

# Carpatho-Rus'

## Karpatska Rus'



SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT YONKERS, NEW YORK AND OTHER MAILING ADDRESSES

NO. 2 CARPATHO-RUS, YONKERS, N.Y., JANUARY 19, 1996 VOL. LXVIII

Continued from Issue #1, 1/5/96

### The History of Lemkovina Part 16

#### I. Sanok (cont'd)

Later records about Sanok are scarce and usually concern mutual relations with the Uhrians (Hungarians). The Galician-Volynian chronicles in 1205 mentions the meeting of Uhorian King Andrei II (1205-1253) with the Galician-Volodimir King Roman, who escaped from the advancing Galician Boyars with her children, four year old Danilo and two year old Vasilko. The widow and the King reached an understanding whereby the King, out of friendship for the deceased Roman, would become the protector of the sons and defend their rights to Halich and Volodimir. Meanwhile, he assumed authority over the Halich and Volodimir principalities, holding Danilo and Vasilka as his vassals.

In 1340 Sanok with other towns of Galician Rus are transferred to Poland. In 1366 the King grants Sanok according to the Magdeberg law. In 1377, the Uhrian King Ludwig (1370-1382) visits Sanok.

The population of Sanok during the Princes' times was completely Russian. Even during Polish domination it retained for a long time its Russian character, nationality and faith. Sanok also had a foreign element in residence, primarily Poles and Uhrians. In the time of the Galician Russian Princes, Sanok had its own Russian mayor. From time to time, the city was governed by a waywode of the Boyars sent by the Princes, as one of the most important cities of Galician Rus. Justice was based on the rules of "Russkaya Pravda". All important cases of citizens were heard in a court council, consisting of the waywoda, judge, councillor, secretary and assessor. Monetary claims were settled in pieces of silver or in so-called kunitsas (?) (martens)(?).

The Russian history of Sanok is closely related to its churches. It is said that Sanok once had five churches. Historically accurate is the fact that during the princely period, a wooden church of St. Martyr Dimitri existed in 1250, which contained the miraculous icon of the crucified Christ.

It is not known whether the construction of St. Nicholas Church was ever realized, but in 1667 we find on the land a wooden church of the Holy Spirit and not of St. Nicholas. The lack of hard evidence is due to the confusion in the chronicle of the department of the parochial church administration. The chronicle text as follows: "This church, witnessing the decline of the Russian Princely Galician state, existed until 1550, and it was then disassembled and a new church in the name of St. Nicholas was planned by the Russian inhabitants of Sanok on land donated by its warden, Peter Zborovsky. The deed to this foundation was confirmed in 1551 by King Zygmund and by King Volodislav IV in 1632.

We do not exclude the possibility that St.

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### Chairman of Carpatho-Rusyn Society Interviewed (Part II)

The following interview with John Righetti, chairman of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society (CRS) Planning Board, was conducted in May and November, 1995 in Pittsburgh, PA. Mr. Righetti was interviewed by Susyn Y. Mihalasky, a staff writer for *Karpatska Rus'*. Part I of this interview was published in the previous issue of *Karpatska Rus'*.

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**KR:** Carpatho-Rusyns have historically organized themselves around church organizations, but the CRS has tried to define itself as a secular cultural organization. In light of this, how have the local churches and clergy welcomed the CRS? What kind of role have they played in the CRS's first year of life? What kind of role might they play in the CRS's future?

**JR:** The official church representatives have welcomed the concept. Generally, however, they feel that the church's job is not to foster ethnic identity but to provide spiritual guidance.

Susyn, you get the newsletter, so you see that we do not maintain a separation between church and state the way the United States government does. The newsletter always has church oriented-material, because we see church life as an integral part of our culture. Nevertheless, we don't get into the business of whether the Greek Catholic Church or the Orthodox Church is the "true owner" of Rusyn identity. Simply put, eastern Christianity is a part of our Rusyn culture, but one does not have to be an active participant in eastern Christian spiritual life in order to be involved with Rusyn culture.

