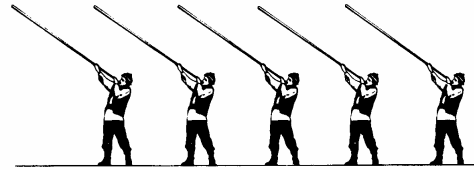


Trembita



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The Rusin Association is attempting to document and preserve the family histories of Rusin immigrants to Minnesota and the Midwest. In our last issue we printed part one of a story by Norm Larson about his family—the Semankos.

In part one he wrote about his grandparents who immigrated from the Rusin village of Becherov, Slovakia. In part two, which is printed in this issue, Larson writes about the neighborhood where he grew up - Northeast Minneapolis, Minnesota the home of many Rusin immigrants.

Our next issue will include an article about how to collect your family history through interviewing relatives and family friends.

Karen Varian, Editor

Inside this issue:

- Memory Eternal Page 4
- The People from the Borderlands Page 5
- 2003 in Review Page 8
- Rusyns in the new European Union: Half in, half out Page 10
- The Rusin Question in Ukraine ... Page 12
- Duchnovich Dinner—2004 Page 14
- Festival of Nations—2004 Page 15
- Upcoming Events Page 16

The Semankos of University Ave. Minneapolis—part 2

Everyone in the neighborhood knew one another. The people were Polish, Slovakian or Russian (no one in those days ever referred to Rusins or Rusyns). Also on the 2400 University Avenue NE. block were the Brinda family (no relation to Johnny's wife, Helene Brinda Semanko), a small barber shop run by a man whose first name was Joe and, finally, a gas station at the corner of University and Lowry Avenues. Actually, there were three gas stations – one on each corner; the fourth corner housed a tavern with living quarters upstairs.

Across the ally from us at 2411 3rd St. NE. lived the Tapsaks. Mrs. Anna Tapsak, we were told, was a Semanko, as was a sister of hers whose married surname was Dennis. They must have been cousins of my mother and her brothers and sisters, but I do not have any details. My Grandfather Gregory Semanko, though, was the only Semanko of his generation that I knew of who lived in Minneapolis. The Tapsaks had three sons plus many other children who died in infancy. I remember seeing a wide grave for the Tapsak children at the Russian Cemetery on Stinson Blvd. and 31st Avenue NE. in St. Anthony Village.

On one side of the Tapsaks in the same 2400 block of 3rd Street NE. were the Dancik and Genosky families. The Genoskys had a family of many sons – more than the four in our fam-

ily. The Genosky boys were about our same ages so there were always plenty of nearby boys to play with.

The Danciks had several children, including sons who had a manufacturing plant, Northwestern Wire Works, on the second story of a huge garage that took up most of their back yard at 2401 3rd St. NE. At some point the Danciks moved their plant to 2nd Street S. near Minneapolis' Seven Corners area. It was probably about the time that the Bloskys bought the Danciks' duplex and moved out of 2406 University Ave. NE.

On the other side of the Tapsaks were two families, the Mrozkas who had two boys and two girls and Mary and Michael Fedorak who had no children.

Mrs. Tapsak and several other 3rd Street neighbors had huge vegetable gardens in the backyards. During the war, as we sought to be patriotic, we Larson boys planted a small Victory Garden in our backyard. I do not recall that it produced anything.

Nearby on the 2300 block of 3rd Street NE. lived the Leba family. Martin and Pearl Leba had 10 children – five boys and five girls. The youngest child was Richard, who was my best friend during my growing-up days. Richie, now deceased, was three days older than I; he was born on Aug. 19, 1934, and I was born on Aug. 22. Richie's mother died when he was young, and several older sisters and brothers took care of him.

One of Richie Leba's brothers was killed in the war. An article about Frank Leba is included in a booklet produced by the St. Mary's Veterans Association. Sgt. Leba was killed in action while fighting near Colmar, France, on Feb. 4, 1945.

Next door to the Lebas lived my godmother, Aunt Mary Warchol. She lived with two sisters, Catherine and Helen. None of them ever married.

On the other side of the Leba family, at the corner of 3rd Street and 24th Avenue NE., lived an

old woman named Siplock. I knew her only as "Old Lady Siplock." She was always yelling at us, referring to us as the "Semanczaks." I do not know what we were doing wrong except, perhaps, that she knew all the neighborhood children called her "Old Lady Siplock."

The Olejar family who lived in the 1500 block of California St. NE. were good friends of our family. John Olejar's first wife died at a young age, leaving behind a son named Richard. Mr. Olejar remarried, and he and his wife Margaret had four children, the oldest of whom, Gerald, is my age. The others – two boys and a girl – were about the same ages as my brothers.

