by a mayor with a Slavic name. And would you believe it, that same brochure indicates that the president of the City of Cleveland Federation responsible for all the cultural gardens is none other than Sigmund T. Brinsky, Esq., himself a long-time community activist in America and son of another Carpatho-Rusyn poet, Reverend Sigmund Brinsky (1881-1932), who comes from the same region as Duchnovyč.

Should not we, Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn descent, and most especially those living in the Cleveland area, at least inquire about what happened to the statue in the Rusin Cultural Garden? We owe it to Duchnovyč and to our forebears in America who showed respect for their cultural and religious heritage. Write a letter inquiring about the missing statue in the Rusin Cultural Garden to: Mr. Ozell Dobins, Commissioner, Division of Park Maintenance, 1230 East Sixth Street — 4th Floor, Cleveland, Ohio 44144.

Paul R. Magocsi
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

With this issue we continue our survey of recent publications compiled by Philip Michaels. These are from 1979 and will be listed alphabetically. Many of these works are from Eastern Europe and are difficult to obtain. Most, however, can be found in research libraries of major universities (California, Harvard, Indiana, Toronto, Yale) or in institutions like the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, and Cleveland Public Library. Local libraries can often obtain these works through interlibrary loan. Titles which can be purchased will be designated as such. — Editor


The annual folk festival held for three days each June in the Svidnik amphitheater attracts often between 30,000 and 40,000 spectators to see folk groups from the Prešov Region and other eastern European countries. The present volume, with parallel texts in Ukrainian and Slovak, provides a brief history of the festival, comprehensive lists of all organizers, contents of programs, participating groups, and a bibliography of all reviews. There are 96 pages of photographs, many in color, which illustrate the wide variety of Carpatho-Rusyn folk costumes.


This is the first doctoral dissertation written in the United States to deal exclusively with the career of the greatest nineteenth-century Carpatho-Rusyn writer and national leader, Aleksander Duchnovyc. The dissertation focuses on the political and historical, not the literary, aspects of Duchnovyc’s activity. Dranichak’s thesis is based on a wide variety of secondary sources and deals with the early life of Duchnovyc as well as his activity in education and in promoting the publication of literary and scholarly books.

Throughout the thesis, Dranichak tries to prove, often in a polemical manner, that not only did Duchnovyc identify himself and his people with Russians, but that Carpatho-Rusyns and their language are supposedly Russian. (Available from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106).

Duklja, Vol. XXVII, Nos. 1-6 (Prešov, 1979), 80 pp. each issue.

This volume of Duklja, the literary and public affairs journal of the Ukrainian-Rusyn population in the Prešov Region, contains primarily new literary works by local authors. The only substantive articles are by A. Šlepec’kyj and F. Nau- menko on the nineteenth-century writer Aleksander Pavlo- vyc (No. 4) and by V. Syroko on the poetical aspects of local Rusyn folk songs (No. 6).

There are, however, several brief biographical essays commemorating the birthdays of several contemporary cultural leaders from both the Prešov Region and Transcarpathia, including the literary historian Olena Rudlovcak (No. 1); the painters Julius Muška (No. 2), Orest Dubaj (No. 4), and Zoltan Šoltes (No. 5); the folklorist and composer Jurij Cymbora (No. 3); the sculptor Ivan Harapko (No. 5); and the writer Stepan Hanuščyn (No. 6).


The Amerikansky Russky Viestnik, published by the Greek Catholic Union from 1892 to 1952, was without question the most influential of all Rusyn-American newspapers. Its columns are filled with invaluable data on early immigrant political, religious, social, and cultural life, as well as with information about the European homeland upon which the immigrants had a decisive influence. This work represents the initial effort to provide a comprehensive annotated bibliographical guide to all articles in the Amerikansky Russky Viestnik between 1894 and 1914.

The guide includes an impressive 3,065 entries, each of which provides the title of an article (in the original and English translation) and description of its content. There are three appendices listing the officers, membership statistics, and financial statistics of the Czech Catholic Union. Six indexes list photographs, editorials, letters to the editor from Europe, letters to the editor from the United States, subjects, and names. This guide is an indispensable aid to anyone interested in the Rusyn-American community prior to World War I. (Available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center for $12.50)


These are memoirs written by a Galician Ukrainian who participated in the Carpathian Síč military unit established in 1938. The Síč was based in Chust, the Carpatho-Ukraine’s capital, and most of the events described take place in that town. These memoirs, with historical photographs, focus largely on the Galicians who came to Subcarpathia in late 1938 early 1939, and the impression one gets, at least from this book, is that they were the most important element in the Carpathian Síč.