Only a small number of local clergy have been supportive. We have not had any indication one way or another from most local clergy. We are not disappointed about that state of affairs because, in all honesty, we never expected much support. We know that many of the Rusyn parishes have been "denationalized" over the years. We never saw them as places where our meetings could be advertised. If a priest gets up and informs his parish that we will be having a meeting, that's great, but we never counted on that.

We disseminate our message mostly through the membership and the secular press. I should say that the Rusyn ethnic and religious press has been very accepting and, as you know, most of the Rusyn press is church affiliated. . The *Church Messenger* [the Johnstown Diocese newspaper], the *Byzantine Catholic World* [Pittsburgh], and *Horizons* [Parma, OH] have all carried information on the startup of the CRS, along with information on our meetings. The Greek Catholic Union has also carried information about us.

**KR:** The activity of Lemkos is of special interest to *KR* readers. What role have Lemkos played in the CRS?

**JR:** Western Pennsylvania has a very large Lemko population. Our own study of local parishes suggests to us that Lemkos make up about 40% of all Rusyns here in the western Pennsylvania area. One of the things that has always intrigued me is that, unlike the situation in New York, New Jersey, and Cleveland, where Lemkos have a strong group-awareness, the vast majority of Lemkos in western Pennsylvania do not. By way of illustration, the term "Lemko," widely recognized and used in New York and New Jersey, is here not well known nor widely used. As a result, it has been a little more difficult penetrating the Lemko community here. Nevertheless, we are making progress.

I think back to our first meeting, when people signing up to become members were asked to identify their ancestral villages in the Old Country. I asked the audience how many of them were Lemkos, and only one person raised his hand—even though several had indicated that their families came from villages in the Lemko region. It is more difficult for American Lemkos to retrace their heritage. Unlike Rusyns from eastern Slovakia, who have readily been able to go back and find family in the Homeland, many Lemkos have nothing left, or don't know where their family has gone.

**KR:** Maybe Lemkos in western Pennsylvania don't have a Rusyn consciousness because they are of a Ukrainian orientation (as is often the case in Poland).

**JR:** That [Ukrainian orientation] is very, very rare. Lemkos in western Pennsylvania are like typical Rusyns: they are better at knowing who they are not than who they are. Ten years ago, had you asked Lemkos to identify their ethnonational heritage, the vast majority would have responded that they are Russian. But more and more of them are coming to the CRS meetings. In fact the first two guys who walked into today's meeting were Lemkos.

**KR:** Why is the situation of Lemkos in western Pennsylvania different from that of Lemkos in New York, New Jersey and Ohio?

**JR:** In western Pennsylvania most Lemkos left the Greek Catholic church in 1910-1915. When the Greek Catholic church was split into the Ruthenian and Ukrainian churches, Lemkos were then expected to go into the Ukrainian Catholic church. Many of them were very much against that and went to Orthodox churches instead. We've done research on the Lemko community, and we've found that in those communities where there were Galician Ukrainians and Subcarpathian Rusyns, the Lemkos always affiliated themselves with the Subcarpathian Rusyn community - in church, in secular community organizational life, etc.

**KR:** What efforts have been undertaken by the CRS to network with other Rusyn communities outside of Pennsylvania and the United States?

**JR:** We have an interest in expanding our relations with Rusyns in Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. As

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Nicholas Church was actually constructed, and for some unknown reason, its existence was brief and the church of the Holy Ghost was built on the same location. The fact remains, in the later stone church of Descent of the Holy Ghost in Sanok, early in the 19th century there existed a side altar of St. Nicholas. In any case the above illustrates the existence of strong religious tolerance during the reign of King Zygmund August.

On the location of the aforesaid wooden church of the Holy Ghost in Sanok, from 1784-1789, during the tenure of parish priest Fr. John Kunevich, a new stone church of the Holy Ghost was constructed with voluntary contributions, and it stands to this day. Besides the icons of Christ's Crucifixion in the castle and the Mother of God icon in the suburban church, it possessed a fragment of the Lord's cross. In 1827, a bell-tower was built during the tenure of Fr. Vasili Chemarnik. In 1907 and 1933, new repairs and painting under Fr. Emilian Konstantinovich was completed.

