As we begin our eighth year of publication, we are pleased to announce an addition to our staff. As of the summer issue, John Righetti will assume the position of assistant editor, along with the task of coordinating recent, current, and future events in the column, "Rusyn Forum."

Mr. Righetti has always taken an active interest in the Orthodox Church and Rusyn cultural affairs. In 1975, he organized a choir of young people from St. John the Divine Orthodox Christian Church in Monessen, Pennsylvania. After their initial performance at a church banquet, the original five members resolved to continue as a group, which later evolved into the Carpathian Youth Choir and Dancers. Under Mr. Righetti's direction, they continue to thrive and add to their impressive list of performance achievements. Besides working with the Carpathian Youth Choir and Dancers, John has pursued an interest in his Slavic heritage at the University of Pittsburgh where he received a Certificate in Russian and East European Studies, concentrating on the history of Austria-Hungary with a special emphasis on Subcarpathian Rus'.

In the fall of 1983, he traveled to Uzhhorod in Soviet Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus'), where he studied Carpathian dance and choreography through a study tour arranged by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. A moving piece on his trip, entitled "Journey to the Homeland," appears in this issue.

John Righetti is currently Director of Public Relations and Development at the D.T. Watson Rehabilitation Hospital in Sewickley, Pennsylvania. We welcome him to our staff and look forward to sharing with our readers his enthusiasm and talent. We urge all organizations and individuals who wish to report about recent and future events taking place in the Rusyn community to write to: John Righetti, 197 Shiloh Avenue, #404, Pittsburgh, PA 15202.

Also in this issue, we have included an article on the trembita, the first in a series on Transcarpathian folk instruments. The author, Victor Sostak of Uzhhorod in Soviet Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus'), is a specialist on the folk instruments in that Carpatho-Rusyn region. He is also a performing member of the Trojisty Muzyky Ensemble, a renowned musical heritage group. In 1983, they performed for the Moscow Festival of Ethnographic Ensembles where Mr. Šostak received a certificate of excellence for his work. He also has a folk instrument exhibit which has traveled throughout the Soviet Union. This native of Uzhhorod has written and produced a catalogue of instruments and lectured widely on all aspects of traditional musical instruments of Transcarpathia.

Victor Šostak has written for the Carpatho-Rusyn American a series of articles on the various folk instruments of Transcarpathia. These pieces include technical and historical information, combined with a touch of folklore. The result is unique and makes for very enjoyable reading. You can read these articles along with a piece on Rusyn wedding music in future issues of our newsletter.

The spring 1985 issue of the Carpatho-Rusyn American is in many ways representative of how far Carpatho-Rusyns have come in the area of heritage study. In this issue alone, we have articles by scholars in cities in two regions of the homeland — Mykola Mušynka of Prešov, Czechoslovakia and Victor Sostak of Užhorod in Soviet Transcarpathia. Listed in Recent Publications are numerous scholarly works including journals and periodicals still being published on a regular basis. There is also a report from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, our parent organization which serves to promote the study of Carpatho-Rusyn history and culture. And finally, news of the recent publication of a book surveying the century-old Carpatho-Rusyn experience in the New World by Dr. Paul R. Magocsi and entitled Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America.

However, scholarly research on Carpatho-Rusyns and their history and culture will continue to thrive only as long as there are people who are interested in reading about this unique group. In that regard, we have been particularly successful. Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn background have evolved into a varied and sophisticated group of individuals with a knowledge of their heritage that is greater now than at any other time in our history. This knowledge of who and what we are is accompanied by an intense desire to learn more. It is in this way that we as a people support the study of our own heritage and preservation of Carpatho-Rusyn culture in general.

Although Carpatho-Rusyn culture can be documented by scholars, only the people themselves can perpetuate their own heritage. In this area, too, Carpatho-Rusyns in America are to be commended for their efforts. The staff of the Carpatho-Rusyn American has received letters from readers around the world, including Israel, El Salvador, and Canada, requesting information, giving information, and offering suggestions. In the past year alone, we have published material from contributors in Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia. News of activities by Rusyns in the community has increased, which is indeed proof that Rusyn Americans are taking responsibility for the preservation of their cultural heritage.

In the past year we reported that two young cultural activists, members of our own Rusyn community, traveled to the homeland to study traditional Carpathian dance. We have begun publishing a series of articles on the search for roots because of the great interest expressed by our readership. We have printed a request by a reader researching parishes founded by Rusyns in eastern Pennsylvania. We have received news about the existence of Carpatho-Rusyn cultural and study groups, language classes, and numerous exhibits featuring some aspect of Rusyn culture or history.

Rusyns have increased their public exposure. Carpatho-Rusyns and stories about their heritage have appeared in national publications — Life and Gourmet Magazine to name but two. Our dance groups, more numerous than ever before — Slajjane of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania. Karpaty of Ambridge, Pennsylvania, Kruzjok of Cleveland, Ohio, Beskydy of Livonia, Michigan — are only a few who have performed before large crowds at folk festivals. Many of these groups have appeared on television.

While we still have quite a way to go, Carpatho-Rusyns in America have come a long way in preserving their heritage. It is for this reason that Rusyn-American cultural activists have deservedly earned the respect of the community.
ALEXIS G. TOTH (1853-1909)

During the last decades of the nineteenth century when tens of thousands of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe began to arrive on America’s shores, several new churches were established to serve the spiritual needs of the newcomers. Among the bodies that grew most rapidly by the turn of the twentieth century was the Russian Orthodox Church. This was particularly remarkable in that there were so few Orthodox immigrants from the Russian Empire. Where then, did all these “Russian” Orthodox adherents come from? The answer lies in the story of a man who has come to be known in official Orthodox publications as the “father of Orthodoxy in America.” The person in question was neither Orthodox nor for that matter Russian, but rather a Greek Catholic priest of Carpatho-Rusyn origin named Alexis G. Toth.

