

# OUTPOST DISPATCH

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF RUSYN OUTPOST: NORTH AMERICA

VOLUME ONE, ISSUE ONE - OCTOBER 2003



PHOTO COURTESY N. RENAK

## THE INAUGURAL ISSUE

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## Keeping busy...

It's been an exciting month since the pilot issue of *Outpost Dispatch* premiered on 23 August! That date also marked the first International Rusyn Youth Day, which was observed around the world. The primary celebration, however, was at the Rusyn international summer camp in Komloška, Hungary. Hopefully next year, a few of us from North America will also be able to attend.

We are also proud to announce that **Rusyn Outpost: North America** (RO:NA) is up and running, and we have taken on our first members. If you haven't joined yet, there's still time: our membership kits are just about ready and should be sent out in the first week of October. Everyone who has already sent us an email about joining will receive one, so if you haven't contacted us yet, you should do it ASAP. The kits include a membership application, background information and a very cool sticker designed by RO:NA member Maria Silvestri - who also designed the cover of this magazine.

We've also got a brand new website, thanks to RO:NA member Željko Koljesar. Check it out at [www32.brinkster.com/outpostna/](http://www32.brinkster.com/outpostna/). For now, the site has all the essential info in English - and a Rusyn-language version should be done in the very near future as well.

But be warned: this will be the last issue of *Outpost Dispatch* to be archived on the website. If you want to continue to receive it, you have to join RO:NA. Members also have access to our listserve, which will not only give you access to the whole *Outpost Dispatch* archive in .pdf format, but also keeps you updated with any and all Rusyn info that somehow doesn't find its way into the magazine. The listserve also connects you to other young Rusyns throughout the United States, Canada and beyond.

RO:NA still has a few more tricks up its sleeves. We are currently working out the details of creating a CD sampler of the best of contemporary Rusyn music, which might include Pittsburgh-based group **Slavjane**, **Serencza** from Poland and/or the Vojvodinian punk band **Stativa!** (featured elsewhere in this issue). Once it's set, all of our members will receive a free copy, and it will also be provided free to new members.

On 4 October, RO:NA will participate in the annual Czech Independence Day celebrations in New York - the event marks the independence of the first Czechoslovakia, which included the Rusyns of Podkarpatska Rus' and eastern Slovakia. We're also finishing up the preparations for a film night in Toronto in November. If you're interested in this event, send an email to [RusynYouthNA@aol.com](mailto:RusynYouthNA@aol.com) and we'll keep you in the loop.

As of this issue, *Outpost Dispatch* will be published twelve times/year, during the first week of every month. Bringing the best of the Rusyn-language press in Europe to young Rusyns in North America is one of the goals of *Outpost Dispatch*. Aside from our original materials, this issue includes articles from **Rusyn** and **Narodny Novynky** (Slovakia), **MAK** (Serbia and Montenegro) and **Besida** (Poland), all of which are appearing in English for the first time ever.

We encourage contributions from far and wide, which can be sent to [RusynYouthNA@aol.com](mailto:RusynYouthNA@aol.com). Photos are particularly welcome, as are creative writing - short stories, poetry, crossword puzzles...use your imagination, **we can't do it without you!**

## Rusyn Youth Day Celebrated in Komloška

L'udmila Šprokhova, Krive, Slovakia

On 23 August, young Rusyns celebrated the first annual Rusyn Youth Day, in the Rusyn village of Komloška, Hungary. Young Hungarian Rusyns were joined by compatriots from Poland, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine. The World Council of Rusyn Youth held a meeting at which, among other things, the preparations for the second World Forum of Rusyn Youth were already being discussed. The second World Forum will be held in Krynica, Poland, in 2005.

That same day, the young Rusyns met with the members of the World Council of Rusyns. An evening disco ended the young Rusyns' 4-day visit to Hungary. Despite this year's success, we are all certain that next year will be even better! Thanks go out to everyone who worked on the organization of this year's camp in Komloška, as well as to Vasyľ Popovič, head of the Local Rusyn Self-Government in Komloška, and to Gabriel Hattinger, head of the Organization of Rusyns of Hungary. (This article originally appeared in Rusyn in the 3 September 2003 issue of *Narodny Novynky*)

## Lemko Children's Poetry Book Now Available

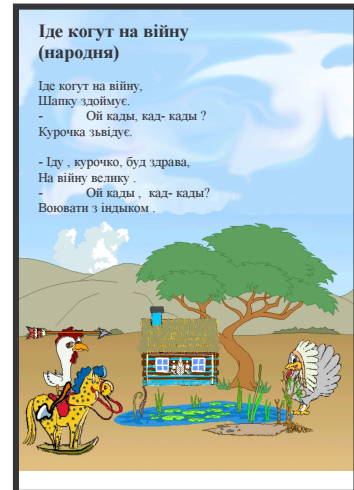
*Ide, ide did, nese bajok mikh...*, a new book of children's poetry was recently published in Wrocław, Poland. The book includes 15 poems, all in the Lemko variant of Rusyn.