The Olejars did not have a car so our two families often piled into my father's car to go on outings. My father had a Nash that he used for work during the week and a big black Packard that was used on Sundays and for special occasions. A lot of people could fit into the Packard. During the war, though, the car was sold and, according to my father, was to become an ambulance for the war effort.



Catherine and Walter Larson and family— 1944

In 1933, the year my parents were married, my father opened a meat market at 2203 Johnson St. NE. He ran Larson Bros. Meats there, and an older brother, Al, ran the meat market they owned at 13th Avenue and 3rd St. NE. The Larsons had lived on 14th Avenue near University Avenue. My father at some point had sole ownership of the Johnson Street market, and after the war, he sold it to the three Ready Brothers

who had worked for him. Ready Meats still exists today, now located at Johnson Street and 36th Avenue NE.

Four Polish men and a Scandinavian (my father) in 1947 organized the 13th Avenue State Bank at the corner of 13th Avenue and Second Street NE. in the building that had housed the Second Northwestern National Bank, which had been moved to the Midway District of Minneapolis/St. Paul. The men felt there was a need for a bank in that section of Northeast Minneapolis. The new bank had its grand opening on Saturday Jan. 3, 1948.

President of the bank was Raymond J. Julkowski, a lawyer and state senator. Vice president was Raymond A. Mikolajczyk, a professional banker. Cashier was Walter E. Larson, my father, who, after he sold his meat market to the Ready Bros., was associated with Clinic Equipment Co. in North Minneapolis, including a stint as president of the firm.

These three plus the other two men who organized the bank – Dr. Walter S. Warpeha Sr., a dentist, and Walter A. Kostick, who was president and general manager of the Aero-Flex Lift Co. – formed the bank’s board of directors.

When the bank opened in January 1948, Ray Mikolajczyk and my father were full-time employees along with three women – a teller, a bookkeeper and a receptionist/secretary. For many years throughout high school and college I worked summers and part time – as a messenger in downtown Minneapolis every work day and then helping in bookkeeping, typing letters and other correspondence and finally working as a teller.

Eventually the bank was bought out by the Carl

Pohlad banking interests, and it exists today as the Northeast Bank at the corner of Broadway and Marshall Streets NE. with additional offices in Columbia Heights and Coon Rapids.

The bank’s Web site states that working with others to meet local community needs is the bank’s tradition that dates back to 1947, when Northeast Bank “was founded by a handful of local people in direct response to the need for a local bank.”

The bank’s historical information continues that even though the State of Minnesota had not issued any new bank charters during the previous 25 years, the bank’s founders “were undaunted.” Motivated by the banking needs of local businesses and families, they decided to do something about it. The five men (two Rays and three Walters) gathered a group of other community leaders and residents, chartered a bus and took their petition for a bank charter to the Minnesota State Capitol. The charter for the 13th Avenue State Bank of Minneapolis was granted on Nov. 20, 1947.



Catherine Semanko Larson and husband Walter—1973

Our Larson family left University Avenue NE. in the late

summer of 1950 when we moved to Buchanan St. NE., half a block north of St. Anthony Blvd., now known as St. Anthony Parkway. I was attending Edison High at the time so I did not have to transfer schools. My younger brothers, however, were at Schiller School and had to transfer to Lowry School, from which they graduated, and each of us graduated from Edison, I in 1952, Larry in 1955, David in 1958 and Glenn in 1961.

While in my early years at Edison, I began writing a column for the school newspaper, the Edi-

son Record, and in my senior year of high school I ascended to the job of editor-in-chief of the Record.

In November 1949, when I was a sophomore at Edison, I wrote a series of three essays – one about each of my three brothers. I still have those papers (I received an A on each one), and I am concluding this article with excerpts from those essays.

Larry, three years younger than I, is the second boy in our family. He was 12 years old at the time I wrote this:

“Larry is quite nice looking, having pretty blue eyes, shining teeth and blond hair. Larry is very generous. He’d give away anything of his to a smaller boy or girl. Although it is better to give than to receive, he sometimes overdoes it. Especially when he was younger, he would give away all his toys until he had nothing for himself.”

David was Larson Brother No. 3. He was almost 9 years old when I wrote this about him: “When David was about 4, he was exceptionally strong. He looked just like a boxer. Because of this, the older boys nicknamed him ‘Dempsey’ for the former heavyweight champion, Jack Dempsey. ‘Demps,’ as he was known, really did not care for fighting. He is quite a scientist and is always doing something with one of his chemistry sets.”

Glenn, my youngest brother, was 6 years old when I wrote this: “Whenever a special occasion arouse, Glenn always wanted tools. He has a huge chest filled with saws, hammers, nails and whatever else a young carpenter needs. He has made a chair and a table. The table is quite safe to use for playing, but everyone is afraid to sit on the chair for fear it will break. Glenn also is a painter. This summer he decided to paint his wagon. A white wagon is really “different.”