Alexis Toth was born in 1853 in a Carpatho-Rusyn village in Spis county, then in the Hungarian Kingdom and today in the Presov Region of northeastern Czechoslovakia. The young Alexis followed in the footsteps of his father and was ordained to the priesthood in 1878. Although he began his priestly career in a village parish in the Greek Catholic Diocese of Prešov, this experience was not to last long. Recognizing his talents, the bishop of Prešov appointed Toth in 1880 to be his diocesan chancellor and one year later made him professor and rector of the Greek Catholic Seminary in Prešov. Toth’s career as a high-ranking member of the Rusyn Greek Catholic hierarchy in the European homeland was to last less than a decade, however, because in 1889 he accepted an invitation to go to America.

Unlike the other early priests who served new parishes in Pennsylvania and nearby states, Toth went instead farther west to a small community of Carpatho-Rusyn Greek Catholics in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He celebrated his first mass in November 1889. Soon after, he reported, according to custom, to the local ecclesiastical superior — at the time Roman Catholic Archbishop of St. Paul, John Ireland. This was a fateful meeting. It was brief but stormy and was to change irreversibly the history of Eastern Christianity in the New World.

Archbishop Ireland was at the time one of the leading figures of the so-called Americanization movement. In religious terms, this represented the efforts to have Catholicism accepted fully into American life. As a corollary, the Catholic Church should remain a unified American church without any distinct ethnic parishes, and furthermore the immigrants had preferably to give up their European traditions (religious and otherwise) and assimilate to the mainstream American norm. Therefore, when Archbishop Ireland learned that the newly-arrived Reverend Toth not only failed to fulfill the Americanizing ideal, but — worse still — he had been married, the Roman Catholic prelate refused to recognize Toth’s priestly status and forbade him to perform his duties. The determined Toth, proud of his own eastern-rite traditions (which included a married clergy) simply continued to organize his Minneapolis parish.

Meanwhile, Ireland together with other American bishops convinced the Vatican to decree (on October 1, 1890) that all Greek Catholic priests in America must be celibate and remain subordinate to local Roman Catholic bishops. In response to this threat to their canonical status, the Reverend Toth travelled to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where he was made chairman of a council of Greek Catholic priests concerned about their status in America.

During the following months, Toth’s relations with Archbishop Ireland only worsened, until he decided to break entirely with Rome. In March, 1891, he and his parish were accepted into the Russian Orthodox Church. The move was hailed by some as the legitimate return of Rusyns to their ancestral Orthodox faith. Nor was the Minneapolis experience to be an isolated case. In 1892, the energetic Toth left for eastern Pennsylvania where he proceeded — with the financial backing of the Holy Synod of the tsarist Russian Orthodox Church — to convert several Greek Catholic parishes to Orthodoxy. By the time of his death in 1909, Toth had succeeded in bringing at least 20,000 Greek Catholics into the Orthodox fold. The “return to Orthodoxy” even had an effect on the European homeland as returning immigrants followed Toth’s example by converting many of their native Carpathian villages to Orthodoxy.

It is for these reasons that a very high percentage of the membership in today’s Orthodox Church in America (the successor to the Russian Orthodox Church) are descendants of those early Greek Catholic parishes converted by the father of Orthodoxy in America, the Carpatho-Rusyn priest Alexis G. Toth.

Philip Michaels
JOURNEY TO THE HOMELAND

John Righetti, director of the Carpathian Youth Choir and Dancers of Monessen, Pennsylvania, has written a moving piece on his trip to Uzhhorod in Soviet Transcarpathia (Sub­ carpethian Rus') during November 1983. With a grant from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, Righetti studied with choreographers from the Transcarpathian Folk Ensem­ ble and specialists in folk music and instruments from the University of Uzhhorod. The following are some of his im­ pressions upon visiting the homeland of his ancestors for the first time. — Editor

The sun had risen only a short time before I first laid eyes on the Carpathian Mountains. It was at Beskyd, where the train from Kiev enters Transcarpathia. The radio on the train was playing Carpatho-Rusyn folk music as I looked out over the land of my heritage — cold and misty, just as I had always imagined it would be. I watched the people in the village as we passed through, saw their faces, their farms, their cupolaed churches tucked among their mountains. I was overcome with an emotion so deep that mere words cannot express the feeling. I cried. How was it that an American man, raised in a small western Pennsylvania steel town, felt as though he had come home? What was it about this place, a place that until now had only filled my romantic imagination? I knew these churches, these mountains, these faces. And each of these faces said to me, Brate, vitajte doma ("Brother, welcome home.")

I had just entered Transcarpathia, home of my Carpatho-Rusyn ancestors, thanks to a special program arranged by the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center and the Soviet Union’s Lvivske Tovarystvo Ukraina (the Society for Cultural Relations with Ukrainians Abroad). It was just a month before that Jerry Jumba, another Carpatho-Rusyn American choreographer, and I had learned that we had been selected for a pilot program to study Carpatho-Rusyn choreography, music, and costume, for an extended period in Transcarpathia. It was indeed a surprise, since we were the first Carpatho-Rusyn American choreographers invited to do so since World War II. Each of us was departing independent of the other and would be returning on his own as well. The idea of traveling alone in eastern Europe was frightening and exhilarating as I prepared to go to a land I never thought I would actually see.