Aside from traditional Rusyn poems from Lemkovyna and Vojvodina, translations of children's poems from the French, Polish, Russian and Ukrainian languages are also included.

The large-format book is also heavily illustrated by Anna Pszkiewicz-Worhacz. It was edited and translated by Miroslaw Worhacz and Bogdan Horbal, with additional translation by D. Pawliczek.

The book is available for \$12, including shipping and handling. Contact [horbal@worldnet.att.net](mailto:horbal@worldnet.att.net) to order.

(Rusyn News From Around The World cont. on page 2.)



**ON THE COVER:** *Rusinska Uljica (Rusyn Street), in Ruski Kerestur, Serbia*

**NEXT ISSUE:** *Updates on Rusyn youth activities in Arizona and Ohio, Lemko artist Niki for Drowniak, Rusyn film... and much more!*

## Ruska Bursa battle continues

**Bogdan Horbal, New York**

Problems between the Polish government and Ruska Bursa, a Rusyn cultural organization which operates in Gorlice, are continuing. Though the organization currently has control of the Ruska Bursa building in Gorlice where it operated before World War II, local authorities are now threatening to sell the building at auction, or to divide it between the Rusyn organization and a Ukrainian one which also claims it.

The Ukrainian-oriented Union of Lemkos has been lobbying to have at least part (if not all) of the building "returned" to them, even though that organization has no direct links to the pre-WWII Ruska Bursa organization. More importantly one of the major goals of the pre-World War II Ruska Bursa organization was to counter the spreading of Ukrainian ideology among Lemkos.

Unfortunately, the Union is much better than the Rusyn-oriented Lemko Association at politics, and it shows. Stefan Hladyk is their leader, and he is everywhere, meeting with local and central Polish officials. He has put so much pressure on the head of Gorlice county that the latter is leaning towards "returning" half of the building to the Ukrainians.

Rusyns have met with officials in Gorlice and in Krakow and are considering taking the case to court, but a quick resolution does not seem likely. In Prešov this June, the World Forum of Rusyn Youth resolved to support to Rusyn efforts to regain control of the Ruska Bursa building.

## PA Wooden Church Inaugurated

**Rich Custer, Washington, D.C.**

On the weekend of 16 and 17 August, Rusyns celebrated the culmination of a years-long effort to build an authentic Rusyn-style wooden church at Camp Nazareth, a youth camp near Erie, Pennsylvania.

Metropolitan Nicholas of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the U.S.A. led the consecration of the new church, dedicated to SS. Cyril and Methodius, Apostles to the Slavs. He was joined by Orthodox hierarchs of the Ukrainian, Serbian and Greek Churches, as well as Metropolitan Basil of the Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic Church in America.

A dinner followed the consecration, at which the Reviljak Family of Bardejov, Slovakia, provided the entertainment. The Reviljaks also performed Rusyn folk songs on Sunday afternoon. The Carpatho-Rusyn Society also sponsored a *Vatra* (bonfire) at the campgrounds on Saturday night which featured a sing along led by Rusyn musician and folklorist Jerry Jumba.

The church was built by American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, which also owns and operates the camp. The church was built in the Lemko style most frequently seen in northeast Slovakia and southeast Poland

Architect Joseph Parimucha, an American Rusyn, designed the church. The wooden shingles of the church were executed by craftsmen from the Rusyn village of Tichy

Potok (Tychyj Potik/Štel'bach), in the Sabinov district of northeast Slovakia.

The still-unfinished lower level of the church will hold a heritage center and museum dedicated to the Rusyn people in America who established the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese in 1938.

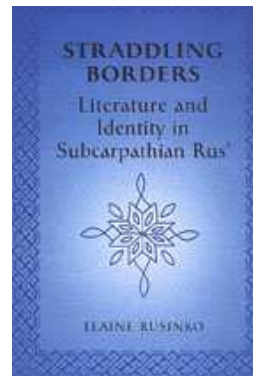
## Literature Study Published

Dr. Elaine Rusinko's *Straddling Borders: Literature and Identity in Subcarpathian Rus'*, a major study of Rusyn literature from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, was recently published by the University of Toronto Press.

The book delves into the ways literature has contributed to the preservation of the Rusyn identity in Europe over centuries of domination by other nations. Unique in Rusyn studies so far, Rusinko applies Post-Colonial Theory to the Rusyn case with great success.