Gloria A. (Dado) Johnson—Age 77, passed away February 2004. She was a long time member of the Rusin Association. She is survived by her husband of 48 years, David, and many relatives, friends and neighbors.

Irene (Lechko) Rokoski—Age 81, passed away April 2004. She was preceded in death by daughter, Janice; sister, Anne “Pat” Guzy; brothers, William “Bill” Lechko, Stephen Lechko and two infant siblings. She is survived by loving husband, George; daughters Andrea Kaufman and husband William, Barbara Griffith, 7 grandchildren; brother, Alex “Al” Lechko.

Irene and her family cherished their Rusin heritage. Irene was a long time member of the Rusin Association. Her sister Pat was a life time member, daughter Barbara is a current member, and her brother Bill entertained our members at various functions playing Rusin songs on his accordion.

Teresa (Kocisko) Stroncek—Age 74 passed away June 2004. Teresa was a sister of the deceased Archbishop Stephen Kocisko, the first Metropolitan-Archbishop of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States. The Kocisko family grew up in Northeast Minneapolis and attended St. John’s Byzantine Catholic Church. She is survived by husband, Frank, three sons and a daughter; sisters Ann Hanlon, Marge Lahti, and Ag Anderson; brother Ray.

The People from the Borderlands

An Interview with Alexander Mušinka, a Rusin, who works at the Department of Slovak History and Archives at the Philosophical Faculty in Prešov, Slovakia

Reprinted from The Slovak Spectator 2/09/204

The Slovak Spectator (TSS): Who are the Ruthenians and where do they come from?

Alexander Mušinka (AM): To put it simply, the Ruthenians are the eastern Slavic inhabitants of the northeastern part of the Carpathians. Geopolitically, it's the northeastern part of Slovakia, from the Tatras to southeastern Poland and sub-Carpathian Ukraine. The corner where Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine meet is considered the homeland of the Ruthenians.

The Ruthenians are a marginalized group in a geopolitical and political context because they have always been in between something or someone. They found themselves in between eastern and western Slavs, and in between eastern and western Christianity. This is the line where orthodox Christianity ends and Catholicism begins and, of course, this had enormous influence on their evolution.

It was a mixed group of people that, on one hand was very cosmopolitan, and on the other hand, very conservative. You could say that total conservatism met total cosmopolitanism. For example, Andy Warhol is an innovator who became world famous, yet he comes from a very conservative background, a phenomenon that plays a large role in his art.

TSS: What do you mean by conservatism meeting cosmopolitanism?

AM: This region has always been very poor, very conservative, yet cosmopolitan at the same time. Why? Because the area has always had very little to keep people there. It really was the middle of nowhere and people were forced to emigrate. There are several

hundred thousand Ruthenians in the US and in Canada. Some say there are two or three million in the world, depending on how you count.

At the same time, this region has always managed to produce some very new things—to unite or connect the seemingly impossible: eastern and western Christians. The Greek Catholic religion came out of this intersection. To put it very simply, Greek Catholics are orthodox Christians who began to acknowledge the Pope. That happened in this region.

The people didn't have a problem placing a different structure onto something that hadn't changed for a very long time. There are historical documents about the fact that some villages went over to Greek Catholicism and people realized it only several decades later. Because, on the bottom layer, nothing had changed. Slovak was used in the same churches, and they used the same icons. For the regular person, the nuances were not visible. This happened in the 16th century.

TSS: What is the situation of the Ruthenians in Slovakia today?

AM: When we talk about the Ruthenians in Slovakia today, we can observe two tendencies. There is a certain political argument between two groups—the Ruthenians and the Ukrainians. On the one hand, the Ruthenians say that they make up the fourth independent eastern Slavic nation of this region—after the Russians, the Byelorussians, and the Ukrainians. The Ukrainian side acknowledges the Ruthenians as Ruthenians, but claims that they are not an independent nation and instead form a part of the Ukrainian people. They regard the Ruthenian language as a Ukrainian dialect.

This argument, which already existed in different forms from the Hapsburg Empire through the first Czechoslovak Republic and up to 1968, started again after the Velvet Revolution in 1989. At this time, a counterpart to the centralized Ukrainian organization appeared in Slovakia: The Ruthenian national organization “Rusynski Obroda”. So this community is divided into two parts when it comes to representation. Either they are pr-Ruthenian or pro-Ukrainian.

To avoid confusion, it needs to be said that there are also real Ukrainians’ in Slovakia. There are thousands of people from central and eastern Ukraine who emigrated here, married here, etc.

TSS: How would you characterize Ruthenian identity in Slovakia today?

AM: I would say a normal assimilation process is taking place. Sooner or later, the new generation seems to feel less and less different from the majority population since the difference in culture is not so great. But if we are to talk about what is a characteristic of Ruthenian identity and if we don’t use the usual political phrases, it is language, first of all. Secondly, it’s the use of the Cyrillic alphabet. Linguistically, the Ruthenian language belongs to the eastern Slavic language group, in contrast to, for example, the Šariš and Zemplín Slovak dialects, which are part of the western Slavic language group.