In the Sanok suburb, entrance to the city, from the distant past stood another wooden church, The Nativity of the Virgin Mary, which the governor's council of Lvov in 1790, by notice #27458, ordered to be dismantled. This notice was issued because of falsehoods by the Poles that the church was destroyed by fire. Its side altar and an icon of the Holy Virgin now remain as memorials in the Sanok church. The last pastor of the Sanok city entrance church was Fr. John Vaitsovich.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Sanok was a lively religious, cultural and nationalistic center for all of Lemkovina. In 1551 there existed a school for writing manuscripts and church books, such as the Epistle. It served two organizations well; the Youth Brotherhood at the Holy Ghost Church and at the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary at the Sanok City Entrance, which existed until the middle of the eighteenth century. One of the graduates was the son of Fr. Michael Vasilevich, who on receipt of a book from Princess Holshanskaia, translated the Epistle from the Bulgarian language to Russian. This translation was later found in the Peresopnitsa monastery. It is now known as the "Peresopnitske Epistle" of 1556.

After the Brest Union was established in 1590, the inhabitants of Sanok and its surrounding areas remained loyal to the Orthodox faith, opposing the acceptance of the Union, through the seventeenth century. Consequently, when Orthodox Bishop Antoni Vinnitsky, 1650-1679, lost his Peremysh Orthodox episcopacy he sought protection and support in Sanok where he lived from 1668 to 1675. With the aid of town residents and the suburban Orthodox gentry, he planned a new Orthodox episcopate, assuming that Orthodoxy would overcome the Union. Upon his death in 1689 the Sanok Orthodox episcopate declined under severe pressure from those in authority, and the only remaining memory was that, thereafter, the Peremysh bishops began the use of the title "Bishop of Sanok".

To be Continued

**Press Fund Contributions**

Samuel Hubiak	\$100.
M. Kundiak	100.
Paul Ruschak, in memory of mother, Paraska Madzy Ruschak	100.
Mary Bakaletz	80.
Julia Van Ess	20.
Konrad Kril	10.
Dan Patrick	10.
John Rzyk	10.
John Shulak	10.
Walter Turchick	10.
Julia Yadlowsky	10.
D. Trochanowski	5.

Total \$465.

**NOTICE**

The annual meeting of Lemko Assoc. Elizabeth Branches 35-7-38, will be held on Sunday, February 25, 1996 beginning at 2:00 PM. The meeting is to be convened at:

P.A.L. Youth Center  
400 Maple Avenue  
Linden, New Jersey

The Committee requests that all members please attend since important matters will be up for discussion.

**Branch Committee****Notice**

A new subscriber has requested information about his ancestral village, Ostawica/Oslavicja, located in southeastern Poland, south of Sanok in the Ostawa valley. It may have been destroyed during the 1947 Visla operation. If any reader has information or knowledge of this village, kindly write to: A. Herenchak, Box 156, Allentown, NJ 08501.

**Notice**

Family historian looking for leads. Did you know my uncle? **Teodor (Frank) Sudia**, born in Barwinek, Krosno province, Galicia, emigrated to New York/Jersey City in 1909. Worked as a butcher. Believed living with wife and daughter in Passaic, New Jersey in 1920. Any information would be appreciated. Greg Leck, 101 Bunny Trail Drive, Bangor, PA 18013.

**C.R.A. Center, Lemko Hall, Yonkers****Schedule of Events, 1996**

Spring Dance	"	May 15, '96; 9:00 PM
Annual Membership Mtg.	Sun.	June 2, '96; 2:30 PM
Annual Picnic	Sun.	July 14, '96; 2:00 PM

**LEMKO WEDDING VIDEO**

A two hour video cassette of the film LEMKO WEDDING is still available for sale to our readers. This is the original film that was made almost 30 years ago, and it should be of interest to those readers who have not had the pleasure of viewing it.

Cost, including postage and handling, is \$45.00. To order kindly send your check or money order to **CARPATHO-RUS**, 556 Yonkers Avenue, Yonkers, New York 10704.

