FROM THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Education is essentially a process of communication. As we scurry to meet the deadline for this issue of the Carpatho-Rusyn American, we are struck by three thoughts: (1) how much there is to learn about our people; (2) how many others are out there like us; and (3) how many sources there are from which to seek information. The mail reaching Dr. Krafcik’s office in the past six months has been extensive. We have material from people in Oregon, New Jersey, Ohio, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Užhorod, Bratislava, and Kiev. As we begin our seventh year of publication, we thought it would be good to share some of the correspondence.

Dear Editor:

I am most impressed and most happy to have received your introductory issue. I have always (had) a great and deep interest in my Ruthenian-Ukrainian heritage. Enclosed is a check for my 1983 subscription. In the future I intend to ask for the back issues.

Sister Mary Faith Vetovich, O.P.
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Editors:

I want you to know I am thrilled with the newsletter and the other publications you send out. My parents are from the village of Dubrovka near Užhorod, and I grew up speaking “po-nasomu” in Brooklyn. . . . I have been excited from the time I saw an announcement for the newsletter. . . . and also in reading each back issue. You have helped me recover my own heritage.

George E. Spontak
Montpelier, Vermont

Dear Editor:

First of all, you will find a check to renew my subscription to the Carpatho-Rusyn American. I keep them all in a special three-ring binder. Perhaps some day my children will take some interest in their heritage. . . . In the meantime, I find this little periodical interesting and informative. Keep up the good work!

I wanted you to know that I have taken the first step in the long journey back home! My family came from an area that is now on the Soviet side, so I am obliged to go through the Red Cross in Moscow to find my kin.

If you are interested, some day I will tell you about our Old Believer Community here in Oregon. Your friend in the West.

John Hudanish
Woodburn, Oregon

Dear Mr. Hudanish: On behalf of Dr. Krafcik and the staff, we invite you to keep us informed of the progress you make locating your family. Also note of Patricia Onufrik’s “Search for Roots” in this issue, which deals with research possibilities.

Dear Editor:

I am inquiring about a book, published by your center, about the churches of the Carpathian Region. . . . my parents (now dead) came from this area prior to 1910. I know very little about it and would like to know more.

I remember, as a child in school, being hard pressed to explain what I was ethnically. My parents did not consider themselves Poles, and heaven forbid you should say they were Austrians. They were Carpatho-Rus, and that was that.

I often wondered how this sect of beautiful, pious people came to be in this hidden area. . . . They spoke of it with such reverence, I thought it must be God’s Country. . . . I’m happy to hear there is now a research center for the study of these fascinating people.

Dorothy (Burdziak) Crossan
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Editorial Staff:

Enclosed you will find $5.00 as a renewal for my subscription.

As a Ukrainian I find many of the views expressed in this quarterly very interesting. I am learning much. One thing is clear: the Carpatho-Rusyn/Ukrainian relationship is quite complex. Dialogue and exchange of ideas are the only way to find some sort of meeting ground.

Dr. Larissa Jani-FONTANA
Bethesda, Maryland

Dear Patricia:

I received the back issues of Carpatho-Rusyn American in the mail this past week. In the midst of many things that needed doing, the urge to sit and read through all of them was strong enough to put all things aside. That’s exactly what I did.

You can’t imagine the flood of tears and memories that washed over me as I read and read. Allow me to explain . . .

I was particularly overcome by the Fall 1982 issue in which you described the thoughts and feelings you experienced on your journey to the “old country” to meet your family there. Of special importance to me was that you travelled to Ruska Vol’a and Čirč, as that is the area from which my maternal ancestors came.

Betty Ann Kvartek
Canonsburg, Pennsylvania

The writer of this last letter wrote another six pages describing how her “baba” came to this country, and the trials her family endured on the way to America. Her closing sentences summarize how many people involved with ethnic awareness must feel: “As I get older, I feel a need to know about my heritage and to experience it for myself. This need becomes stronger as the years go by. My only fear is that it may already be too late.”

We hope that it will not be too late. Oral history projects are underway across the nation, and research is being done by people all over the world to help preserve and promote our Carpatho-Rusyn heritage.
After 1919, when Carpatho-Rusyn territory south of the Carpathian Mountains became part of Czechoslovakia, several Czechs became intensely interested in Rusyn culture. This is the first of four articles written especially for the Carpatho-Rusyn American by Dr. Mykola Musynka of Prešov, Czechoslovakia, which will provide biographies of those Czech scholars and writers who published most about various aspects of Rusyn life.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of Florían Zapletal, one of the most outstanding Czech activists in interwar Subcarpathian Rus'. His work was many-sided. As a military functionary, politician, art historian, ethnographer, historian, literary scholar, journalist and, last but not least, an art photographer, he left an indelible imprint in each of these spheres. Nevertheless, his name fell into oblivion after World War II, and by 1969, when he was buried in his native village of Bochoř near Přerov in Moravia, he had become completely isolated from cultural and political life. A certain revival of interest has occurred only in the past few years. after Professor Magocsi published the exquisite collection of Zapletal's photographs. *Wooden Churches in the Carpathians* (Vienna, 1982).