TSS: What are the main differences between the Ruthenian and the Ukrainian tongue?

AM: It’s a very simple question that is very difficult to answer. What is the difference between Czech and Slovak?

TSS: Can a Ruthenian communicate with

a Ukrainian without problems:

AM: Yes, they can. But this is a subjective, immeasurable matter. If a Czech person wants to, he can always communicate with a Russian without problems. If he doesn’t want to, he won’t understand a word.

TSS: In what way can the linguistic relationship between Ruthenian and Ukrainian be compared to the one between Slovak and Czech?

AM: I think the Ruthenian language is maybe closer to Ukrainian than Slovak is to Czech. But again, if I want to prove that the two languages are further away from each other, I can. Similarly, if I want to prove that they are closer, I can. There is no exact way to measure this distance between languages.

TSS: Is the Ruthenian language in Slovakia different from, for example, the Ruthenian language in Poland?

AM: Yes it is. There is not one Ruthenian language. Currently there are six. Each country has codified its own form. In Slovakia it was codified in 1995. The Ukrainians, the Hungarians, the Poles, even the Americans have their own form.

I think the best comparison would be to compare it with the differences of various dialects of the Roma language. Wherever the Roma live, they take over words from the local country of residence. For example, the Hungarian Roma language is different for the eastern Slovak Roma, or Vlach Roma.

In Yugoslavia, there is a community of Ruthenians who emigrated there in the 18-19th centuries. They publish many books and periodical, have their own schools, and

are very active. This group of people started to use a peculiar form of Ruthenian that, linguistically, is a western Slovak dialect. To this day they argue about what language it really is. At first glance it's a Slovak dialect, but they consider themselves Ruthenians.

TSS: Is the Cyrillic alphabet in use everywhere?

AM: Yes, although there are certain groups like church institutions that want to use the Latin alphabet because of the younger generations, who use the Cyrillic alphabet less and less. They still speak the language but don't write in Cyrillic.

TSS: Can we speak of a Ruthenian political movement in Slovakia?

AM: There is a political movement, but it is regional. There is no real push to reach a level of state recognition like the Hungarians or the Roma.

The Pro-Ruthenian movement is connected with the Rusynska Obroda organization, a part of the international Ruthenian Union, which has representatives from all countries. They want the Ruthenians to be acknowledged as an independent nation. There are extremists—mostly from the sub-Carpathian region—who want a Ruthenian state, but I don't think that there is a realistic foundation for that... although, you never know. But in Slovakia, there is no political representation on a parliamentary level. On the other hand, there are politicians with a Ruthenian background, for example the current Finance Minister Ivan Mikloš.

TSS: Is there a national Ruthenian education system?

AM: Yes, there is a complete educational structure, from kindergarten up to university, that was purely Ukrainian until 1989. After 1989 the number of schools was reduced from 100 to 17 here in eastern Slovakia. Now there are around 10 schools in which the Ruthenian language is taught.

Humanities subjects were always taught in Ruthenian, whereas subjects like chemistry, for example, were taught in Slovak. So, in reality, the Ruthenian national school system has the Ruthenian language as an additional subject, rather than the language of tuition.

There is also a Ukrainian high school here in Prešov, and there is a Ruthenian radio program in Košice. There are hundreds of folklore groups and folk festivals here, which are organized both by the pro-Ukrainian and pro-Ruthenian sides. I think they will have to unite eventually.

TSS: What does the future hold for the Ruthenian minority in light of Slovakia's EU-entry?

AM: Whether or not EU entry will bring about any developments for the Ruthenian issue is a big question mark. I would probably say that drastic change is unlikely. Pragmatically speaking, the Ruthenians really are in between two structures and the main part of the Ruthenian cultural foundation is found in the sub-Carpathian area, in western Ukraine, which will be beyond the Schengen frontier. So, communication will be problematic. I don't think that EU entry will facilitate communication between Slovak Ruthenians and Ukrainian Ruthenians. The question is what the communication will be like between Slovakia and Ukraine.

2003

Trembita

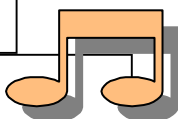
This is the 15th year of publishing of the Trembita. The goal is to publish the newsletter 4 times a year. Issues in 2003 were devoted to the 7th World Congress of Rusyns, The Rusins of Minnesota, and the Semanko Family.

Hostina

As usual, on the first Saturday in December we held a potluck brunch to celebrate St. Nicholas and the Christmas holidays. This year we focused on children's activities. Barb Breza gave a demonstration on the traditions of a Rusin Christmas Eve and the children made ornaments out of walnuts.