Though the text is in English, it includes several excerpts of literary documents which appear in both English and the original Rusyn, many translated for the first time ever.

The 575-page book is available from the Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center for \$45.00. Checks and money orders can be sent to C-RRC, Inc. 7380 SW 86 Lane, Ocala, FL 34476.



## New websites debut

September was a busy month for internet-savvy Rusyns. First, the official Rusyn Outpost: North America website premiered at [www32.brinkster.com/oupostna/](http://www32.brinkster.com/oupostna/).

Just a few days before, the Rusyn International Media Center premiered at [www.rusynmedia.org](http://www.rusynmedia.org). This site brings together any and all information about the Rusyns appearing on the internet not only in the Rusyn media, but also in elsewhere. Most of the articles are in Rusyn, Polish, Slovak, Ukrainian, and many other languages, but English-language summaries are provided for most of the foreign-language articles. If you poke around, you'll also find extensive bibliographies, information about censuses in many countries in Europe where Rusyns live, materials on the World Congresses of Rusyns and a whole lot more.

The Rusyn Association of North America also announced the creation of a website for its quarterly magazine, *Rusnaci u Švece*, at [www32.brinkster.com/rusmagazine](http://www32.brinkster.com/rusmagazine). The site will host the magazine's archives, with materials in both Rusyn and English. Best of all, the site was designed by RO:NA's own Željko Koljesar.

contribute a story idea, an article, poetry, photos or just about anything else - contact [RusynYouthNA@aol.com](mailto:RusynYouthNA@aol.com) today!

## Being there? Getting there!

**Vladko Bodjanec, Ruski Kerestur, Serbia**

Yeah, I went to Komloška, and it was reaaaly "interesting"... but the most interesting part was just getting there...

At first, I thought no one from Vojvodina would go, because most took long vacations this year. So we (Vladimir Bodjanec) decided to put an article/add in the local Rusyn weekly newspaper *Ruske Slovo* to invite everybody who is interested in the camp to contact us (me). But nobody called, nobody wrote email... And we (I) was sad... Because no one will go... And that means I won't go... Because I didn't want to go alone. Also, I have an important role in this play that the Rusyn Djadja Theatre (which recently became professional) is staging, so I didn't want to be unfair and make the others lose four days because of me etc, etc... But there was another play being staged at the same time with another director from Novi Sad, and most of the actors from our play were there, so it turned out that I had four days free. So on Thursday evening, I decided just like that to go to Komloška, even though I would be one day late... But, whatever...

I went to Budapest by train, and asked a friend to send a text message to our friends from Poland who were going to the camp, to ask them to pick me up at 8 p.m. in Olaszliszka-Tolcsva (the nearest train station, some 9-10 km from Komloška). But I missed the train at 4:05 p.m. from Budapest, and I had to wait for another one at 5:00 p.m. But it turned out that I had to have a reservation for that train and I didn't

had enough time to get one... So, I had to go with the next train, at 6:10 p.m. That train arrived in Olaszliszka-Tolcsva at 9:45 p.m. And now, oh my god, what am I going to do? I thought: I could walk 10 km alone in the dark and listening to the wolves or whatever around me, or I could spend the night at the train station and wait for the first bus (which only goes once or twice a day...), or I could hitch-hike to Komloška...? hmmm....

I started looking for cars on the road and some faces that I knew... But there was nothing... Of course, it was 9:45 p.m. at this point and I was expected at 8.00 p.m... Well, let's seeeeee... hmmm... I can walk, I can wait or I can hitch-hike... I decided to hitch-hike, and I was lucky - the very first car stopped. Some woman with children. I guess I looked like a friendly, harmless student who missed his last bus home... But they lived in Erdohorvati, 5 km from Komloška, and I guess I didn't look so friendly after all, since they dropped me off there and left me to walk the last 5 km to Komloška! Well, whatever... I was close, I was close!!! So then I started walking... for about 20 seconds. Another car stopped. "Komloška?" I said. "Igen" they said. So finally, a few minutes after 10:00 I got there. But they left me off at the very end of Komloška, and this Rusyn park where the whole thing was taking place was at the other end of the (only) street in Komloška, still some 3-4 km away... But then a friendly face popped out of nowhere with a car full of people, and they took me the last bit of the way. And there I was... Very tired...