**SUBSCRIPTION FORM**

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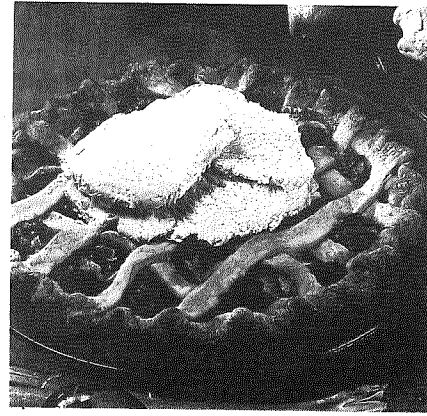
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Send To:

**CARPATHO--RUS**  
c/o Alexander Herenchak  
P.O. Box 156  
Allentown, NJ 08501

**The Cooking Corner**

To master homemade pie crust, use butter--the best choice for a tender, flaky and rich-flavored crust you just don't get with shortening or oil, says The American Dairy Association. Just make sure the butter is cold!



*Rhubarb's pink-red color adds to the appeal of lattice-topped pie. Ice cream, of course, lends appeal to everything!*

**Apple-Rhubarb Pie****Pastry:**

2	cups	all-purpose flour
1/2	tsp.	salt
6	tbls.	butter
6	tbls.	lard
6 to 8	tbls.	milk

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. For pastry, thoroughly combine flour and salt. Cut in butter and lard until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle in milk, a tablespoon at a time, mixing until flour is moistened. Divide dough in half. Wrap each half in waxed paper and refrigerate while preparing filling.

**Filling:**

1 1/4	cups	sugar
3	tbls.	quick-cooking tapioca
1/2	tsp.	cinnamon
1/2	tsp.	nutmeg
1/4	tsp.	salt
3	cups	cooking apples, sliced, peeled
2	cups	(about 3/4 lb.) rhubarb, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1/2	cup	chopped nuts
1	tbls.	butter
		vanilla ice cream

For filling, combine sugar, tapioca, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt in a large mixing bowl. Add apples, rhubarb and nuts. Toss gently to coat; let mixture stand 15 minutes. Roll out half the pastry on lightly floured surface to 13 inch diameter circle. Fit into a 9 inch pie plate; trim to 1/2 inch beyond plate edge. Roll out 2nd half into 11 inch circle, cut into 1/2 inch strips. Add mixture to pie, dot with butter. Weave strips, trim, fold over bottom. Seal and flute edges. Cover pie edges with foil. Bake 25 minutes; remove foil and bake 20-25 minutes or until crust is golden-brown. Cool slightly.

Agway Cooperator

Due to the diligence and efforts of our Lemko Assoc. member, Laurence Krupnak, we can now offer for sale the following two audio cassettes as well as three video cassettes.

Item #1. An audio cassette of 16 Lemko and two Ukrainian folk songs transcribed from classic 78 rpm records. They include many Lemko wedding, gypsy, Christening and Christmas songs by such artists as Stephen Skimba and Barna, Potochak & Co. Item #1 \$12.

Item #2. An audio cassette of 10 Russian, Two Hungarian and 8 Slovak folk songs from classic 78 rpm records. They include Russian polkas, Slovak chardashes, Hungarian gypsy melodies. Item #2 \$12.

All prices include shipping costs. Kindly send your check or money order (made payable to Lemko Assoc.) to either of the following:

Alexander Herenchak  
P.O. Box 156  
Allentown, NJ 08501

Mary Barker  
521 Piermont Avenue, 520  
Rivervale, NJ 07675

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regards Rusyns in Slovakia, the CRS has raised over \$1000 to support the publication of *Narodny Novynky*; we also sell the Rusyn Renaissance Society's tape and publications here in the United States.

Via our mailing list, we maintain contact with our sister Rusyn organizations in the United States: the Lemko Soiuz [Lemko Association of the United States and Canada], the Rusin Association [Minnesota], the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center [New Jersey], and the Carpatho-Russian American Center [New York]. They receive our newsletter gratis.

**KR:** As you are aware, much has happened in North America and the Homeland during the CRS's first year of life. Please give us insight into your own and your members' views of Rusyn as a codified, literary language; and of the canonizations by the Orthodox Church of the Reverends Alexis Toth (May, 1994 in South Canaan, PA) and Maksym Sandovych (September, 1994 in Gorlice, Poland).