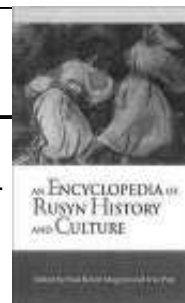
Dance

Dean Poloka, Choreographer for the Slavjane children's dance group of Pittsburgh was in town in November and taught the Lipa Slovak Dancers a Rusin dance and choreographed a dance "Od Ungavar" which the youth dancers performed at the 2004 Duchnovich Dinner.



Duchnovich Dinner

Dr. Paul Robert Magocsi was the guest speaker at our Duchnovich Dinner. He lectured on his new book "An Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture".



Rus'kyj Den Picnic—Karen and Larry Goga hosted the 2003 August picnic.

www.geocities.com/rusinmn

Thanks to Martin Super for setting up our Web site. We have had 3419 visitors.

7th World Congress of Rusyns

Karen Varian, represented the Rusin Association as a delegate to the 7th World Congress of Rusyns held in June in Presov, Slovakia. The 8th World Congress will be held in Krynica, Poland in 2005.



Festival of Nations

The theme for the 2003 Festival was children. Our exhibit focused on baby's first bath and baptism. Kay Handley was the Exhibit Chair and did a great job at putting the theme together. We couldn't do this without all the volunteers.

In Review

Rusin Association Celebrated 20 years

2003 marked the 20th anniversary of the Rusin Association. The concept of the Rusin Association started in 1981 with a meeting at St. John's Byzantine Catholic Church under the guidance of the parish priest, Fr. Fedyszak and Larry Goga. It was called the Rusin Cultural Awareness Group. In 1983 the group became independent from the church. On June 30th, 1983 the group was incorporated as the Carpatho-Rusyn Ethnic Association of Minnesota. The founding members were Larry Goga, John Haluska and John Gera. In 1985 the group changed its name to the Rusin Association. Today our members are diverse, a mixture of those who have known they are Rusins and those that are just learning that they are Rusin. Our anniversary was celebrated with a luncheon at the St. Petersburg Restaurant.

Membership

2003

Number of regular members: 71
Number of lifetime members: 5
Total number of paid members: 76

Membership Dues

Membership dues in 2003 were \$15.00. We collected \$1094.00 for 2003 of which \$864.00 was actually collected and deposited in 2003.

Note: Our financial statement does not include the amount of volunteer time and non monetary miscellaneous donations

Financial Statement *2003*

Beginning balance: \$2884.60

Income:

dues collected in 2003	864.00
Duchnovich Dinner	1404.00
Merchandise	2007.00
Donations	<u>355.97</u>
Total Income	\$4630.97

Expenses:

Duchnovich Dinner	1147.05
Festival of Nations	151.70
Merchandise	2136.52
Printing, stamps, copies	991.73
Donations	200.00
Misc.	<u>72.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$4699.00

Ending Balance \$2816.57

Rusyns in the new European Union: Half in, half out

By Brian Pozun

**Reprinted with permission from the
Rusyn Outpost:North America publica-
tion—Outpost Dispatch, May 2004**

With the 1 May 2004 accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia (along with six other countries) to full membership in the European Union, Rusyns throughout Europe find themselves in an awkward position. Though Poland and Slovakia have substantial Rusyn populations, the number of Rusyns in the Czech Republic and Hungary is not high, and more Rusyns live outside the borders of the EU, in Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine—mostly in Ukraine.

It is hard to say exactly what the EU will bring to the Rusyns in the long term. For now, the only thing that is clear is that the Rusyns are an official minority of the EU and the Rusyn language is among the EU's regional and minority languages. This offers significant protection to the group and its language, and carries with it heightened prestige.

In terms of practical benefits, however, everything is up in the air. It is hard to imagine that Rusyns will not be able to reap benefits stemming from their countries' stronger economies and more secure places in Europe, as well as from EU programs designed to aid lesser-developed regions in EU member states. And even those Rusyns living in states just across the EU's borders do stand to reap benefits from their neighbors' membership in the long term.

Those countries outside the EU's borders are facing significant problems already, and the

fact that the Rusyn homeland now straddles the EU's borders means that the Rusyns on both sides of the divide are affected.

Though EU expansion should help the economies of the new members, it will hurt the economies of the excluded states drastically. According to Russian press agency Itar – Tass, Ukraine stands to lose USD 250-350 million annually in the next few years as a result of EU expansion. On the other hand, tariffs on Ukrainian goods will drop by 3.5 percent, and trade should increase dramatically in the coming years which will mitigate the negative affects. According to Serbian Minister of International Economic Relations Predrag Bubalo, Serbia stands to gain from EU expansion as well, even though his country is not among the new members. Though he did acknowledge that there will also be negative effects, Bubalo stressed the positives in a recent speech. He pointed out that “Serbia stands to benefit from the fact that some foreign companies will seek to move their facilities and capital from the ten EU newcomers, due to changed business conditions after their accession.” Cheaper labor and other lower expenses explain “why some facilities will be moved from Hungary to countries outside the EU borders, particularly to Serbia as the nearest one,” according to Bubalo.