But after showering, a bit of the local Tokaj wine, some singing with all those happy Rusyns and everything else just made things better. I missed the most interesting day, because the World Council of Rusyn Youth met on Friday, but I was told that no important decisions were made this time. The next meeting will take place in Medžilabirci in June 2004, and the next camp will be in Poland, not in Komloška...or maybe in Poland AND in Komloška... They did say that we need to improve the statute of the World Forum of Rusyn Youth, because there are some problems with it And apparently the others thought that nobody from Vojvodina showed up because of the controversy at the Forum in Prešov (ED. described in our last issue, and elsewhere in this one). They thought we were taking the side of the North Americans and the Germans - they thought that the Vojvodinians were boycotting the camp.

This year about twenty came, five from Slovakia, seven from Poland, five or six from Ukraine, just me from Serbia and Montenegro, and some young "Komloskians," but they weren't there all the time. The World Council of Rusyns came too, and they held a five-hour-long meeting on Saturday. We also had a meeting with them, directed by Marek Gaj of Slovakia. And Paul Robert Magocsi gave the youth delegations from Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine copies of the *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*. And that's it.

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**Rusyn youth at the camp in Komloška**

(photos courtesy of [Narodny Novynky](#))

## Being Ethnic on the Bus

Susyn Mihalasky, New Jersey

I've just taken a window seat on the bus that I ride in my daily commute between New York City, where I do research, and New Jersey, where I live. It's 6:30pm and we are all heading home. The usual crowd of tired, sweaty, but nicely dressed office people squeeze on board along with me. They place their briefcases and raincoats in the overhead racks and scramble for the last remaining seats.

The interior of the bus grows warm and the windows begin to fog over. Huh. No "sightseeing" for today.

I guess that I'll just settle in for my usual long linguistic struggle reading my copy of *Beshida*. I reach into my bag, being careful not to jostle the elbow of the Asian man now seated next to me. He is well dressed in an expensive-looking suit and watch. He is reading the newspaper of choice among more educated, politically informed Americans: *The New York Times*.

But my *Beshida* awaits. I get to work: "iiii-uuuu-eeee..." What? What? "B-b-vvvv-ooooo..." What? I don't know that word, either. Why are there so many long words? But I press on, undaunted. Nobody ever said that reversing the process of assimilation would be easy.

"Excuse me. What is that you are reading...is it your ethnic language?" I look up. My well-dressed Asian neighbor is talking to me. I notice that he is in his 20s and has a thick Chinese accent.

Now, this is an unusual twist. In the United States non-white racial groups are the ones who most often "act ethnic." They openly display their languages, cultures, religions, foods and folk costumes. Americans of European heritage are often grouped into the meaningless category "white." White. Who cares? What could that possibly mean? Are all "white" people alike? And are the lives and values of "white" and "non-white" Americans so dissimilar that skin color is a reliable indicator of identity? Yet here is a "white looking" Asian man inquiring into the ethnic background of a "white, European" American.

I answer my neighbor's question: "I am reading a newsletter put out by my ethnic community in Europe. We call ourselves 'Lemkos' and the name of our region is 'Lemkovyna.'

"Where exactly is Lemkovyna?" my neighbor asks.

Where is Lemkovyna? How could I describe it? Does he even know where the Carpathian Mountains are? He probably would not know Lemkos from Martians. I am tempted to say: 'Lemkovyna is on Mars and Lemkos are really Martians in disguise.' But then I reconsider.

"Lemkovyna," I say, "is located in the Carpathian Mountains in the south eastern part of Poland...you know, in Eastern Europe."

My neighbor nods his head intelligently, knowledgeably.

Could he really know where it is? Schools in the United States neglect the subject of geography, but in his country geography is probably well taught. The only reason that I know where Lemkovyna is located is because I was there...and I certainly don't know where Mars is!

I return to my *Beshida*: "Iiiiiii.....," "Oooooo....."

Why does one language need so many variations on one sound?! Maybe someone just hit the wrong typewriter key? And why does Lemko borrow words from Ukrainian or Polish but not from English? English has lots and lots of very good words...and I know all of them already! There would be nothing new for me to learn!

Huh. The window is still fogged over, but we are not moving. We must be caught in traffic. I turn to my neighbor:

"So, I notice that you have an accent. Where are you from?"

"I am from China," he answers, almost reluctantly. He then gives a long, unpronounceable place name that sounds either like a curse or a burp.



St. Nicholas Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church, New York City (photo courtesy of B. Požun)

"Oh, I know it!" I say.

To my surprise, he shows no surprise. Huh.

A few minutes later, looking at my *Beshida*, my neighbor says: "It is a very interesting looking language."

"Cyrillic alphabet," I say.

Again, he nods his head in a knowledgeable, intelligent manner. They must have really good education in that unpronounceable place in China....

"Of course, you are fluent," says my neighbor.

This is a statement of belief rather than a question. How can I be a "real ethnic" if I am not fluent in my language? I decide that I cannot possibly disappoint him....