**JR:** Regarding codification, everyone with whom I've spoken seems to feel the same: that the codification puts an end to the last issue that our enemies can use against us to deny our existence as a distinct nationality [that Rusyns are not a distinct nationality because they do not have their own language]. Everyone here recognizes the codification for the significant event that it is.

The canonization events have been very interesting because they have resurrected the issue of ethnicity, particularly within the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). The heaviest russification efforts took place in the OCA at the turn of the century, when ethnic Rusyn parishes first passed from Greek Catholicism into Orthodoxy. You have 3 or 4 generations of people [in the OCA] who have wrestled with the questions "Who am I? Something Russian? 'Little' Russian? 'Soft' Russian? Or 'Russian-but-not-like-the-Muscovites?...', and that kind of thing. There has always been an awareness among these people, but as the generations passed, this awareness has been dissipated. When the second and third generations hear the word "Russian," they just naturally assume that the balalaika samovar and sarafan are elements of their own culture. You see that quite often in the OCA. I can't say much about the Synod or the Patriarchaal parishes, with which I am less familiar.

I applaud the OCA for the way in which they have responded to the Rusyn ethnic identity question raised by the canonizations. They have transcended a Russian elitism to say that "We are the Orthodox Church in America. As such, Rusyns may be Rusyns within our Church. Not only do they have the right to their Rusyn identity, but we have to acknowledge the fact that they were and are a significant portion of our Church."

**KR:** How far back would you date this change in attitude by the OCA?

**JR:** To no more than three years ago. I think that this attitude change arose out of three events: the Bicentennial of Orthodoxy in America; and the two aforementioned canonizations. These major events have obliged the OCA to address the fact that there is this significant Rusyn presence in the Church.

It is important to note that there were a couple of roads the OCA *could* have taken in responding to this renewed ethnic question. They could have squelched it, or they could have followed disinformation practices like saying that Father Toth was a "Russian priest from Slovakia," or a "Carpatho-Russian" priest..., etc. Likewise with Father Sandovych and the Bicentennial. They could have said that there were "Russians in Galicia" who came to America. Instead, the OCA newspapers and periodicals came out saying that, "The people who emigrated from this area were called Rusyns and here's what they did and what they are...", and

"Father Alexis Toth was a Carpatho-Rusyn priest, and he brought Greek Catholic Rusyns within the Orthodox Church, where they came to constitute a substantial portion of the Church...." This is very significant. You have to understand that here in western Pennsylvania the myth of "Russian Orthodoxy" was very prevalent.

Let me give you an example from my own experience. My home parish is an OCA parish that split off from the Byzantine Catholic Church. The parish is 95% Rusyn, proof that both the Byzantine and the Orthodox church in that community had a large Rusyn base, mostly from Zemplyn, Už, and Bereg counties. Their "official" church histories, however, tell a different story. When I first started attending that OCA church, I learned that some of those people firmly believed that they were founded as an Orthodox church, that the "Uniates" took their church away, and that they then had to go build another one. It was flagrant historical fallacy. All that you have to do is look at the facts and see that they went to Greek Catholic Church, and that these people were at the turn of the century Greek Catholics.

Unfortunately, the pro-Russian indoctrination has many of these people feeling that from the minute they planted their feet here, they were Orthodox, and that somehow the Greek Catholics took that away from them-not in 1646 but in 1910. From 1910 on, there had been such strong Russification efforts in those churches and particularly the early clergy. Let's not forget the political benefit to the Russian Empire in having Rusyns return from American to Austria-Hungary as Russians.

When I look at the "official" histories given out by the western Pennsylvania parishes, quite often I find a Greek Catholic priest leading his people into Orthodoxy. Six months or a year later, he is removed and a "real" Russian priest is brought in who teaches these people not only Orthodoxy, but Russian ethnic nationalism as well. It's incredible! You take these people standing there in Zemplyn ethnic costume and only 2 years later they have in their church the Russian Actors Guild wearing tiaras and *sarafany* and playing balalaikas. That has been the experience for many Rusyns in the Orthodox Church.