Due to the political climate and weather at the time (it was early November), travel to Transcarpathia was labored, to say the least. I flew from Pittsburgh to New York to Montreal to Prague to Moscow to Kiev and went by overnight train from Kiev to Uzhhorod. In the 1980s, I hadn’t expected such an excursion.

Upon arriving in Uzhhorod, I was given a room at the Hotel Zakarpattja and an itinerary for dance practices and things to see. In the process, I encountered many interesting things and many interesting people. I came away with many lasting impressions and many more memories.

Walking through the streets of Uzhhorod, I was amazed by the people’s faces. They were the same faces of my neighbors, the kids I went to school with, the people I worked with. They were the faces of the Slavic-American immigrant and his progeny. It was striking to see the similarities. It was my first realization that there was a continuity between these people and us Slavic-Americans. Indeed, a few times, the resemblances were so shocking that I thought I was walking past an old friend in Uzhhorod! And perhaps I was, in a sense.

I took notice of everything I could. comparing it, as any traveler would, with what I knew. We spent one afternoon visiting Hanna Mychovych, famed Carpathian artist, known for her dinka (gourd) carving. Preserving an ancient Rusyn art, she carves tiny gourds on the vine with intricate patterns and scenes; as the gourd grows, so does the pattern.

Hanna lived on a hilly street with small houses built right next to one another and each with small gardens in back just like the neighborhood I grew up in. She and her sister Olga, who had sung with a state ensemble for years, entertained us with stories of the olden days in Transcarpathia, folk songs and their origins, slivovica, vodka, kolaci, and fruits. I told Olga of my great-grandmother’s roots in the village of Turja Poljana and she sang me a song from there — one my prababa (great-grandmother) and aunts sang often. At that moment, I realized that these people were entertaining me in the same way my family had always done — the exact same way. It was just like Orthodox Christmas at “baba’s house” in America. I felt totally at home, just as I did the entire month in Transcarpathia.

I was awakened to the fact that I felt more at home there, in a foreign land, than I did in the homes of some of my friends and acquaintances who grew up in the popular American culture. As I met more and more people in Transcarpathia, I made the correlation that they were people raised with the same moral code and values that I had been raised with. I discovered that I grew up more in their culture than in an “American” one. Nothing drove this home more than my most touching experience in Transcarpathia — one I had always hoped would happen. It was the meeting of kin.

Before I left for Europe, I found an old envelope with a letter to my great-grandfather from his sister-in-law, Maria Romančak, who lived in Turja Poljana. I wrote to Maria, not knowing whether she was still alive, telling her who I was, and when I would be coming to Transcarpathia. When I arrived in Uzhhorod, I sent a second letter, telling her where I would be staying.

One Sunday afternoon, as Jerry and I worked on choreogra­phies in my room, the phone rang. It was a woman named Marijka, who said she was my cousin. She said that she was in the lobby and that she had come to meet me. I rushed downstairs, hardly believing that the moment had come. I encountered a diminutive blonde woman, a man, and an older woman in a large coat and green babuška. Marijka, the blonde, was Maria Romančak’s granddaughter, an elementary school teacher in Turja Poljana, where her grandmother, parents, and she and her family still lived. The man was her uncle Stepan (no relation to me) and the older woman was her mother, also Maria. They had come two hours by bus to Uzhhorod to meet me and take me to Stepan’s apartment in the city to meet more family and to talk.
The apartment was small, but comfortable, with beautiful Rusyn embroidery everywhere. In the dining room was set a spread of traditional Rusyn foods that two young children eyed hungrily. There I met Vera, Marijka’s 21-year-old sister, and her fiancé, Viktor. I distributed the gifts I had brought with me and sat down to a meal where, uncomfortably, everyone wanted to see me eat before they would do so. And Stepan’s two young children? Of course, they could wait for the grown-ups to finish.

We ate tomatoes in sour cream, pickles, bread, kolbasa, and potatoes and drank vodka while I shared pictures of my family in America. I showed Maria a picture of my prababa Anna with her sister Kejda in America. She exclaimed (ponašomu, of course): “I have this picture, too.” Again, a bond existed across an ocean, one weakened with years, but never really broken. To see in people’s faces from a faraway land the same features you see in the faces of your own family is truly indescribable. I will always cherish the time I spent with them.

Since I was in Transcarpathia for cultural reasons, I quite naturally paid close attention to the Carpatho-Rusyns’ relationships with their traditional art forms — dance, music, song, embroidery, woodcarving, etc. The Rusyns have no greater pride than in their native culture. It is fostered in every aspect of life and highly cherished. Embroidery is put on display and viewed like fine art. Artists are revered and theater is extremely well attended. Dance, it appears, is the most respected of all. Almost all factories and trade unions house some performing dance troupe for its workers or members — and all dance troupes are highly skilled. In Transcarpathia, boys, in learning the rigorous mountain dancing, want to be dancers as much as American boys want to be football players. In a region of roughly one million people, over 20 percent of the population performs with some type of folk ensemble of which there are literally thousands!

The people are so proud of their unique Carpathian culture that they make an interesting comment. When studying dancing, I would sometimes ask the origin of the dance. Usually when I asked, “Is this a Ukrainian dance?” (since, after all, the people in today’s Transcarpathia are supposed to be Ukrainians), they would answer: “No. This is a zakarpatskyj (Carpathian) dance.”