"Of course," I answer, waiting for a large bolt of lightning to come out of heaven and strike me dead. But nothing happens. Perhaps the bus will crash? No, not that either. In fact, the bus is finally beginning to move. And the window is unfogging....

I return to my reading. First one word...then the next...then the next. This article is going surprisingly quickly, I understand all of the ideas and I know a lot of the words in it. Maybe I really am fluent! I am proud of myself until I realize that the article I am reading is a Lemko translation of one that I wrote in English. Huh.

Suddenly a hand is blocking the page. Surprised, I look up. My Chinese neighbor is pointing at the page and looking at me:

"For example, what does this word mean?" he asks.

Panic.

(cont. on page 8.)

## Rock 'n' Roll in the Backyard

Ivan Sabadoš, Ruski Kerestur, Serbia

For you to be as clear as possible about just who Mirko Hornjak Kole is and what Stativa! was, we have to go back at least ten years, to the beginning of the 1990s. That was when the Kerestur punk scene arose from sweat, beer and blood like an unwanted child, sentenced to a stolen life without meaning or perspectives immediately upon birth. Paradoxically, but at the very same moment - possibly the darkest in the recent history of Serbia - an atmosphere was created in which there wasn't even a trace of authority, control or common sense. This atmosphere helped the punk scene take off.

As if from nowhere, loud, ugly, angry kids flew into the vacuum that is Ruski Kerestur. Insofar as punk defines itself as an allergic reaction to negative socio-economic tremors which, sooner or later, occur in every society, I maintain that our dear Kerestur, at least in this instance, took a step with the rest of the normal world for the first and last time, even if similar things had already happened in the West in the middle of the 1970s. But elsewhere, punk took off even later than in Kerestur. Due to similar circumstances, the highest-quality punk scene in recent years has been in Brazil and Argentina, for example.

This is the way things went in Kerestur: the band YuckFou broke the ice, the Smargel's broke it a bit further, three or four incarnations of Underwear went even further, and then came the heathen bands ŠMZ and The Aids... The membership of these bands all came from the same roster, with people going from one to the other in quick rotation. The bands, as a rule, fell apart just as soon as they hit on something concrete musically.

There wasn't much going on, other than failed concerts and a couple demo recordings. The big action was at the public rehearsals, where literally whoever wanted to could get up and play. These quickly developed a cult following. Nobody had any illusions of developing a compact Kerestur punk scene back then. There was no conscious movement, revolt or political action. There was just a narrow circle of people who got together, played and listened to the music they loved. This was how they passed the time, having been chased to the margins of the Turbofolk philosophy dominant in Serbia in those days. Left to its own devices, the punk scene would probably have burnt itself out pretty quickly, leaving no trace.

But in the meantime, a couple of small, unconnected incidents brought about by some teenagers trying to prove themselves - which, as my neighbor Sergej is wont to say, is a normal part of growing up - turned everything upside down. It began with the famous graffiti ("Sex, Drugs and Religious Education," see photo above) in the center of town, which got a reaction from the village priest immediately, and quickly introduced the punks to the famous Rusyn means of public information.

Overnight, so to say, Kerestur punk found itself in the

center of an enormous media whirlwind - for the Rusyn microcosm, anyway.

I still have a couple newspaper articles from that time which were written by people who are now Kerestur's pundits of political journalism, and the scandal that followed the TV broadcast of "Keresturiada," the youth evening of the annual Červena Ruža festival, in 1993 in particular stands out.

Something spectacular happened in these articles and features. Kerestur's punks were described as wild fascists, flying in the face of tradition, drug addicts and Antichrists. It made people uncomfortable, and was a topic of discussion everywhere: in school, in town, on the street...

The whole affair made the hitherto convicts and criminals interesting to the media. Since a hardened mind can't be changed, and the system can only be controlled from inside, the punks decided not to argue with the media, but to send them articles and songs instead. However much of this is the truth is visible today - just look at who writes two-thirds of the news today...