This detailed study analyses the eating and drinking habits of Rusyn ethnographic groups on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains — Lemkians, Boikians, and Hutsuls — from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s. The first three sections deal with: (1) the food products available in the mountains and the implements used to prepare meals; (2) the eating and drinking regime and diet; and (3) the church calendar and its relationship to foods. The last section traces the changes in eating and drinking habits that have occurred in recent years.

Hyjak, Mychaljo, ed. Ukrajins’ki narodni kazky Schidnoji Slovakia (Ukrainian Folk Tales from Eastern Slovakia), Vol. VII: Bratislava and Prešov. Slovac ke pedahohične vyd.,
This volume, in the continuing series of Carpatho-Rusyn folk tales from the Prešov Region of northeastern Slovakia, includes 25 texts, all based on recordings made in 1972 of Mykola Dutka form Cigel'ka, a mountain village on the Polish border northwest of Bardejov. The volume is handsomely illustrated and concludes with an essay by the editor on the folk tale tradition in the Bardejov Region and a Rusyn-Ukrainian glossary of dialectal words.


This valuable ethnographic study describes all the elements that comprise the traditional wedding preparation, ceremony, and celebration. The description is based on customs in the Prešov Region village of Rovné, just north of Svidník, and all the texts are in the original Carpatho-Rusyn dialect spoken there. Also included are the music and texts to more than 80 songs from Rovné and nearby villages, as well as photographs taken at a recent traditional wedding.


This work contains an historical survey of Subcarpathian Rus' from the end of World War I to the end of World War II. The author presents the classic Marxist interpretation: that local councils strove to unite with the Soviet Ukraine in 1918-1919; that the region suffered under Czechoslovak oppression during the interwar period; that the partisan movement was widespread during World War II; and that the populace overwhelmingly welcomed incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1944-1945.

**RECENT ACTIVITIES**

On November 18th-19th, 1982, the parishioners of St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota, were treated to a display and lecture on Carpatho-Rusyn culture presented by Jerry Jumba of Parma, Ohio. This reflection on the past culminated the final week of our 75th anniversary celebration at St. John's which, according to its articles of incorporation dated June 8, 1908, was initially named: "The Ruthenian Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist of Minneapolis."

Almost 100 people, mostly middle-aged to elderly, attended this workshop. The majority of them were parishioners. Discussion was spirited and participation lively. One rather surprising fact surfaced in response to Jumba's initial question to the audience — "What nationality are you?" Several individuals were unsure or unaware of their Rusyn heritage. Even though the founders of our church (only 75 years ago) were essentially all Rusyns, today many are of other nationalities. The parish, of course, has gone through change, as has society in general. Intermarriage, conversion, and so on, have brought people of various other ethnic backgrounds into our church. They have been welcome and all share in the friendly and positive environment which is created by the total membership of the church. To understand one's heritage, regardless of nationality, helps one to better understand oneself and others. We must try to project this understanding as positive energy instilled into our everyday lives.

After the workshop, more cultural discussion was stimulated by follow-up questions brought forth by several young parishioners who were unable to attend the official event. These were young people of Rusyn background who discovered within themselves a latent interest on the subject evoked by conversation with those who had attended the workshop.

Another visit by Jumba would undoubtedly find an even wider range of interest than originally prevailed. In fact, a local "Rusyn Club" is presently in the making.

Lawrence Goga
Chairman. Church Advisory Committee
St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**REQUEST FROM READER**

I am an associate professor of history and am presently engaged in a research project on the Displaced Persons of Europe (DPs), 1945-1952. As part of this project, I have been seeking out ex-DPs all over the country, interviewing them in person or by mail, and attempting to gather other information from more traditional sources. I would be happy to hear from anyone who has information on the DP years, especially on DP camp activities — organization, clubs, court system, theater and other cultural activities, and schools. My aim is to write a book which will help Americans understand the DPs, the DP era, and the importance of that period. Thank you for any assistance. Mark Wyman, Department of History, Illinois State University, Schroeder 334, Normal, Illinois 61761, or by phone at (309) 436-6641.

**IN APPRECIATION**

The Carpatho-Rusyn American extends a warm thank you to all who participated in the Markus-Magocsi dialogue by means of printed commentaries and letters to the Editor in our quarterly issues of 1982. Responses to the initial articles regarding aspects of the Rusyn/Ukrainian relationship in this country by Professors Markus and Magocsi printed in the Fall issue (Vol. IV, No. 3, 1981) were varied and controversial. They represent the kind of exchange of ideas and information which the newsletter hopes to continue on this and other issues of concern to our readers. We invite readers to write with their opinions, comments, and suggestions on this and other subjects.

**OUR FRONT COVER**

The Rusin Cultural Garden, Rockefeller Park, Cleveland, Ohio, as it appears today. See the article "Rusyn Remnants in America" in this issue.
THE CARPATHO-RUSYN AMERICAN

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