The aspect of Carpathian life I personally found most fulfilling was religion. Indeed, in an officially atheistic nation, there were few outward signs of religion, and my first few days in this new place, like any new place, left me a little unsure. But my first Sunday in Užhorod, I awoke early to walk the hill to Užhorod’s Orthodox Cathedral, the mother church of my ancestors. It had snowed the night before and the temperature was bitter. There were few people on the streets as I trudged along. As I ascended the steps of the cathedral, I saw a baba all in black sweeping the upper landing before the doors. When I got closer, I saw that one eye was blind and that she had a stump for a hand. She looked up at me with warmth and kindness and said, Slava Isusu Christu (“Glory to Jesus Christ.”) I responded Slava na viky (“Glory forever”), and knew I was truly home.

Inside, the church was beautifully ornate, but as bitterly cold inside as the weather was outside. It was filled to capacity with people, old and young alike, and an unseen cantor led the prostopenje (Carpathian plain chant) of the liturgy. There I stood, praying to God exactly where generations of Rusyns had prayed before me, using the same language and music as my ancestors. These people had preserved their faith and an important part of their musical culture as well. They prayed and sang for hours with such fervor, such belief, that I was in awe. I have never seen any congregation of people in America so devoted to God. And once again, that continuity — that as a Carpatho-Rusyn American, I could stand there and sing the timeless Divine Liturgy with my people, truly my people, an ocean away.

John Righetti
Monessen, Pennsylvania
The Subcarpathian region, a mountainous area, was a rather poor agricultural one. Of cereals, only oats and barley produced satisfactory yields, whereas rye and wheat fared far less well. Moreover, until 1348 when feudal servitude was abolished, most of the land was owned by foreign nobility, especially Hungarian. These nobles felt little obligation to their hard-working subjects. The hardships of those times are reflected in numerous folk songs, such as the following one recorded in the village of Kurov near Bardejov:

Robyme na panským
Od svitu do nočí,
A naš pan povídá,
Ze nam n'íti pomoci.
Od tjažkej roboty
Ruchén'ký nam miljút;
A panove sobi
Paljunočku pijút'.

We work on our master's fields
From sun-up to sundown,
And our master says
It can't be helped.
Because of hard labor
Our hands are losing strength,
While the masters
Help themselves to a good drink.

Harvest time, nevertheless, was one of the most joyful times of the year for the peasants. With it were connected many customs going back to the distant past. Before starting to gather the crops, for instance, the harvesters would roll on the ground hoping that the earth might grant them the strength needed in the work. According to another explanation, it was believed that the sheaves would "roll" into the barns in great numbers.

When the harvest was over, a shock of unreaped wheat, tied with a ribbon or a straw binder, was left at the end of the field. This boroda or "beard," as it was called, was originally an offering to the pagan field gods. Later the custom was aimed at "keeping the mice in the field," i.e., preventing them from "visiting" the barns. In another explanation, the boroda was to provide a hiding place for quails.

The ears of grain gathered last were used by the peasants for making a tidy sheaf which, decorated with field flowers, was ceremoniously brought to the household. This sheaf (called dido or diduch — grandfather) remained unthreshed, and during Christmas it was held in an honorable place at the Christmas Eve table. Since it was believed to have magic power, ears from the sheaf were woven into the wedding wreaths, put into the beds of women giving birth to their first child, and in curing diseases. The supposed procreative power of the sheaf led the peasants to place ears from it under hens in hopes of getting more eggs from them, and to put grains from it into the first seed, and so on.

With the harvesting finished, the harvesters would make a ceremonial wreath and, singing cheerful songs of the season, bring it to their master or the manager. After binding the wreath with a special ribbon, the master or his deputy would invite the harvesters for a feast (obzinky or obdomaš).

After the abolition of feudal servitude, many Carpatho-Rusyns migrated for the harvesting season to the Hungarian lowlands. Hired by wealthy farmers, their reward was often merely free board and a small amount of grain to take back home. In spite of the hard work among strangers and the meager rewards, the harvesters did not fail to celebrate their obzinky even here. Their songs on this occasion often reflected both their complaints and longing for their homes and dear ones in the mountains, as in the following example recorded in the village of Mlynarovce near Svidník:

Vže zme dorobily madjarsku robotu,
Čekaj nja, mamočko, domu na subotu.
Ne tak na subotu, jak na tu nedilju,
Rychtúj mi, mamočko, košuljku bilu . . .
Napys lem mi, pismo, jak ti davu znaty,
Bo ja z žalu umru, budeš banuvaty.
Umru v Madjarščyni z tjažkoj roboty:
Začnu v ponedílók, tlahnu do suboty.
Now we have finished the Hungarian job, 
Wait for me, mother. I’ll come back home on 
Saturday, 
And if not on Saturday, then on Sunday. 
Prepare for me, mother, my white shirt . . . 
Write me a letter, mother, if you get my 
message, 
Or else I’ll die from woe, and you’ll be sad. 
I’ll die in Hungary of hard labor 
Which I start on Monday, and end on Saturday. 

After World War I the obzinký customs became largely defunct. However, after World War II they were revived in the newly-founded collective farms both in Soviet Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus) and in Czechoslovakia’s Prešov region. At present, when the harvest is over, the harvesters will ceremoniously bring an obzinký wreath to the head of the kolkhoz (or cooperative farm in Slovakia), singing humorous songs both traditional and contemporary. The obzinký feast then takes place in a local tavern or, in some places, in a local cultural center.