Florian Zapletal was the first official of the new Czechoslovak government in Subcarpathian Rus'. When he went there in early 1919, he was already theoretically and practically well prepared. Prior to World War I, he had studied art history at the University of Vienna, and history and philosophy at Charles University in Prague under Professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the future president of an independent Czechoslovakia. Immediately after the outbreak of the war in August 1914, he defected to Russia where he became one of the leading activists of the Czechoslovak anti-Austrian resistance as editor of the magazine *Češkoslovenský*, which stood for the policy of establishing an independent Czechoslovakia. At the same time, he continued his study of art history at the universities of Petrograd and Moscow. Among his teachers and a personal friend was the renowned Russian art historian, the Rusyn-born Igor Grabar (see the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 1931).

Soon after his return to an independent Czechoslovakia at the end of 1918, Zapletal was sent to Užhorod to head the Subcarpathian Press Service. When in the summer of 1920 the Rusyn-American lawyer Gregory Zsatkovich became governor of Subcarpathian Rus' (see the *Carpatho-Rusyn American*, Vol. II, No 3, 1979), he appointed Zapletal his secretary and chief advisor in military matters. However, both Zsatkovich and Zapletal were soon frustrated with the policies of the Czechoslovak government in Subcarpathian Rus', a fact Zapletal openly expressed in letters to President Masaryk and in a number of articles in the press. After governor Zsatkovich resigned in protest in 1921, Zapletal returned to Prague, although Rusyn culture and politics were to remain in the forefront of his interests.

In 1922, Zapletal published one of his best works in Rusyn art, *Horjanska rotunda* (The Rotunda of Horjany), which dealt with a little-known fourteenth-fifteenth century church located near Užhorod. The following year his survey, "The Wooden Churches of the Subcarpathian Rusyns," appeared. Although relatively short, the study remains invaluable, because of its comprehensive classification of Subcarpathian wooden churches on the basis of their ground plans and because it raised the problem of the imminent danger of the decay of these precious artifacts of Slavic folk architecture whether as a result of official or local neglect. Consequently, Zapletal became involved in a number of campaigns for their preservation, and he devoted virtually all his vacations — even after leaving Subcarpathian Rus' — to photographic documentation and scholarly research on Rusyn wooden churches. Unfortunately, he never succeeded in using his remarkable collection as a basis for a comprehensive scholarly synthesis.

No less important than his concern with Subcarpathian architecture was Zapletal's interest in the development of Czech-Rusyn relations. Besides innumerable articles in Czech periodicals, he also published two small monographs devoted to this theme: *Rusíni a naši buditele (The Rusyns and Our National Awakeners*, 1921) and *A.I. Dobrjanskij a naši Rusíni r. 1849-1851 (A.I. Dobrjanskij and Our Rusyns in 1849-1851*, 1927). However, the most significant part of Zapletal's writings were his in-depth reports and commentaries on political themes. In the period from 1919 to 1925 alone, Zapletal published in the Czech press as many as 162 articles on Carpatho-Rusyn political life.

Yet dozens of his manuscripts still remain unpublished on deposit in several public and private archives in Czechoslovakia. Perhaps the most outstanding part of Zapletal's heritage is his collection of photographs from Subcarpathia containing several thousand glass negatives, only a small part of which have appeared in print. At least a portion of Zapletal's invaluable unpublished work ought to be made accessible to the public. The centennial of his birth is perhaps as good an opportunity as any to undertake that task.

Mykola Mušynka
FOLK CUSTOMS OF THE CARPATHO-RUSYNS: EASTER

Easter (*Velykden*) is the central holiday during the time of the spring solstice. Celebrated by Christians as the holiday of Jesus Christ’s resurrection, it nevertheless retains a number of elements of originally pre-Christian pagan customs. Thus, for instance, the forty-day period of Lent prior to the Easter festivities has its antecedent in the heathen period of the “great fast.” The Carpatho-Rusyns always observed the fast very rigorously. During the whole period, no meat, eggs, or milk products were eaten, and many elderly people also observed the so-called “dry fast” twice a week — on Wednesdays and Fridays. This meant that they neither ate nor drank anything at all. Although “fasting cures” are now strongly recommended by many contemporary physicians, the original “great fast” had nothing to do with any health considerations. In fact, the long period of abstinence from certain foods was inevitable in a situation where primitive man was unable to produce sufficient reserves of foodstuffs. Knowing that the hard work connected with spring agricultural activities would require sound nutrition, he provided for the spring by radically reducing his diet at the end of winter. The “great fast” was an appropriate means for doing just that. During this period, the peasants used their special wooden utensils (*dijká*, *gelety*, *putryj*) to preserve butter, cheese, *bryndza* (sheep cheese), and sometimes also meat, suet, pork fat, and bacon.

The period of the “great fast” was seen by primitive man as the time of the final conflict between outgoing winter and incoming spring (*vesna*), both conceived as personified creatures: Winter was seen as an ugly old woman or a vicious old man whose intent it was to retain power over the world at the expense of all living things; Spring was seen as a beautiful young maiden who with the help of the supreme god, the Sun, triumphs over the stratagems of Winter.