The biggest immediate problem is the fact that the outside border of the EU has been tightened significantly, and when the new members take on the EU's Schengen border regime, border controls will be virtually impenetrable. For the Rusyns and many others living along both sides of the borders, this is nothing less than tragic.

Firstly, families living on either side of the new EU border face huge restrictions on their movement. Those living along the Polish Ukrainian border are among the lucky ones.

Poland only introduced visas for Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian citizens in October 2003, and now with Poland as a member of the EU, Ukrainians are able to get free visas from the Polish consulate and Poles can go to Ukraine visa-free. Along the Slovak-Ukrainian border, visas were not necessary until June 2000. Slovakia is only allowing free visas to ethnic Slovaks in Transcarpathia. Everyone else, along with those living elsewhere along the EU border may face high visa costs which will inhibit their visiting EU states.

The tightened border controls are also putting the skids to much of the informal economy along the new EU border. According to Radio Netherlands, 6,000 pedestrians cross the border at Medyka into Poland from Ukraine every day. These are mostly poor people who make their livings smuggling cigarettes and liquor. Border guards confiscate nearly 10,000 packs of cigarettes each day at just the Medyka crossing. And it's not just the smugglers who now face a severe cut in their income, but also middlemen in the new EU member states, and even the public who purchased the cheap goods.

The EU will probably not affect the life of the Rusyn national community in the new member states very much at all. One way that the EU will be felt, however, is through investment by Brussels in lesser-developed regions of the EU. For example, Brussels will give 1.7 billion euros to Bratislava for development projects,

or 105 euro per capita. Warsaw will get 67 euro per capita, and Budapest 49. In Slovakia, the money is earmarked for development in the Presov and Kosice regions, home to most of Slovakia's Rusyns. According to Natalia Taraxovova, director of the Presov regional office in Brussels, "19 major projects for repairing schools, hospitals, cultural, (and) social care buildings" have been submitted for approval. If all are accepted, they would be worth over 12 million euro.

Minority languages in new EU countries where Rusyns live

Czech Republic—Population: 10,293,000; Official language: Czech, Minority languages: German, Hungarian, Polish, Romany, Rusyn and Slovak.

Hungary—Population: 10,162,000; Official language: Hungarian, Minority languages: Croatian, German, Romany, Rusyn, Serbian, Slovak, Slovene and Ukrainian.

Poland—Population: 38,644,000; Official language: Polish, Minority languages: Belarusian, German, Karajim (extremely endangered), Kashubian, Romany, Rusyn (Lemko), Ukrainian and Wilamowicean (extremely endangered).

Slovakia—Population 5,380,000; Official language: Slovak. Minority languages: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Polish, Romany, Rusyn and Ukrainian.

(Source: Eurolang)

Through its European Bureau for Lesser Used Language and various treaties and agreements, the EU should play a key role in promoting the Rusyn language—as well as the Ukrainian language—in the member states where it is recognized. More likely, however, is that it will not make the situation any better than it already is. Language expert Tove Skutnabb-Kanagas recently told Eurolang, the news service of the

European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages:

In a comparison in 2001 I looked at which countries had signed and ratified both international and European language and minority related human rights instruments, for instance the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The accession countries were either at the same

level or better than the then EU member countries. And they were doing better than the EU countries in several aspects of implementation. There is a lot of hypocrisy in the "old" EU countries which have consistently demanded more of the "new" EU member countries than they have been willing to do themselves.

To date, the Czech Republic, Malta and Poland have signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Cyprus have ratified the Charter. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has been signed by Latvia and has been ratified by all the others.

Regardless of the protection, however, the Rusyn language will likely come under fire from the spread of English, perhaps more so than it already has in the new member states. English was already the most common second language within the old EU, and spoke by more people than any other single language. The EU's public opinion poll Eurobarometer recently found that some 47% of the EU's citizens speak English as either a first or second language, and that figure is likely to rise when the new member states are included.

Speaking to the *Slovak Spectator* in February, historian Alexander Musinka also predicted little change for the Rusins of Slovakia after EU entry. (see article on page 5)

More Rusyns will join the EU when Croatia and Romania become members, perhaps in 2007, but it does not look like Ukraine—home to the largest number of Rusyns in Europe—will be joining any time soon. And so the Rusyns are likely to remain a nation divided by borders for years to come.