St. Andrew’s Day (November 30) has always been one of the most popular festivals in the Subcarpathian region, because it was celebrated as a “name day” by many Rusyns, the name being a commonly-used one. But there was another special reason for its popularity: St. Andrew was regarded as a patron saint of love. Therefore, both the preceding eve and the day itself led to the evolution of a number of customs. On the eve of the day, village girls would walk around all the houses in which there lived an Andrew (regardless of whether he was a small boy or an old man) and, standing under the window, they would wish him good luck regardless of whether he was a small boy or an old man) and, standing under the window, they would wish him good luck, humoring songs both traditional and contemporary. The obzinký feast then takes place in a local tavern or, in some places, in a local cultural center.

The girls would beat you.
And you, people, understand.
It’s our right.
Not a big right, though:
We want only a trough of oats.
If you don’t give it to us,

You will be sorry.
For we will smash all your pots
On the shelf.

Being thus duly “warned,” the Andrew in question would bring the girls the “offering” they asked for: oats, eggs, flour, and other foodstuffs. The girls would then go to the tavern and exchange the oats for brandy, and use the rest of the food for a feast in one of the village houses. (Later on they would be joined by the boys and a musician, and of course the revels would become more joyous.) The girl’s party would include also some jocular palm-reading and “magic” rites aimed at finding out which of the girls would marry in the course of the year. These rites had various forms: all the girls went to the stream and each one gathered a number of small stones. These were then counted at the party: an even number meant marriage, an odd number meant further waiting for the bridgroom.

In another custom, the girls would make small flour pellets, lay them next to each other, and let in a rooster or a dog. The girl whose pellet was eaten first was “sure” to marry first as well. Given thus the “sign” of the upcoming marriage, the girl was obviously eager to know who her husband would be. She “found it out” by counting the ninth post from the left in the fence. If the post was upright and covered with bark, the bridegroom would be handsome and rich. If there was no bark on the post, the husband would be poor. If the post was crooked, the husband would be a hunchback. If there were knots in the pole, the husband would be a widower with children. Later the girls invented a new custom: slips of paper with the names of various boys would be added to the filling of pirohy (pastry filled with jam or cheese). When the girl then received a piroh with a name of one of the boys, it was believed that she would marry him.

But perhaps the most “unfailing” manner of finding out the identity of the future husband was this. Before going to bed, the girl would sow flax around a wooden pole stuck in the ground, asking the patron of love for help (recorded in the village of Kurov near Bardejov):

Andriju. Andriju, 
Výnes nam porciju, 
Bo jak nevýneses, 
Djivky tja pobýjút'. 
A vý, ljude, znajte, 
Naše pravo dajte, 
Pravo nevelyčke, 
Lem korytce vivsa. 
Bo jak nam nedate, 
Ta pobanujete, 
Všytcy horci potrepeme, 
Što v polyci mate.

Andrew, Andrew, 
Bring us an offering, 
For if you don’t 
The girls will beat you. 
And you, people, understand, 
It’s our right. 
Not a big right, though: 
We want only a trough of oats. 
If you don’t give it to us,

She would then use a pair of undershorts to “harrow” the patch of land she had sown with flax. At night she would lay the undershorts under her head. The boy she dreamed about in her sleep was to become her husband. There is no doubt that this “magic” technique of prediction was highly successful, for the “dream boy” would most likely be the same who figured most prominently in her daytime thoughts about the prospective bridgroom.

Mykola Musynka
Prešov, Czechoslovakia
THE TREMBITA

The author of this article, Victor Šostak, is a specialist on Carpatho-Rusyn folk instruments. A graduate of the University of Užhorod, he is now a curator at the Užhorod Historical Museum. This article is the first in a series on folk instruments and was translated by Margarita S. Mikhalyova and Jerry Jumba. — Editor

Night was drawing near. We were sitting around the bonfire, from time to time throwing on a few dry branches. Suddenly, in the distance, we heard faint fluttering sounds. Then the fluttering changed to resonant, accented bursts that spread like a wave over the highlands. It rolled over the tops of the fir trees to every hut and down into the meadows. The sound was everywhere, bouncing from the high rocks and continuing outward a great distance.

“That is the trembita,” said our old guide smiling, “the shepherds are calling their flocks.” We listened to the melody of the trembita with great interest. The sound expanded to its full intensity, was sustained for a time, then rolled into the distance. We still felt among us the subtle vibration of its presence. “The people have an interesting tale about the word trembita,” said the old guide. Seeing that we impatiently waited for his story, he slowly lit his pipe and began in a low voice...

Once upon a time in the Hutsul region there lived a magic craftsman. He was a very old man with flowing grey hair like the highlands covered with snow, a wrinkled face like the furrows in the field, and a great curved back with a peak like the Hoverla mountain, the highest in the Carpathians. He had no wife or children. He made many unusual, finely-crafted musical instruments, such as the cymbaly (a stringed instrument struck with mallets), the piščalka (whistle), the flojar (whistle), husly (violin), maly basy (stringed bass), and the berbenycja (drum).

One autumn, three brothers traveled from the distant highlands to visit the magic craftsman. They needed a special musical pipe made from the birch tree. They called it a berezivka and asked the craftsman if he could make such a pipe for them. The old man was surprised that the three brothers asked for only one pipe. They explained that they were three orphans who worked as shepherds. They could not afford to buy three birch pipes. They would take turns playing and hope that this special instrument would frighten the wild animals away from the flocks.