Winter was the symbol of death, Spring the symbol of life. This magical symbolism is clearly reflected in Carpatho-Rusyn Easter customs. In many Transcarpathian villages it was customary until quite recently to celebrate the so-called Death Sunday two weeks before Easter during which the personified Death (*Morena, Marina, Smerstka*) was escorted out of the village. Young girls and boys created a straw effigy of Death and dressed it in old women’s clothing. Singing cheerful songs, they carried it to a hill behind the village, being careful not to step either into snow or mud, for they believed that this could be ominous for the forthcoming crop. Behind the village, the effigy was stripped of its rags and was either drowned in a stream or burned. In some places it was customary to visit neighbors with the effigy and collect offerings for an evening party. The women accompanying the procession were in the habit of picking out pieces of straw from the Death effigy which they later placed under brooding hens to ensure that young chicks would be born healthy and sound.

In the beliefs of older generations of Rusyns, the decisive period of struggle between the supernatural forces of good and evil fell within the last week of the fast called Passion Week (*Strastnyj týžden*). On the first Sunday of this week known as Flower or Willow Sunday (*Kvitna* or *Verbova ne-
dilja*), it was usual in the churches to consecrate pussy willows which were believed to contain magic power. At home the pussy willows were kept in a place of honor near the icons all year long in the conviction that this was the best insurance against fires, storms, destructive winds, and other exigencies of nature. They were also used as a protection against “unclean spirits” on such occasions as the birth of a child and during the post-natal period; at baptisms and weddings; when taking cattle to their first pasture, and so on. The consecrated pussy willows were also important in folk medicine.

The key day for exorcizing “unclean spirits” was Green Thursday or *Zelený cetver*, for on that day it was believed witches (*bosorkán*) from far and wide held their “annual conclaves” during which they chose their new principals, redistributed their domains, and accepted “novices” into their ranks. There are still many legends in practically all villages inspired by these midnight meetings at places, such as *Lysa hora* (Bare Mountain), *Corna hora* (Black Mountain), or *Čortov verch* (Devil’s Hill). These places were, of course, all imaginary, even though there are in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland mountains that bear the first two names.

Since Easter was a feast of the revival of nature, it was also customary to “revive” the homesteads during the last week before Easter. This included cleaning the house, stables, barns, and cellars; washing kitchen utensils in the stream; polishing tables, benches, beds, and other pieces of furniture; submitting cattle to magic rites; bathing and branding sheep on Friday and Saturday, and many other customs. Thus, for instance, it was usual on Good Friday to wear at least one new piece of clothing, or else, it was believed, one ran the risk of being in tatters for the whole year.

Good Friday required the most rigid fasting. Village boys used to walk around on that day with wooden rattles for exorcizing “unclean spirits.” Also, from Thursday to Sunday a large wooden rattle placed in a church tower or belfry was used instead of the bells in what was likewise believed to be an exercise of magic power. The potential wicked deeds of witches were forestalled by special markings on the doors of stables. The doors were marked with the sign of the cross, and at night locked with harrows hung on them with their teeth facing outwards so that the witch would hang herself on them.

On Saturday *paska* was baked. This was a special kind of ritual bread made of wheat flour and decorated with winter-green and magic symbols, such as the sun, stars, and pictures of animals. Usually one large *paska* was baked (sometimes so large that it had to be axed out of the stove), as well as several smaller ones, most often in a number corresponding to the number of family members. A special kind of cheese — *šyrk* or *žovta hruďka* — made of milk, flour, and eggs was also prepared. On that day, housewives cooked ham, sausage (*kolbasa*), bacon, eggs; the latter being specially painted for the occasion.

In this connection it is important to note that the egg, especially the chicken’s egg, has played an extraordinary role in the Easter customs of Carpatho-Rusyns as well as of other Slavs. Containing an embryo of future life, it was regarded as a symbol of life in general, and as such it was believed to be a depository of unusual magical powers.
Moreover, the egg was considered the first “gift of nature,” for hens would begin to lay them long before the spring earth had awakened and had begun to bestow its gifts on man. Since, as was pointed out above, the Carpatho-Rusyns could not eat eggs during the great fast, the number of eggs gathered in that period became so large that it became a custom to present the eggs to relatives and friends. To make it look more like a gift, the egg was painted initially red (krašanky, farbanky), and in the course of time various decorations (pysanky) were added. The painted egg, as well as being a gift, was like all eggs believed to have magical powers and as such it was widely used in folk magic. It became a means of communication between living and non-living nature, between this and the other world. Among other customs, eggs used to be plowed into the earth during the first tillage to ensure rich crops; raw egg was rubbed into the skin of cattle to preserve their health; and eggs were laid on the graves of relatives to gain their favor. The various decorations gradually attained the function of symbolic messages expressing the wishes of the egg’s owner or donor. Later on, however, the magic function of the ornamental symbols came to be forgotten, and so today even the traditional egg-painters have no explanation for the meaning of certain individual patterns.