On the Catholic side, Rusyns were told that they are "Ruthenians" and not like "those other people" [fellow Rusyns in the Orthodox Church]. Both churches were in their own way perpetuating division and disinformation within the Rusyn community of western Pennsylvania. That's why the CRS is so interested in telling Rusyns within the Orthodox and Byzantine Churches that they are the same Rusyn people - not Russian, Carpatho-Russian, nor Ruthenian. "Rusyn" is what our ancestors called themselves before anybody got in there and messed with them. I'm not trying to be down on these churches. As I've said, I am most pleased especially with the way the OCA has taken these three instances [the Bicentennial and the two canonizations] and said that it's OK for these people to be Rusyn in the Orthodox church.

**KR:** What projects is the CRS currently involved in?

**JR:** The CRS is currently working with the Pittsburgh Children's Museum to create a diorama to help children appreciate cultural diversity. They want us to create a display that shows how Rusyn-Americans live and what is unique about their culture, so that the children of other cultures can learn about us. The thing that I find so exciting about it is that they were enlightened enough to say not only that different racial groups need to understand one another's culture, but that there is no such thing as a monolithic "white community"! The idea of a "white community" has always annoyed me. I am not the same culturally as someone whose ancestors came from the British Isles.

**KR:** They too often look just at skin color.

**JR:** Exactly. But this time they said, "Let's look at Pittsburgh's *cultural* diversity and admit to

ourselves that even within the 'white community' people have different values and live differently." So, the museum is going to create a little "neighborhood" which allows you to go from diorama to diorama, from "house" to "house." Kids can look into the dioramas and see how Rusyn Americans live. We'll probably show scenes of Christmas Eve Holy Supper or getting the Easter basket ready to be blessed.

We are also working with the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center on a massive Western Pennsylvania Historical Society project. The Historical Society is creating an "immigrant's pathway" in their museum. We are helping them to put together an entire room to illustrate how Rusyns lived at the turn of the century. The work is going very well.

We are also involved with the Duquesne University Tamburitzans. They perform East European folk material, yet very rarely perform Rusyn material. In those rare instances when they did, it was traditionally called "Ukrainian" or "Slovak." We met with them, and the result of that meeting was that we have established a relationship with them to help them to add authentic Rusyn material to their repertoire.

We are currently purchasing Rusyn song books and tapes for the Tamburitzans so that they can begin to familiarize themselves with Rusyn culture from Slovakia. As we find similar folk music from Rusyns in Poland and Ukraine, we will purchase these as a donation to the Tamburitzans. By the way, at the conclusion of our meeting with the Tamburitzans, their executive director decided to have them join the CRS as one of our first association members!

The CRS is also planning a "Rusyn Heritage Tour" of the Old Country that will focus just on the Rusyn region and things Rusyn. CRS guides will provide informed commentary as the tour travels to important sites of Rusyn history and culture. It will be the first tour of its kind. Rusyn-Americans who want to visit the Old Country with benefit of guides and translators normally have had to go on tours geared toward other - Polish, Slovak, Ukrainian - groups and interests. The Heritage Tour is tentatively planned for June-July, 1996. Also among our larger current projects is the city of Cleveland's Cultural Gardens Renovation Project....

**KR:** What is the Cultural Gardens Renovation Project?

**JR:** Back in the 1930s a large area of Cleveland was set aside for various ethnic groups to develop cultural gardens that showcased some aspect of their particular culture. The Rusyn garden was developed at that time by an organization called the Rusin Elite Society. It featured a bust of Aleksandr Duchnovych with the words Я Русин был, емь и буду ["I was, am and will remain a Rusyn"] carved at its base in both English and Rusyn. The Cultural Gardens really went downhill as that section of Cleveland itself went into decline, but now the City wants to renovate the Gardens and is presently contacting the various ethnic groups, asking them to invest in the task of renovating their particular garden. Aside from a Rusyn Garden, there are also gardens for Ukrainians, Slovaks, Croatians, Rumanians, Irish, you name it.