“Alright,” answered the craftsman, “I will make a pipe during the springtime, a pipe which no person has ever had.”

So the old craftsman went into the forest and selected a certain tree that had been struck by lightning. He cut it into two even pieces and hollowed out the inside. He covered the inside and outside with sheep fat for ninety-nine days. This sealed the wood, protected it from cracking, and kept each piece perfectly straight. He glued the halves with resin from the tree and then wrapped it with rings of birch bark. From the heart of a maple tree he carved a mouthpiece and set it in just the right position. Finally, one evening the craftsman began to play the new pipe behind his mountain cottage. A beautiful, powerful sound shook the mountains, so that people ran out of their homes and listened in amazement to the enchanting music.

The three brothers returned to the magic craftsman and gave him the tremendous wooden pipe on which he had burned a special inscription: Trem bratam — “To three brothers.” The brothers returned to their village playing their magical instrument. Everywhere they went people were astonished to hear such music. News of the magical pipe spread throughout the Carpathians. Because it was the three brothers who played such an instrument, the people began to call the wooden pipe a trembita.

In Transcarpathia (Subcarpathian Rus’), there are several kinds of trembitas, each with its own special function. The small košadnyc’ka trembita, less than three meters in length, is used to signal that Christmas carolers are coming. The vivčars’ka trembita, three meters in length, is used by shepherds to signal their location in the mountains, to call the sheep in at dusk, and to signal if the herd is attacked by bears or wolves. Finally, the third type, the pochorona or funeral trembita, is longer than three meters and its main function is to play outside the house where the body is laid out for viewing. There are special funeral melodies to help express the grief of the village, an age-old ritual that is vividly portrayed in the motion picture, Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors, based on a short novel by Mychajlo Kocjubns’kyj.

The large trembita is also played on happy occasions, such as festivals and weddings. The wedding procession and the home of the bride and groom are surrounded with joyful trembita calls in a major key. They sound out so happily that other shepherds across the mountains answer the joyous calls.

Another happy occasion is in the spring when farewell calls are played to the residents of the mountains. The people in the valley hear these most cheerful trembita calls as the shepherds signal the return to their native villages.

It is dark now. The ancient fir trees stand in the shadow of the moonlit night and touch the sky. One last time we hear the trembita sound. It is a sorrowful melody of departure, a shepherd leaving a loved one.

U trembiton’ku zahraju, zahraju, zahudu.
Z svojim mylym ridnym krajem rozmovu povedu...

I will play my trembita, and
Thereby speak with my dear native land.

It is very difficult to imagine the Carpathian forests and highlands without the magic song of the trembita.

Victor Šostak
Užhorod, USSR

OUR FRONT COVER
The traditional shepherd’s call with the trembita high in the Carpathian Mountains.
RECENT PUBLICATIONS 1981

With this issue we continue our survey of recent publications compiled by Philip Michaels. These are from 1981 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 at Berkeley, 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


This is the first monograph in Soviet Marxist historical literature about Subcarpathian Rus', which sets as its goal the analysis of non-Communist political parties active in the region before 1945. Attention is given to parties representing all nationalities that functioned under Austro-Hungarian (1890s-1918), Czechoslovak (1919-1939), and Hungarian (1939-1944) rule. Interesting, if brief, descriptions are provided for the numerous political parties — Czechoslovak Agrarian (headed by Stepan Kločurak and Avhustyn Štefan), Social Democratic (Julijan Revaj), Christian Democratic (Avhustyn Vološyn), Autonomous Agricultural Union (Ivan Kúrtjak and Andrij Brodij), Russian National Autonomist (Stepan Fencik), Ukrainian National Union (Fedir Revaj) — as well as for cultural organizations such as the Prosvita Society (est. 1920) and the Duchnovýť Society (est. 1923).

Particular attention is given to émigrés from Russia and the Ukraine, including Kateryna Breško-Breškovskaja (the “grandmother” of the Russian Revolution), who settled in Subcarpathian Rus' after World War I, as well as to returning immigrants from America (Gregory Žatkových, Aleksej Gerovskij), who influenced local politics and the economy (especially the establishment of the Subcarpathian Bank).

In keeping with Soviet Marxist historical interpretation, all these and other organizations are strongly criticized by the author as nothing more than front organizations designed to exploit the Carpatho-Rusyn masses. Despite such one-sided views, this study still contains much useful factual data.


This large-format, high quality, and profusely illustrated book is the first survey of all eastern European wooden architecture from Finland and northern Russia to Romania and Yugoslavia. In the center of this region, in fact in the very center of Europe, are the mountainous lands inhabited by Carpatho-Rusyns. This territory is well represented in Buxton’s book.

The easy-to-read text describes building techniques as well as stylistic variations and similarities from region to region. Chapter 3 (pages 87-148) is devoted to the Carpathians, and the most beautiful of the wooden churches in the Rusyn regions of Subcarpathian Rus’ (Soviet Ukraine), the Prešov Region of eastern Slovakia, and the Lemkish region of southeastern Poland are represented in 78 photographs and 24 ground plans and lateral sketches. Besides this chapter, there are several other photographs of Carpatho-Rusyn churches throughout the book as illustrative material for comparing building techniques.