Pysanky traditions in the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland differ from region to region. Decorations from the Prešov Region and Bojkian Region (central Transcarpathia) are relatively simple though very colorful. Some of the most complex decorative patterns, however, come from the Hucul region in eastern Transcarpathia, and it is no overstatement to say that they are genuine works of art. The most widespread technique in painting eggs is the waxing technique. A decoration is drawn onto the egg with a stylus or pin-top dipped in wax, and subsequently the egg is dropped into a natural or artificial coloring liquid. Nowadays pysanky from the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland both in the Soviet Union (Transcarpathia) and Czechoslovakia (Prešov Region) have become an important branch of handicraft production, and the two countries export thousands of Carpathian painted eggs to Europe, America, Asia, and Africa — unfortunately, however, without specifying their regional place of origin.

On Saturday night, the master of the household places the pasky, the painted eggs, and other foodstuffs into big baskets to be brought the following morning to the church for consecration. In most villages, the Easter blessing of pasky is held in the open air in front of the church. In the more distant past, the pasky were consecrated in cemeteries in order to emphasize the magical function of the act. Even today this constitutes a grandiose celebration of the awakening of nature. The effect is enhanced by the wide assortment of tantalizing foods, the beauty of exquisitely-painted eggs and embroidered cloths, the fragrance of burning candles, and finally by the stately sound of the choir of believers. While integrated in the course of time into Christianity, this festive ritual has many echoes of the ancient pagan past.

The consecration of paschal food (svjačenyna) actually heralded the start of the major festivities which followed the forty days of fasting. Everyone hurried home with the consecrated food in the belief that the summer crop would then also be brought home as swiftly. Svjačenyna was the only food eaten on the first day of Easter, and every good hus-

With the feast completed, the girls would gather usually at the lower end of the village to take part in Easter games. Hand in hand they went up through the village. Singing various Easter songs and stopping outside the church and cemetery or at a previously chosen meadow behind the village, they paid homage with their songs and spring dances to the reawakening life of nature.

These songs and games were closely connected with agricultural occupations of the villagers. Some of them were immediate imitations of certain agricultural activities, such as the sowing of poppy-seed or millet, the processing of flax or hemp, and many others. Another frequent motif in these games and songs is that of love, finding its reflection mostly in fixed dialogues between boys and girls. In many of the songs and games there is also the motif of a wife ransomed from captivity or serfdom. In one of these games the “husband” offers to buy his wife back for a herd of cows, a flock of sheep, and other gifts. However, the group of girls representing the captors fails to agree with the offer. At last the “husband” frees his “wife” by breaking the cordon of the girls and giving his beloved a kiss. Another motif is connected with
military matters. For instance, in the game Voritci (Wickets) girls divide into two "camps" exchanging the following dialogue:

1. *Pustyte nas, pustyte nas. Vijnu vijnuvat!*
2. *Ne pustymyo, ne pustymyo. Mosty polamaty.*

1a. *Až my mosty polomyto*
   *Kalynovy nakdiademo*
   *Taj pinjazi nadajemo*
   *Prjač sobi jdemo.*

2b. *A nam sesi ne lomyte,*
   *Kalynovy ne kladete,*
   *Taj pinjazi ne davajte,*
   *Prjač sobi jdyte!*

(1. Let us go to make war. 2. We won't let you go, for you'd break our bridges. 1a. If we break the bridges, we’ll build new ones of snowball flowers and give you money and go away. 2a. Don’t break the bridges, don’t build us new ones out of snowball flowers, and don’t give us any money, you’d better go away now!)

Each of the Easter games was accompanied by special group dances by the girls (chorovody), thus adding an element of magic to the entertainment. This impression is further enhanced by archaic elements in the song melodies which are similar to those of wedding songs (ladkanky). The ritual chorovody in their original form were on the wane already before World War II, and even the names of their varieties were virtually forgotten. They are now extinct almost everywhere except in some of the most isolated localities. The memories of old-timers and the descriptions of the old dances in folklore literature, however, have become a stimulus for many folklore groups to try and revive this form of ancient folk dance at folklore festivals.

The games and dances were usually ended by the tolling of church bells which summoned the believers to evening services. The girls who ran the quickest to the village were believed to be the most marriageable. In some villages, the Easter chorovody ended by welcoming Spring (Vesna). Spring was invariably represented by a young girl holding a green twig (usually from a birch tree) and escorted into the village with festive songs. Incidentally, the only participants in the Easter games and dances were girls. Boys either stood by and watched or played their own improvised games.

The second day of Easter was characterized by the custom of Easter dousing. From early Monday morning, groups of young boys visited the houses of village girls and splashed water on them as well as on the other women present in the house, expressing wishes for their good health and well-being. Should some of the girls resist the dousing or even hide, they were brought by the boys to the local stream where they received an even more thorough “watering.” In fact, the girls were expected to reward their dousers with a little treat and to present their loved ones with a painted egg. On the next day the roles were reversed: girls doused boys and young women doused their future husbands. Today, the Eastern dousing is practiced even in towns, although as mere entertainment, and instead of water the young dousers (now only the boys perform the ritual) use various perfumes. As a reward, they usually receive painted eggs and candies, and sometimes even small sums of money from their relatives. Though strictly secular today, the custom of Easter dousing still bears the mark of the ancient Rusyn belief in the sanctity of water as a source of all life. Its use in the custom was therefore originally symbolic: it was to purify both the body and soul and to ensure good health and vitality.