**KR:** Finally, what new directions would you like the CRS to take in the future?

**JR:** There are a few directions I would like the CRS to take. We are currently in discussion with the Andy Warhol Museum here in Pittsburgh to see if they would be willing to co-sponsor with us the bringing to Pittsburgh of a Rusyn artist to lecture on contemporary Rusyn art forms. We would then like to have a showing of the artist's works at the Warhol Museum. It would bring out the arts community and also let people see that Rusyn culture is a living, breathing culture and not something that stopped dead 100 years ago. This project is in keeping with our goal to address not just genealogy and history, but contemporary

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Rusyn reality.

Another one of our future goals is to establish contact with the Rusyn groups of Europe, and for us both to understand that we are viable manifestations of the same culture. One of the challenges that we American- and European Rusyns will have to face together is to understand that Rusyn culture does not evolve and manifest itself only in Europe. When I paint a picture or I write a piece of prose, this is Rusyn culture being manifested. There is Polish-influenced Rusyn culture and Ukrainian-influenced Rusyn culture. Those are facts, there is nothing we can do to deny them - nor should we. But we need to help our European brothers understand that while Rusyn culture in American has Anglo and American influences, it is still Rusyn culture.

**KR:** I understand you quite well, because I had a similar experience with some Rusyns in Poland several years ago. I told them that I write English-language prose and that, since "rediscovering" my Rusyn roots, I was anxious to explore my "new" identity through my writing. They said that I would do better to devote my time to collecting and researching historical Rusyn prose, poetry, folk songs, etc. and in this way work to preserve the past. But isn't creating a future as necessary as preserving a past? If I feel the need to explore my cultural heritage today, in 1995 and in English, why should it be discounted?

**JR:** That's right. Why is what Olena Duc-Fajfer writes considered a form of "Rusyn cultural expression" while what you or I write is not? After all, we are all Rusyns.

**KR:** Part of the issue revolves around the question of language. The fact that an American Rusyn writes in English is probably a large part of the reason why the effort might be discounted. But it would be natural for an American Rusyn to use English to write about the experience of Rusyns living in America. Isn't that a form of Rusyn cultural expression - inspired by the Rusyn experience in America?

**JR:** Exactly. I speak an Uż dialect of Rusyn, although you need to speak slowly and clearly to me in order for me to understand. I have a lot of trouble understanding Lemko. So, I remember how shocked I was when Olena Duc-Fajfer was here last year and said to me that in order to be active in the Rusyn community you must speak Rusyn.

I've studied linguistics and learned that rule #1 is: language has function. Language is preserved only as long as it fulfills a function. In the American Rusyn context, the Rusyn language serves no function. Rusyn has not been spoken in America for 50 years-but we still have cultural and religious festivals, and folk ensembles. Being Rusyn in the United States does not require knowledge of the Rusyn language.

What drove this home for me was my wife's own ethnic experience. She is of Irish heritage and cannot understand the centrality of the language in Rusyn cultural endeavors. She said to me, "Look at my people - the overwhelming majority of Irish in the world do not speak Gaelic. Does that mean that we are no longer Irish? Some of the greatest Irish poets, prose writers, novelists wrote exclusively in English and continue to do so into the present day! Look at James Joyce. Even though he wrote in English, he is still recognized as one of the great Irish writers."

**KR:** I think that a European Rusyn might respond that language has other functions beyond simply facilitating communication. Language also has the more intangible function of transmitting ethnonational identity across generations. Loss of the language is most often the first step to assimilation and eventual complete loss of Rusyn identity. This certainly has been true in the American context. On the other hand, there are other ways of transmitting identity, among them family and religious faith. Language may not be

necessary to transmit identity if other mechanisms of transmission are present.

Olena probably also had a second point in mind when she told you that one needs to speak Rusyn in order to take part in Rusyn culture. She probably was thinking practically, as I found out in my own personal experience. My inability to speak fluent Lemko hindered me quite a bit while I was in Poland. Very few of the cultural activists that I met in Poland or Slovakia were able to function in English, nor did they understand much of what goes on in the United States.

In the Lemko context, being without the language can keep you out of the community arena of ideas and activities. You can "get in," but to a real extent you will miss many of the subtleties and subtexts of Lemko consciousness and cultural experience. Interacting with Lemkos without the benefit of the language is sort of like looking at the sky from underwater: you can make out the shapes and colors, but there is some distortion of reality. So you need to learn to think in a way that compensates for the distortion - and this is not easy.