This is the first book-length general history of Jews in Subcarpathian Rus’ to appear in English. Until their forced deportation by the Hungarian government (under German pressure) in the spring of 1944, the Jews had played an enormously important role in the economic life of Subcarpathian Rus’. By the 1940s, they had numbered 100,000 and lived among Carpatho-Rusyns in both the cities and countryside. Some Subcarpathian cities had a particularly marked Jewish character, such as Mukachevo whose population was 43 percent Jewish, and Užhorod 28 percent Jewish in 1930.

Dicker’s historical account is divided into five chapters: (1) the arrival of Jews in Subcarpathian Rus’ from Galicia in the eighteenth century and their development until World War I; (2) the cultural and educational flourishing of the community during the interwar years of Czechoslovak rule, a period also marked by Rusyn-Jewish cooperation; (3) Hungary’s annexation of Subcarpathian Rus’ and northern Transylvania and the forced deportation of Jews from those areas to the Auschwitz death camp in 1944; (4) the plight of displaced persons; and (5) the careers of outstanding Jews from the area who settled in the United States, including the noted writer Elie Wiesel.

The book is written in an engaging style in which the author has successfully combined historical narrative with descriptions of the lives of leading personalities. Among these are rabbis from the Teitelbaum family in the nineteenth century, the interwar politician Dr. Chaim Kugel, and the community leader for Orthodox Jews from Subcarpathia in New York City (Brooklyn), Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum. Throughout this study, much attention is given to the struggle between Orthodox Hasidic Jews (traditionally the majority in Subcarpathian Rus’) and the more modern Zionists, as well as to the community in Sighet (Maramaros county), which after World War I came under Romanian control.

Duchaček, Ivo. “Jak Rudá Armáda mapovala střední Evropu: Těšínsko a Podkarpalsko” (How the Red Army Re-

Despite the general title, this extensive article deals almost entirely with the problem of Subcarpathian Rus', both within the interwar first Czechoslovak Republic and in particular during the months of late 1944 and early 1945, when the area was held by the Red Army. The author provides a series of previously unpublished dispatches sent by the official Czechoslovak delegation that spent a few months (October 1944 to January 1945) in Subcarpathian Rus', a territory which, according to agreements between the Allies (including the Soviet Union) and the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, was to become once again part of Czechoslovakia after World War II. Much has already been written about the Soviet incorporation of Subcarpathian Rus' in 1944-1945 (works of F. Němeč and V. Moudry, V. Markus, I. Evseev), and the present article provides a few more documentary details about Czechoslovak foreign policy at the time.

Also very interesting is the introductory portion of the study in which Ducháček discusses Czechoslovak rule and attitudes toward Subcarpathian Rus' between 1919 and 1939. The incisive commentary about the strategic value of the region and the evolution of “Czech mini-imperialism” make Ducháček's study one of the best and most provocative to appear on this subject in the last decade.


This is a reprint of the Russian-language edition of a general history of Carpatho-Rusyns prepared in 1853 by the national leader Aleksandr Duchnovič and first published in 1914. The present volume also includes the introduction to the 1914 edition by the Russian specialist in Carpatho-Rusyn studies, Fedor F. Aristov, as well as a parallel translation of the whole work into Vojvodinian Rusyn by Julijan Kol’esarov.


Besides new literary works by Ukrainian-language authors from the Prešov Region, translations, and literary criticism, there are only a few articles of interest in this volume for Carpatho-Rusyn scholarship. These include a study based on numerous statistics about economic development in eastern Slovakia (only the northern part of which comprises the Carpatho-Rusyn inhabited Prešov Region) from World War II to the present by Vasil Kapišovský (No. 2), as well as several shorter articles about local cultural activists: the Transcarpathian linguist Josyf Dzendzelivs’kyj (No. 1); the Prešov Region writers Jurko Borolyc (No. 1); Ivan Hryc-Duda (No. 2); Marijka Pidhirjanka (No. 2); and Fedir Ivancov (No. 5); the recently-deceased Czechoslovak specialist on Rusyn dialects Andrij Kurmys’kyj (No. 2); the actor and director Josyf Fel’baba (No. 2); and the painter Stepan Hapak (No. 5).

Dulićenko, Aleksandr D. Slavjanskie literaturnye mikroja­zyki: voprosy formirovanija i razvitija (Slavic Literary Mini-

This well-researched monograph written in Russian deals with a subject that is often talked about by professional Slavists (as well as partisans of various national viewpoints) but is one that has rarely been analyzed in a serious and objective manner. Dulicenko, a Soviet specialist in Slavic languages, has chosen twelve, what he has called, micro-or mini-languages and has presented a comparative study as to how some developed into literary languages representing distinct ethnic groups or nationalities, while others eventually merged into the literary standard of which it forms a dialectal branch. Among the twelve mini-languages analyzed, several are of Southern Slavic origin, others like Kashubian and Lachian are West Slavic. Of particular interest is the treatment of Eastern Slovak (Šariš and Spiš); Vojvodinian or Bačka Rusyn; and even Carpatho-Rusyn in America which is singled out as one of the twelve studied. In fact, the origin for this comparative study was Dulićenko's discovery (while still a university graduate student in Soviet Turkmenistan) of contemporary publications in Vojvodinian Rusyn.

The book is divided into four chapters which discuss: the historical context of each mini-language area; dialect bases; problems of standardization; and extralinguistic factors influencing language development. Reflecting Dulićenko's primary interest and expertise, much of the book's discussion focuses on Vojvodinian Rusyn. Textual examples of each language, a comprehensive bibliography, and resume in French are also provided.