The completion of Easter festivities was followed by the beginning of spring agricultural activities which were still symbolically connected with Easter. Thus prior to the first plowing of the season the husbandman smeared the throats of the draft animals with fat from the Easter basket to make sure they remained healthy and strong, and he “planted” an Easter egg in the first furrow to give the soil fertility. The ground shells of Easter eggs and grain from the Christmas table served the same purpose. Sowing them in the direction of the four cardinal points, the husbandman would say: Toto ptaškom; toto myšam; tot chrobáčkom; a toto dvyýni.*

*zbý oný s tým sia uspokojoj a ostatnje na pokoju lišý. (This is for the bird; this is for the mice; this is for the worms; and this for animals of the forest; may it satisfy them and may they leave the rest of the crop alone.)*

Even though there is a relatively wide-ranging literature describing various manifestations of Carpatho-Rusyn Easter customs, one still feels that there is a lack of a general theoretical approach to these phenomena that would take into account their broader historical, ethnographic, and national contexts. This is a pity, for these customs most certainly deserve such analysis.

Mykola Mušynka
Prešov

**UNIQUE VISITS TO THE HOMELAND**

The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center has awarded two study stipends in the amount of $500 each to Jerry Jumba, director of the Kružhok Folk Ensemble of Parma, Ohio and to John Righetti, director of the Carpathian Youth Choir and Dancers of Monessen, Pennsylvania. These stipends are to help defray the cost of travel to Užhorod in Soviet Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus’), where these Rusyn-American cultural activists studied during November and December with choreographers and cultural activists working with Carpatho-Rusyn folk groups in the United States.
With this issue we continue our survey of recent publications compiled by Philip Michaels. These are from 1980 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


Folk medicine has always been an important aspect of traditional cultures. This well-written Ukrainian-language volume is the first study to describe in a systematic way all aspects of folk medicine practiced among Carpatho-Rusyns.

The work is divided into four sections: (1) concepts of disease, Rusyn names for disease, and folk “doctors”; (2) the preparation of herbal medicines; (3) the preparation of medicines from animals and mineral water; and (4) the use of magical cures.


Even before the incorporation of the Transcarpathian Oblast (Subcarpathian Rus') into the Soviet Union in 1945, the Communist party played an important role in local politics, most especially when the region was part of the first Czechoslovak republic (1919-1938). This collective work traces systematically the history of the Transcarpathian Communist party from its early beginnings as the International Socialist party (1920) to its activity from the end of World War II to the present when it has been the only political party in the region. Like other Soviet writings on Carpatho-Rusyn political history, only the Communist movement is credited with any positive achievements in the past.


This collection of studies devoted to problems of dialects derives from papers that were delivered at the first dialect conference in Slovakia held at the Šafarik University of Prešov in April 1975. Eight of these brief studies deal with Carpatho-Rusyn dialects in the Prešov Region of Slovakia and in Soviet Transcarpathia. Of particular interest are studies by V. Osor on Czech lexical influences on the dialect of the Chust region (pp. 95-100); Z. Hanudel' on words for cooking in Prešov Region dialects (pp. 135-140); and J. Dzendzeliv's'kyj on Carpatho-Rusyn words in Jakiv Holovac'kyj's mid-nineteenth century unpublished Ukrainian-Russian dictionary (pp. 195-208).


There are two professional Carpatho-Rusyn folk ensembles in Europe (Dukla in Prešov and the Transcarpathian Ensemble in Užhorod), as well as numerous semi-professional and amateur groups that have come into being since World War II in both Czechoslovakia and Soviet Transcarpathia. None, however, is as famous as the Dukla Ensemble, which has toured on several occasions Western European countries and in 1972, under the management of Sol Hurok Concerts, the United States and Canada.

This large-format volume is a beautiful photographic history of the ensemble since its establishment in 1955. Almost every page includes at least one black-and-white or color photograph of the ensemble in performance or of the countryside in the Prešov Region which inspires its repertoire. The texts in both Ukrainian and Slovak provide a short description of the ensemble's development. A list of all its premieres between 1957 and 1980 and a brief résumé in English are appended.


Most of the material in this volume contains new literary works by Prešov Region authors or reviews of recent Ukrainian-language publications from that area. The only substantive scholarly articles are by Josyf Dzendzelivs'kyj (No. 4) on three recently-discovered manuscripts by the eighteenth century Carpatho-Rusyn grammarian and poet, Arsenij Kocak (1733-1800); and by Olena Rudlovcak (No. 6) on Rusyn journalism from the early 19th century through the communist press of the interwar period.