**JR:** Language will become more and more of a discussion point for Rusyns all over the globe because there are now Rusyn communities in the United States, Canada, and Australia. As their second and third generations begin to lose the language, the Canadian and Australian communities will soon go where we've gone.

Well, Susyn, let me give you an idea of where I think the European Rusyns are at on the question of language. I have to say that I was absolutely amazed at what we saw when we went to the II World Congress. They knew that an American contingent was coming and yet did not provide for a translator for the proceedings. Their assumption seemed to be, "Well, if you are active Rusyns you will all function in Rusyn language; and if not, then why did you come?" It is as if you can't have an interest or involvement in the culture if you can't speak the language. I was very uncomfortable at the Congress because I did not understand much of what I was hearing. Some other members of the committee also had less than perfect understanding and we were being asked to vote on issues that we did not fully understand!

I would like to make clear, however, that none of my previous remarks about the differing role of the Rusyn language in the American and European context should be interpreted as in any way denegrating the importance of the recent codification of the Rusyn language. The codification is an impressive achievement, and a vital part in the effort that Rusyns globally are undertaking to preserve their past and guarantee their future. All that I have intended to say is that the Rusyn language is less important in the American context than it is in the European context.

Well, to return specifically to your question, which was about the future directions that the CRS might take. Among the CRS's future plans is precisely this about which I have been speaking: to establish a rapport with the European community which will enable us to understand what it is that they hope to achieve for Rusyn culture, what it is that we hope to achieve for Rusyn culture, and how we can work together. My previous remarks are really geared toward this end.

**KR:** Thank you for what I'm sure our readers will find a most interesting and informative interview.

Susyn Yvonne Mihalasky

#### REQUEST OF OUR READERS

Through our archives we have searched for old Lemko Calendars from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Many of those old Calendars are missing. We would like to request, from our readers, any old Calendars that they may have and do not need. This would be of help to us in researching the history of our people. Thank you.

Ed.

Passaic Branch #5--16

#### 1996 Schedule of Events

May 10	Spring Banquet, 2:00PM	\$15.
July 21	Annual Picnic, 1:00PM	\$15.
October 20	Fall Banquet, 2:00PM	\$15.

#### Birthday Meetings

March 10	2:00PM
June 9	"
September 15	"
December 8	"

All functions are held at the Lodge, corner of Ann Street and Lanza Avenue, Garfield, NJ.

#### CARPATHO--RUS

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#### IN APPRECIATION

We extend our thanks for help in producing this week's issue of Carpatho-Rus to Svetlana Ledenieva and Susyn Yvonne Mihalasky.

(Лалий буде)

Дакотры участники свята "Ватра"-95  
хвалит сой так велике спітканя раз в  
роци, же можна зинти, побесідувати тай  
випити по порярку брата. Лем чути  
! таки відповіди, же "Ватру" остатні роки  
замінене на фестивалі імпортованых  
колективів і конференсієрів з України.  
Таку оціну може даку перевисшено, але  
якаси правда в тім зостає.

Лемків з західних земель з выгнаня в  
тім роци было менше, бо то і копты  
подорожи немалы, дос висока оплата  
вступу. А для тих, што приїхали своїми  
автамі, дос високи ціни оплати паркування  
на травниках - 5 тысяч злотых за 1 год.  
Першы раз тот рік вынанято поряркови  
! охоронни служби, што ватране оцінили  
прихильно, бо в минулых роках злоті  
почали красти, што лем ся даго, навет  
цілы шитра. Дос дорогы білети вступів  
можна оправдати: як ся хоче в Ждїчїні  
творити осередок культурный і го  
розвивати, то на то потрібні фонди.

(Продовженя з ст.4)  
адміністративна зверхниками  
зверхниками і тов тім часі, коли Папа  
Римский Павел II кличе до єдності  
Християн, а церкву православную зве  
сестром римо-католиків. Кому потрібне  
дагыше ділїня нас на віросповіданях? Най  
лемківскы "лідери" ріжных груп і  
полїтїв сами сой на то одповідат.