After all of this, the battle switched to a different front, and the young people of Kerestur, such as they were, finally entered the administration of the local youth center, which enabled them to start putting on concerts. For a brief period

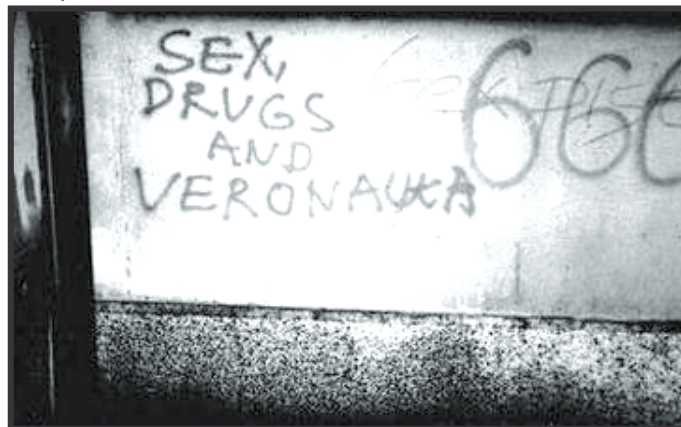
in 1996 and 1997, Kerestur was an important point on the R'n'R map of Yugoslavia. In that season, we had visits by several truly premier bands of the YU rock scene at that time: the Lavhanters, Van Gog, Ateist Rep, Opo, Goblini, the Partibrejkers, Rambo... Finally we lucked out and broke out of the anonymous Kerestur countryside. But despite these early successes and numerous contacts, nothing came of any of this. I still don't know whether it's because of the already traditional disinterest of Keresturians for everything that

goes on in town, or because we lacked ambition, or because we really just weren't capable. All I know is that we'll never have a chance like that again... In the meantime, the neighborhood wasn't sitting back: bands were springing up in the nearby towns of Verbas, Petrovec, Kula... These guys wisely kept to the margins and were eventually able to catch up with the big leagues...

The hero of our story, Mirko Hornjak Kole, was around from the very beginning. Whether in the foreground or the background, he was always there. At poetry evenings, in the bands YuckFou, Šuhajdova, Rektum, Pendrexil... Over time, people came and went (whether they wised up or got fed up), but Kole was always active. I still don't know where he found so much push and energy!

The final "project" which Mirko Hornjak Kole gave the thirsty Rusyn public was called "Stativa!" This was a three-member band in which he played guitar and sang, Zlatan Ruskovski played bass, and Vladan Hardi played drums. After standing still for a long time, the boys from Kerestur somehow were able to take a step beyond all of the other garage bands in the village. That feat was called The Incident of the Naïve Swallow (*Slučaj lakovernog detliča*) and was presented as a promo-CD in June 2000. It was recorded in Kula in a single afternoon. It has 18 "numbers" and a little more than half an hour of music. Bearing in mind

(cont. on page 8.)





**Ruski Kerestur, the Rusyn center of the former Yugoslavia** (photo courtesy of Mihailo Bodjanec)

(*Rock 'n Roll in the Back Yard ... cont. from page 7*)

the technical and financial conditions in which it was recorded, the result is just as it should be. Here, it has to be pointed out that Stativa! had a lot of help and support from Dejan Nadj Rokije, who played the drums this time, and from Miko Nadjovi, who made the crazy booklet featuring Pixie, Tesla and Ana Kurnjikova. To define the music that Stativa played is like trying to explain gumbo - everything and anything gets thrown in and it's impossible to sort it all out in the end. My impression that Kole had intended to put more melodies into the musical legacy of the failing Kerestur scene, music he personally respected and to give everything his own authorial stamp. You'll agree that this was really an ambitious idea. How much of it did Stativa! realize?

It is immediately apparent, and very troubling that there just aren't enough original songs. Of the 18 tracks, just three are entirely original - the already antiquated "Antirežimska" (Anti-Regime Song), "Duvanomanija" (Ganga-mania) - which could have wider potential - and "Nebeški Narod" (Heavenly Nation), which really seems like something from Croatian band Hladno Pivo. Then there are three simple-hearted children's songs, and three Rusyn folk songs, but it's not worth wasting words on them (other than to point out that my favorite "Njedaljeko od valalu" (Far from the Village) isn't one of them). The next three tracks (Gazda/The Boss, Andjo/Betrothed and Bubuš/The Monster) are along the lines of the band ŠMZ/SMF. All three together last 18 seconds total, but they're not bad. There's a hymn about farms and a blues song, which are solid, and the song "NATO - Zlikovci" (NATO - Criminals), a relic of a time which I hope is just a memory that no one wants to remember. I would say the best moment on the disc is the furious version of "Dijana", an old hit

which sounds like YuckFou played it yesterday. There are also two cover songs, but it really isn't clear to me why they're included...

How to conclude? If you take it all and put it together, adding and subtracting, Kole's dream unfortunately wasn't realized. The material lacks freshness, the spirit of the time, an attitude which could have given it direction and meaning, a thread which would have connected it to a larger whole. It is missing the balance between desire and possibility. Stativa! remains stuck somewhere at the halfway mark.

[The original Rusyn-language version of this article can be found in the third issue of MAK, at <http://novimak.tripod.com/sabados1.htm>.]