Also of interest are several biographical and commemorative articles on local cultural leaders, including the writers Fedor Lazoryk (No. 1), Petro Gula (No. 2), and Mychajlo Saldoboš (No. 6); the literary historians Mychajlo Roman (No. 5) and Mychajlo Mol'nar (No. 5); the political scientist Ivan Bajcura (No. 6); the cultural activist Dr. Dionisij F. Rojkovyc (No. 6); and the entire company of the Ukrainian National Theater in Prešov (No. 6), as well as a special article on the Simko family dramatic performers (No. 5).


In 1977, a scholarly conference was held in Bratislava to review the work by researchers that was undertaken in several Rusyn villages (Starina, Veľká Pol'ana, Smolínska, Dara, Ostožnica, Zvala, and Ruske) located northeast of the city of Humenne in Czechoslovakia before they were flooded in the late 1970's to make way for a reservoir. This volume contains nineteen papers in Slovak delivered at the conference and dealing with the material, spiritual, and linguistic aspects of traditional Carpatho-Rusyn culture in the destroyed villages. Related works by many of the same authors and others on this subject were published in Ukrainian in 1979 (see the Carpatho-Rusyn American, Vol. VI, no. 4, p. 4).
Images of Verchovyna

Not long ago, the Carpatho-Rusyn American received an article and graphic sketches from Stanislaw Lazebnyk, Deputy Chairman of the Tovarystvo Ukraina (Society for Cultural Relations with Ukrainians Abroad) in Kiev, the capital of the Ukrainian SSR. We share with you excerpts from an article about Mykola Shelest, an artist living in Kiev with a special interest in Carpatho-Rusyn art and culture. — Editor

Seventeen years ago, the well-known Ukrainian graphic artist Mykola Shelest went on a trip through the towns and villages of the Verchovyna — the highland region of Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus') — that land of sky-blue lakes and emerald forests, exciting legends, and folk narratives. The artist was instantly enraptured by Verchovyna's fairy tale charms. He filled his album with sketches and his notebook with the lyrics of folk songs and stories.

On one occasion, he met an old man in one of the villages. An eager listener and an even more eager talker, the old man had a good memory and natural eloquence. He told the artist about his life, and the story was so exciting that it sounded like an epic professionally written and ready for printing.

Listening to the old man, Mykola Shelest the artist saw strikingly vivid scenes from the highlander's trying past: his trip to America in search of a better life, his return home as an orphan, and his disillusionment. The old man's story was typical of the entire history of his people, who inherently had always been hard workers. In those grim years, they were blind to the beauty of the pine-covered mountains around them. What struck the artist most, however, was the way Carpatho-Rusyns had been scattered in the world. They lived in the Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, the United States, Canada, Greece, Iran, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. All told, graphic pieces by Shelest have been included in international art exhibits in sixty countries.

All Mykola Shelest, a Ukrainian born in the Dniprope­trovsk region, know about the history of his brothers living in the Carpathians was from books and films. Now the old Verchovynian's story had awakened his emotions and stirred his creative interest. The artist stayed in the Carpathians for three years and walked almost all of the territory inhabited by the Carpatho-Rusyns. The result was a series of graphic works.

These prints are based on sketches drawn from life, which means that the portraits show real people and are not products of an artistic imagination. At the same time, the series is based on folk songs which are known to reveal all facets of the life of the people. The graphic works also offer an insight into the ethnography of the Transcarpathian highland and its handicrafts. The prints are not static, nor are they overladen with scenes from everyday life. The artist skillfully builds every composition to convey the development of subject, the psychological stress of the action, the character of the heroes, and the meaning of what is happening.

Clarity and sureness of line is intrinsic to every work of Mykola Shelest. As a rule, his heroes are clad in their best clothes usually comprised of several pieces. He aptly stresses the cut and ornamental details, generally conveying the dynamics of the composition and never forgetting to emphasize human forms.

From his travels in the Carpathians, Shelest also brought back three albums full of folk songs (he is still to compile them). He used some of them as graphic themes. Yes, themes, because each song is a short story in the best sense of the word, written by the greatest geniuses — the people.

Mykola Shelest ranks among the leading Ukrainian graphic artists. His works have been exhibited in the United States, Canada, Greece, Iran, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. All told, graphic pieces by Shelest have been included in international art exhibits in sixty countries.

Mykola Chubuk

Our Front Cover

"The Bridal Shower," graphic print by Mykola Shelest.

"Such is Her Lot," by Mykola Shelest.
"Carry Me, My Horse," by Mykola Shelest.

"A Lemko Dance." by Mykola Shelest.
FROM OUR CENTER

The Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center completed in 1983 its sixth year of operation. That year was also its most successful from the standpoint of finances and number of publications distributed. In 1983, our center filled the largest number of orders for any one year — 918 — which accounted for 1,478 items sold. This means that during six years of operation, we have filled a total of 3,643 orders accounting for 8,247 items sold.

These statistics confirm that our non-profit organization has carried out its initial goal: "to distribute a comprehensive selection of books and articles about Carpatho-Rusyns in the homeland and in the United States." Although most of our publications are obtained by Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background, we also supply materials to numerous public and university libraries throughout the United States, Canada, and in major centers of western and eastern Europe. Our own publications as well as those we distribute from other publishers have been reviewed favorably in numerous journals and newspapers in North America and Europe. Indeed, our activity has helped to make Carpatho-Rusyn culture known not only to our own people but to interested readers in many parts of the world.