THE RUSYN QUESTION IN UKRAINE

(RIMC, 1 March 2004)

The Rusyn question unexpectedly became a topic at an international gathering of world leaders held in Ukraine. On February 21, 2004, over 220 persons met in Kyiv to assess Ukraine's current political status at a conference entitled "Ukraine in Europe and the World." Among the participants were representatives from 27 countries, including 24 foreign ambassadors and a dozen deputies of Ukraine's parliament. President Leonid Kuchma sent eight officials to present his government's point of view. Among them were Ukraine's Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Justice, and two top presidential advisors. The main conference speakers were former U. S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright and former president of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel.

"Ukraine in Europe and the World" was organized by Borys Tarasiuk, Chairman of Ukraine's parliamentary committee on European integration and a supporter of the reformist candidate for the presidency of Ukraine and its former prime minister, Viktor Yushchenko. Among the organizations that financed the international gathering was the Global Fairness Initiative in Washington, D.C., which sent to the conference as its scholarly guest, Professor Paul Robert Magocsi of the University of Toronto.

At a plenary session devoted to the topic, Ukraine and its Neighbors, Pavol Demeš of the German Marshall Fund in Bratislava and Slovakia's former minister of International Relations began his remarks by noting that Slovakia and Ukraine have traditionally enjoyed a broad range of interests, even if they "disagree on whether Andy Warhol was Slovak or Ukrainian." On a more serious note, Demeš claimed that despite Slovakia's entry into the European

Union on May 1, his country was not trying to build a new Iron Curtain to keep out citizens of Ukraine.

In the presence of 173 members of the media from Ukraine and 15 other countries, Professor Magocsi openly challenged De-meš's remarks. He pointed out that in fact Slovakia was the first of the future EU countries to impose visas on travelers from Ukraine. While it is true that every Ukrainian citizen has the right to apply for a Slovak visa, the exorbitant cost makes it de facto very difficult if not impossible for Ukrainian citizens, like those from the neighboring Transcarpathian oblast, to cross what has effectively become a new "economic" Iron Curtain. The session's EU participants called on both Slovakia and Ukraine to make their common border more "user-friendly" and, most importantly, to allow border questions to be decided not by the central governments in Bratislava and Kyiv, but by the local regions and districts that are along the common border between the two countries.

Professor Magocsi also pointed out that "Andy Warhol was an American of Carpatho-Rusyn descent, that is, his heritage was that of a distinct Slavic nationality that is neither Slovak or Ukrainian." Moreover, said the professor, "there are in Slovakia three times more Rusyns than Ukrainians and nearly six times more Rusyn speakers than Ukrainian speakers." Participants at international forums have a responsibility "not to continue to propagate the mythology about a non-existing people like the Carpatho-Rusyns." "Such views are particularly inappropriate for members of the European Union, which remains deeply concerned about the protection of national minorities within and beyond its member states," continued Magocsi.

The unexpected discussion about Rusyns provoked interest among several EU diplomats and government officials as well as among the numerous reporters from the international and Ukrainian media who were unaware that such a distinct people lives within and just beyond the borders of Ukraine. Some were shocked about what they considered a violation of human rights (in this case the right of an individual to chose his or her own national identity). Ukraine's official position on the Rusyn issue was therefore seen as yet another example of the current government's authoritarian tendencies. Even more troubling was the fact that the reformist opposition seems to have similar undemocratic views on the Rusyn question.

Trembita

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Duchnovich Dinner—2004

Our 18th annual Duchnovich Dinner was held on Saturday, March 6. Dr. Elaine Rusinko, author of Straddling Borders, Literature and Identify in Subcarpathian Rus' was our featured guest speaker. Following her presentation, which was held at St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral, the celebration moved to St. John's Byzantine Catholic Church for dinner and entertainment.

This year entertainment included guests from the Ukrainian community who sang folk songs and entertained us with Bandura and Guitar music. The big hit this year was the St. Mary's Youth Ethnic Folk Dancers. The children, ages 5 through 12, had only practiced for a few months. They performed 2 dances. One of the dances was a Rusin dance called Od Ungavar which was choreographed by Dean Poloka, Assistant Director of the Slavjane Folk Dance group of Pittsburgh. The group is taking a break this summer but will be regrouping in the fall. For further information, contact Karen Kokosh-Doten at 763-545-3674.



St. Mary's Youth Ethnic Folk Dancer's

We seated about 110 people for dinner. One special guest was Anne Gillespie Lewis, a freelance writer and author. Anne wrote a very nice article, "A taste of Rusin Culture" which was published in the Minneapolis StarTribune Taste section, June 3, 2004. Along with a nice article about our Rusin culture and cuisine they published Karen Goga's recipe for Holubcy.