(*"Being Ethnic on the Bus ... cont. from page 6*)

"That word? You mean, that word right there?" I ask, pointing to the same paragraph. Anything to gain time....

My neighbor is pointing at a scary looking word with five syllables and at least 10 letters. And it has several different "i"s in it too.

Huh. I frantically read the entire sentence. No help. In fact, I don't know many of the words in that sentence. *Petro!* What kind of an editor are you? Where do you find these strange words?

I read one word below the one that my neighbor is pointing to. Oh, I know that one! "Sheep," I say, "that word means 'sheep.'"

"Oh, I see," he nods his head, visibly impressed with my linguistic skills.

When is my stop? I look out the now unfogged window. My stop is still far away....

I recall my neighbor's thick accent. "Are you fluent in Chinese?" I ask.

"Yes," he answers quickly, without enthusiasm or pride. He sounds as if he does not want to talk about it...and he doesn't.

"Tell me more about Lemkos," he says.

I tell him a little bit about recent events in Poland, about Akcja Wisla ... Ukrainophiles ... Russophiles ... Orthodoxy ... Greek Catholicism. Am I really sitting in a bus full of tired, sleeping people from New Jersey? And after this discussion, why isn't my neighbor sleeping?

Instead, I see that he is as interested in the topic as I am. In my enthusiasm, I begin to tell him about the time when I lived in Lemkovyna and my experiences there. I tell him about how being simply "American" or "White" is not enough...how it is important to retain contact with one's ethnic heritage and roots. I expect that, as a Chinese-American, my neighbor will understand these sentiments and agree with them. Maybe he can provide me with more insights into this.

So I ask him again about China. Again, however, he is unenthusiastic, bored, indifferent. After a very uninspired discussion, he said: "You are very 'ethnic'."

At first, this strikes me as odd. Me? "Ethnic?" Huh.

"Do I really seem 'ethnic' to you?" I ask.

"Oh, yes," he smiles. "You are familiar with your history, language - you are emotionally involved and you even went to live there."

"But don't you care about your roots?," I ask.

At last, I see enthusiasm and pride in my neighbors face.

"No!" he answers triumphantly in his thick accent, "...I only speak English, I am a 'real American!'" "And," he adds assertively, "...I will take an American wife!"

Now he is smiling much too intensely and leaning too close. I take a quick look out the window. Oh, good! My stop is next!

And next time I'll take the train...!

[This article originally appeared in Besida, published in Poland.]

## Cultural Schizophrenia

### Creating a Rusyn Pop Culture (Part 1)

Brian J. Požun, New York

Defining the term "pop culture" is a challenging task. There is no standard definition of just what it is, though one cultural theorist, John Storey, has described several of its features which are easily identified. According to Storey, pop culture "...is definitely a culture that only emerged following industrialization and urbanization." More importantly, he states that pop culture is best defined in juxtaposition to an "other": "popular culture is always defined, implicitly or explicitly, in contrast to other conceptual categories: folk culture, mass culture, dominant culture, working-class culture, etc. A full definition must always take this into account," he writes.

Mainstream Rusyn culture is just about the only "other" available to Rusyns. Even today, mainstream Rusyn culture is heavily rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century national revival and even earlier folk traditions. Thanks in large part to the policies of the Eastern Bloc countries in Europe and assimilation processes among Rusyns in emigration, extremely limited progress was made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With 1989, old traditions suppressed since the forced Ukrainization of the 1950s had to be reclaimed and popularized. Therefore, Rusyn culture started out the 1990s looking backward to try to preserve folk, religious and village traditions. Unfortunately, it has neglected to look ahead in order to ensure that the culture is sustainable in the future. In this way, an anachronistic situation has emerged - the Rusyns are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a 19<sup>th</sup> century culture.

Fourteen years into the renaissance of Rusyn culture in Europe, the time has come to change gears. Maintaining a culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which is rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> is untenable. What use is a culture stuck in the nineteenth century in the face of globalization, which is hastening a process of international homogenization? Significant changes in the definition of Rusyn culture must be made if it is to thrive in the modern world.

I believe that Rusyn culture does not currently offer a full range of choices for its young. Public cultural expression is limited to folk festivals; individual expression to media, which itself tends to be heavily interested in folk topics. The emergence of a pop culture is not only necessary but also crucial if Rusyns want to ensure that their young remain Rusyns and do not fall victim to the threat of assimilation. The culture need not be sexier than the majority culture, be it Slovak, Ukrainian, Hungarian - to say nothing of the increasingly widespread American-led global culture - but it must at least be attractive.