It should be kept in mind that we receive no financial support from any church, fraternal, or government agency. With the exception of the person who fulfills orders, none of our officers, editors, or writers receives any compensation for his or her work. Those profits that we do make from the sale of books are used to help publish, through guaranteed pre-purchasing arrangements, new books about Carpatho-Rusyns. We have also been able to begin a translation project that will result in the appearance in English of classic works in Carpatho-Rusyn scholarship, the first being a study of Easter eggs (pysanky), the second a general description of Rusyn history, culture, and religion. Our center has also for the first time this year been able to award fellowships to two Rusyn-American choreographers studying in the homeland and to provide financial support for the quarterly newsletter, Carpatho-Rusyn American.

Although our center publishes the Carpatho-Rusyn American, that newsletter has an independent budget. Unfortunately, the number of subscribers, which has ranged from 650 to 750 during its six years of existence, is insufficient to make the quarterly self-sustaining. Therefore, any contributions to the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center — which are tax-deductible — are used to help support the Carpatho-Rusyn American. We have many original articles to publish in the newsletter that deal with Rusyn traditional customs in the homeland and with the life of Rusyns in America. We hope you will favor us with a contribution to keep up one important aspect of our work, the quarterly newsletter Carpatho-Rusyn American.

SEARCH FOR ROOTS

Some time ago I attended a seminar entitled "Researching Our Immigrant Families" at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, the emphasis was on non-Slavic nationalities, and therefore the seminar was of little practical use to me. Something I saw there, however, changed my way of thinking about researching my family history. I saw a young woman who had done so much research that she needed a briefcase to hold all of the information that she had unearthed. As I enviously eyed the thick binders full of family history, I thought to myself, the era of "Roots" has passed me by. I had done little to explore my family's past and now I knew as little about my ancestors in 1983 as I did in 1976 when the publishing of Alex Haley's Roots encouraged ethnic Americans to seek out their past.

Until that time, I had felt that it was futile to search for a past that existed only as vague memories in my relatives' minds. Most of the records in the old country were probably destroyed in World War II along with the churches that held them. And of course, what was a genealogy without documents and cold, hard facts?

My father, on a trip to Habura (a village near Medzilaborce in the Prešov Region of present-day northeastern Czechoslovakia), had brought back bits and pieces of information. My 95 year-old great-uncle, Hryhory, had come to America over 70 years ago to work for a short time before returning to his native village. The original wooden church in Habura had been sent to a museum in a large city; the church built to replace it, together with the korčma (tavern), were the only structures to survive World War II. Most of the inhabitants had been sent to live with families in Poland for the duration of the war. You see, Habura was along the front between the Soviets and the Nazis. Our relatives who remained in the village hid in trenches while bullets whistled overhead. Maybe I would never have a family tree that went back any farther than my great-grandparents, but I had the makings of a terrific story.

The point of all this is that I am inviting you to join me on a journey. Think of me as the tour guide, while you, as active participants, will determine where this trip will take you. Due to historical circumstances, the search for Rusyn roots is a difficult one. But I have become aware of special strategies that will make the task easier. In my own personal search I hope to explore these methods further and relate my findings to you so that you may in turn use them to aid your own search.

Experienced travelers are welcome. Please feel free to share your own experiences with us. To first-timers, join me! First stop — the National Archives!

Patricia A. Onufraik

READER'S REQUEST

Anyone having knowledge of the histories of the following parishes founded or co-founded by Rusyns in eastern Pennsylvania — St. John's, Pottstown (1903); Holy Ascension, Frackville (1915); St. John's Maizeville (1908); St. Mary's, Brockton (1912); St. Michael's, Shenandoah (1884); St. Mary's, Hazleton (1889); St. John's, Hazleton (1893); Assumption, St. Clair (1911); All Saints, Olyphant (1905); St. John's, Scranton (1895) — please contact John T. Schweich, 6043 James Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55419.
**RUSYN FORUM**

*Kiev, USSR.* The International Congress of Slavists held its ninth meeting in Kiev between September 6 and 14, 1983. This scholarly gathering takes place every five years and this year more than 2,000 scholars from 30 countries participated. As with the first congress (held in Prague in 1929) so too at this one were there papers delivered about Carpatho-Rusyn subjects. These included L. Dezső (Hungary) on classification systems for the study of historical grammar based on Rusyn texts from the seventeenth century; J. Dovval (Czechoslovakia) on Slovak-Rusyn linguistic contact in the Carpathians; J. Rieger (Poland) on the lexical characteristics of Carpatho-Rusyn dialects; Š. Mysanyč (USSR) on the newest Slavic literature; that of the Rusyns of Yugoslavia; and M. Molčar (Czechoslovakia) on recent literary scholarship about Rusyn-Ukrainian writers in the Prešov Region. Of particular interest at the conference, where all Slavic languages are used for presentations, was the lecture of E. Barič from Yugoslavia. Although a Croatian, she delivered her paper on the Rusyn language of Yugoslavia in Rusyn. She even mentioned the usefulness for her work of the dialectal text, *Let's Speak Rusyn — Bisidujme po-rus'ky,* published by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center.