This brief article provides a good introduction to the history of Carpatho-Rusyns in Minnesota and their relation to other East Slavic immigrant groups in that state. Particular emphasis is placed on the community in Minneapolis, which in 1891, under the leadership of the Reverend Alexis G. Toth (from the Prešov Region), became the first Greek Catholic Rusyn parish to return to the Orthodox Church.


The Reverend Arsenij Kocak (1737-1800) is best known as the author of an unpublished Church Slavonic grammar and as a teacher at the Krásny Brod monastery school during the second half of the eighteenth century. This here-tofore unpublished poetic work (reproduced in full) reveals Kocak's talents as a belleurist and provides an important addition to Carpatho-Rusyn literary history before the nineteenth-century national renaissance.
FROM OUR CENTER

On January 19, 1985, the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center reached an important milestone — after only seven years of operation we sold our 10,000th publication. This seems particularly remarkable considering our hesitant beginnings back in early 1978. Even at that time, certain skeptics in our community argued that, as in the past, Carpatho-Rusyns in America did not have enough interest in their cultural heritage to sustain the work of a scholarly publishing center. We are therefore pleased that 10,000 publications later, the community has proved the skeptics wrong.

In fact, we have experienced a consistently steady increase each year in the number of orders received. This reflects the serious and legitimate interest on the part of Rusyn Americans and their descendants in the cultural heritage of their forbears. Also, the quality of the material offered remains consistently high; besides what our center publishes itself, we also distribute materials put out by the leading scholarly institutions in North America — Harvard University Press, University of Toronto Press, the Immigration History Research Center in Minnesota, and the Multicultural History Society of Ontario.

To be sure, the majority of our publications reach Americans of Carpatho-Rusyn descent. However, we have a growing number of customers and subscribers to our Carpatho-Rusyn American quarterly from the leading libraries and cultural institutions in North America and Europe. From New York to Washington, D.C., Chicago, San Francisco, and from Paris to Rome, Berlin, Prague, Prešov, Užhorod, Kiev, and Moscow there are publications from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center. This is exceedingly important, because it makes it possible for writers, cultural leaders, and government officials concerned with America's multi-ethnic population to be aware of the Carpatho-Rusyn component as well. As a result, it is not surprising to find persons of non-Rusyn background who know more about Carpatho-Rusyn developments than do Rusyn Americans themselves.

The success of the past seven years encourage us to look forward to an even more productive future. Just this past year — 1984 — we fulfilled 1,076 orders which represented 1,472 items sold. Besides that, the Carpatho-Rusyn American had 750 subscribers. We appreciate serving the cultural needs of the community and look forward to expanding our activities in the years to come.

Best-selling titles 1978-1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>No. of Years</th>
<th>Total Sold</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wooden Churches in the Carpathians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,262</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bisidujme po-rus'ky</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our People</td>
<td>1 (month)</td>
<td>928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hovorim po-rus'ky</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>809</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaping of a National Identity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusyn-Ukrainians of Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain Chant Records</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RUSYN FORUM

Pittsburgh, Pa. On June 25, 1984, two dance groups, Vesely Krajany and Tancuji S'Nami, performed at the 60th annual American Carpatho-Russian Day at Kennywood Park. Members of 20 parishes were on hand to view the festivities. Later that summer, Tancuji S'Nami, the dance group from Wood, Pennsylvania under the direction of Patti Beskid, was seen on WTAE-TV as part of its "Heritage Day" series featuring various nationalities.

Užhorod, USSR. On August 4-5, 1984, Dr. Paul R. Magocsi, professor of history at the University of Toronto and president of the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, delivered two lectures at the University of Užhorod. Both lectures dealt with the life of Carpatho-Rusyns in America and were based on material from Dr. Magocsi's newest book, Our People. The Soviet specialists in Carpatho-Rusyn studies who were in attendance were particularly interested in hearing about how people from their region live in the New World.

Wilkes-Barre Twp., Pa. During the fall of 1984, Greek Catholic Union Lodge No. 443 participated in the 9th annual Luzerne County Folk Festival. Their display featured a typical village in Subcarpathian Rus' before the twentieth century handcrafted by John Kish of Ashley, Pennsylvania.

Springfield, Va. On October 6-7, 1984, the Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society hosted a show marking the 45th anniversary of the first stamp commemorating the independence of Carpatho-Ukraine (Subcarpathian Rus') in 1939. The program included an exhibit for collectors and a banquet talk by Dr. Vincent Shandor, a representative of the Carpatho-Ukrainian government in Prague in 1939, who spoke about events in the Rusyn homeland during the two decades leading up to the declaration of independence on March 15, 1939. A cachet envelope, special card and sheet, and special U.S. Post Office Cancel commemorating the first stamp issue (depicting the wooden church at Jasynja) were available for purchase.

For information about these commemorative items, contact: Don Wynnyczok, 403 Seward Square, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

Toronto, Ontario. On November 22, 1984, the Multicultural History Society of Ontario announced the publication of Our People: Carpatho-Rusyns and Their Descendants in North America by Dr. Paul R. Magocsi. This is the first book to deal with the history of immigrants from Rusyn-inhabited lands in the Carpathians and their present-day descendants of whatever religious, national, or political persuasion. The book, written in a popular style, has been greeted so favorably by Rusyn Americans that within three months of its appearance, the publisher has had to prepare for a second revised printing that will appear in the early summer. Our People, with its 86 photographs, 4 maps, and several charts, is available for $20.00 from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 355 Delano Place, Fairview, NJ 07022.
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