Holubcy (Cabbage Rolls)

- 1 large head cabbage, cored
- 1 lb. ground pork
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1/2 cup uncooked rice
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. Garlic salt
- 1 tsp. Black pepper
- 1 (32-oz.) jar sauerkraut, not drained
- 2 cup tomato juice

Fill a stock pot half full with water and heat. Just before the water comes to a boil, put the cabbage in the water, cook several minutes and then turn off the heat. Use tongs to gently pull each leaf off the cabbage, shaking to drain excess water. Set leaves aside.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Mix pork, beef, rice, onion, egg and spices together in a medium bowl. Spread the sauerkraut evenly over the bottom of a 9 by 13 inch non-aluminum pan, and pour the tomato juice over it.

Make the rolls by taking one cabbage leaf at a time and placing a heaping tablespoon or two of the meat filling near the base of the leaf. Roll up, tucking the sides in to form a neat package.

Place the rolls on the sauerkraut. Cut up any remaining cabbage leaves and spread on top. Cover. Bake for about 2 hours.

Nutrition information per serving:

Calories—194

Carbohydrates— 15 g

Protein—14 g

Fat—9 g, including sat. fat—3 g

Cholesterol—51 mg

Sodium—627 mg

Calcium—71 mg

Dietary fiber—4g

Festival of Nations—2004 Celebrations



Blessing of Water - Vodokschi

The theme of the 2004 Festival of Nations was Celebrations. The major Rusin celebrations are religious holy days. We chose to depict a major feast day in the Byzantine Greek Catholic and Eastern Orthodox religions -the feast of Epiphany. Celebrated on January 6, Epiphany is one of the oldest celebrations, predating Christmas by over 100 years. It was established in the Eastern Church in the middle of the 4th century.

The Solemn Blessing of Water, in commemoration of Christ's Baptism, is the main feature of the Feast of Epiphany. The religious ceremony is the reenactment of Christ's baptism.

On Epiphany, Carpatho Rusins, traditionally attend church services where water is blessed. After the Liturgy, in some areas, the faithful go in procession down to the river, signing holy songs along the way. The river symbolizes the living waters of the River Jordan where Christ was baptized. In the ritual, the priest incenses the water and takes a lighted triple candle (a reminder of the Blessed Trinity) and blesses the water by dipping the candles into the water three times (dipping in one of the three candles each time). After imparting the final blessing the priest immerses the

holy cross into the water three times. When the faithful return to church the priest sprinkles the altar and the walls of the church with the freshly blessed water. The faithful come up to kiss the holy cross and to be sprinkled with the newly blessed water.

Most of the folk rites of Epiphany are closely linked with the Christian rites connected with the feast.

Before eating on the day of Epiphany the people drink some of the blest water, which they believe is now endowed with great power, while saying, "may we be as healthy as this water" (jaka sja voda zdorva, taky by smemy zdorovy jak sesja voda).

Other Carpatho-Rusin folk beliefs regarding water are:

- You must not wash your linens in the blessed river for a whole week.
- When you go to look for water early in the morning, you must put on a sheepskin believing it will give you good luck in your household all year long.
- In some villages people bathe in the water on the day of Epiphany. Whoever is possessed by an evil spirit washes himself thoroughly.

Upcoming Events

Rus'kyj Den Picnic
A Celebration of our Rusin Heritage
Saturday July 31—Noon to 4
Karen and Larry Goga's
1115 Pineview Ln., Plymouth, MN
763-595-9188

A gathering of Rusin folks, good food and drink. Contact Karen or Larry to let them know if you are coming and what you can bring.

Fall Meeting—*Saturday, September 25th*, 10:30 a.m., St. John's Byzantine Catholic Church. Note change of date.

Beginning Rusin Language Classes—2nd and 4th Tues., 7:30 p.m., *starting Sept. 14*, St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral School Bldg., 17th and 5th St. N.E.. For further information contact Barb Breza at 612-789-0011. A fee for materials will be charged.

Other events—*Sunday, August 15*—St. Cyril and Methodius Church Festival, 13th and 2nd Street. Slovak Lipa Dancers will be performing.

Carpatho-Rusyn Society
10th Anniversary Celebration
July 23-25—Pittsburgh

Friday, July 23 - Rusyn Film Festival (with commentary), Andy Warhol Museum, 117 Sandusky St., Pittsburgh (North Shore), 7 p.m. Free admission. Possibly followed by a concert for youth and "young at heart" with contemporary Rusyn musicians, 10 p.m.

Saturday, July 24 - 7th Annual Carpatho-Rusyn event at the Andy Warhol Museum, Noon- 4 p.m. A full celebration of Warhol's Rusyn heritage including Rusyn dancing, singing, music, arts demonstrations, food and lots more! Free with museum admission.

Sunday, July 25 - Rusyn Bus Tour of Pittsburgh -- highlighting the major historical sites that contributed to the development of the Rusyn people in America and Europe. Includes a traditional Rusyn dinner. 1:30 - 4 p.m., cost is \$25. Contact **John Righetti** at (412) 749-9899 (select option 9) or e-mail president@c-rs.org for information on these events.

FIRST CLASS

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