*Atlanta, Ga.* On October 7, 1983, Professor Walter Ullman of the University of Syracuse delivered a paper entitled, "The First Shock: The Cession of Subcarpathian Rus'" at the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Southern Conference on Slavic Studies. The speaker discussed the impact on postwar Czechoslovak foreign policy of the loss of its far eastern province, Subcarpathian Rus' (*Podkarpatská Rus*), ceded to the Soviet Union in June 1945.

*Vienna, Austria.* From October 18 to November 2, an exhibit on Carpatho-Rusyn religious and secular culture was held in the central branch of the Creditanstalt, one of Vienna's largest banks. The exhibit featured large scale photographs taken from *Wooden Churches in the Carpathians,* compiled by Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, as well as a display of original folk costumes, handpainted Easter eggs, embroideries, and wooden sculpture from Rusyn villages in both the Prešov Region of Czechoslovakia and Transcarpathia in the Soviet Union. The exhibit was made possible by loans from the Heritage Institute of the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Diocese of Passaic and from museums in Vienna. The Creditanstalt bank also published a brochure on Rusyn wooden architecture to accompany the exhibit, and on the first evening more than 100 persons came to hear Professor Johannes Spalt speak on architecture in Rusyn lands with reference to *Wooden Churches in the Carpathians,* available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center for $24.50.

*New York, N.Y.* The widely-distributed monthly magazine *Life* carried in its December 1983 issue an article with several stunning photographs of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York. Although described as a Russian religious institution within the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia — the Synod, the monastery has interesting ties to Carpatho-Rusyns. Founded in the 1930s, the largest number of monks came after World War II from the Orthodox Monastery located until then in the Carpatho-Rusyn village of Ladomirová, a few kilometers north of Svidnik in the Prešov Region of Czechoslovakia (see the *Carpatho-Rusyn American,* Vol. III, No. 1, p. 5). In fact, the cathedral at the Jordanville monastery is a replica of the church that still stands in Ladomirová; while the head of the monastery (and bishop of Syracuse and Jordanville), whose picture appears in the *Life* article, is Laurus Škurla, a Carpatho-Rusyn born in Ladomirová. This is the second time during 1983 that some aspect of Carpatho-Rusyn culture was featured in a major American publication — the stylish food magazine *Gourmet* in its April issue carried a major article on Rusyn food entitled, "A Ruthenian Heritage."

*Chicago, Ill.* On December 4, 1983, the Ukrainian National Museum presented an exhibit of watercolors by Tatiana T. Bayuk, entitled: "Ukrainian Wooden Churches of the Prešov Region (N. E. Slovakia) — Their Styles and Architectural Variety." Sponsored by the Illinois Art Council, the exhibit included short lectures on the Carpatho-Rusyn churches given by the artist.

*New York, N.Y.* In January 1984, Edward Kasinec, long-time supporter of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, was appointed, Chief of the Slavonic Division of the New York Public Library. As a division devoted exclusively to collecting Slavic materials, it is one of the oldest in the United States and contains one of the richest collections of Slavic books in the world. It is also the only Slavic collection to have its complete holdings published in a catalog form (780,000 entries in 44 volumes). Before taking up this prestigious position, Mr. Kasinec held library posts at Harvard University and the University of California at Berkeley.

The new incumbent is only the fifth chief to head the Slavonic Division since its establishment in 1902. Moreover, he is the first person of Slavic background to hold the post. Born in New York City, both Mr. Kasinec's parents are Carpatho-Rusyns from Subcarpathian Rus' (present-day Soviet Transcarpathia).

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

*Pittsburgh, Pa.* Carpatho-Rusyns will be well represented this spring at festivities in and around the greater Pittsburgh area. On Sunday afternoon, March 18, the Rusyn Folk Ensemble will perform at the West Mifflin Knights of Columbus Hall. On May 19, the group will also participate in the fourth annual Heritage Day parade, sponsored by the City of Pittsburgh. This event brought thousands of spectators and participants to the city last spring to demonstrate pride in their ethnic heritages.

The following weekend, May 25-27, the annual Pittsburgh Folk Festival will take place. Carpatho-Rusyns will be represented by Slavjane, the fine ensemble from Holy Ghost Byzantine Catholic Church in McKees Rocks, which is co-sponsored by the Greek Catholic Union. The Pittsburgh Folk festival has become a major event in the Pittsburgh area and seems to improve each year. We invite our readers who live nearby to be at the David Lawrence Convention Center where the festival will be held.

*Binghampton, N.Y.* On May 19, an East Slavic Heritage Day will be held at the Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences. The program will include folk ensembles performing, among others, Carpatho-Rusyn songs and dances. The guest speaker will be Dr. Paul R. Magocsi of the University of Toronto, who will lecture on the problem of identity among Eastern Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, Carpatho-Rusyns) in the United States. For further information, contact Zenon Wasylyw: 607-798-3930.
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