A large number of young Rusyns now live in urban centers, from mega cities like New York, Moscow, Munich, Toronto, Budapest, Belgrade and Prague, to regional centers like Užhorod, Pittsburgh, Bratislava and Novi Sad, to smaller - but no less urban - towns like Khust, Mukačevo, Košice, Prešov, Krynica, Legnica, Gorlice, Subotica, Osijek, and Rijeka. The World Congress of Rusyns has tacitly acknowledged this - with the exceptions of Medžilabirci and Ruski Kerestur, all of its

meetings have convened in cities. In order to keep Rusyn youth Rusyn in an urban setting where assimilation is stronger and quicker, a culture which can compete is essential. The increasing number of urban Rusyns bodes well for the emergence of a Rusyn pop culture, since, as stated above, pop culture is inexorably linked to urbanization.

Rusyns will never be able to create a popular culture which can supplant the globalized Hollywood cinema, American and British music, Harry Potter books, etc. But it can create a viable alternative. Obviously, the Rusyns - lacking a state and, more importantly, the tax money it would provide - cannot create as full a cultural alternative as, say, Slovakia or Poland. But there is much work already being done which is trying to bring Rusyn culture into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The place to start is with large-scale promotion of what is already in place. The internet and the newly-formed World Forum of Rusyn Youth are two vehicles which offer significant and exciting opportunities to do just that.

There are several Rusyns whose works do not fall within the rubric of folk culture, whose work is clearly aspiring to something else. Unfortunately, we cannot properly speak of a Rusyn "pop culture," since none of these works are widely

popular just yet. In order for a work to become part of a "pop culture," it must "be taken up by 'the people'; it must provoke conversation and enter oral circulation and recirculation.... Like everything else made available by the media and culture industries, it has to be *made* popular," according to Storey. So far, this has not happened.

### Cultural schizophrenia:

Though it is easy to describe Rusyn culture as being a 19<sup>th</sup> century culture trying to survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is not entirely true. One monkey wrench has been thrown into that neat, tidy description: Andy Warhol.

It should be pointed out that throwing Warhol's works into the mix of Rusyn culture is a bit misleading, since he officially considered himself to be from "nowhere," and never once made his Rusyn roots public knowledge. However, the fact that the Rusyn movement has focused on him so intensely guarantees his place in Rusyn culture, whether he likes it or not. Ever since the rebirth of the Rusyn cause in 1989, Andy Warhol has been the patron saint - or celebrity if nothing else - of the movement, thanks to his fame and international prominence. These were seen as being beneficial to the national cause, even if Warhol himself had nothing to do with Rusyn culture as such.

The irony is that everything Warhol represents stands in direct contrast to the rest of Rusyn culture. Warhol was the father of Pop Art, which was ultra modern in its day. While some have tried to view his works through the prism of icons, psyanky, etc., the concept of Pop Art is the antithesis of folk. Warhol's films were experimental, difficult to watch, challenging to understand. They stand in opposition to the easy narrative traditions of Rusyn theatre, as well as to the documentaries and features made in recent years about - and in one or two cases by - Rusyns. Warhol's legacy includes homosexuality and drugs. The Rusyn culture is fantastically asexual: sex - gay or otherwise - has little breathing room; and drugs - except alcohol and cigarettes - are unknown. Warhol



was obsessed with fame and the nature of celebrity; the Rusyns are one of the least-known nations in Europe.

Thanks to Warhol's presence in the pantheon of cultural figures, Rusyn culture can be viewed as schizophrenic. On the one hand, there is a folk culture based on village life, folk festivals, folk songs and dance, miracle-working icons and wooden churches. The majority of poetry, prose and even non-fiction published in Rusyn, and in other languages about Rusyns, also fall into this category. Even the Rusyn-language media more often than not fall into this trap. On the other hand Andy Warhol, the father of Pop Art, cosmopolitan New Yorker, the Rusyns' most famous son, is promoted as a national spokesman. Many try to sweep his associations with drugs, homosexuality and the like under the carpet, but this will never be entirely successful, thanks to the very feature which has made him so attractive to the Rusyn movement - his world-wide significance.

The schizophrenia resulting from Warhol's inclusion into Rusyn culture is at its worst at events held at either Andy Warhol museum, whether in Pittsburgh or in Medžilabirci, where little girls dressed in national costume folk dance in front of his avant garde works. Clearly there is a problem.

The Warhol Museum of Modern Art in Medžilabirci itself is a symptom of the cultural schizophrenia. The museum opened in September 1991 in what was then a backwater Czechoslovak town of just 7000 inhabitants. At the time of the museum's opening, the locals were horrified. Museum director Michal Bycko commented in a 1999 article: "Nobody wanted anything to do with this 'decadent American homosexual.'" In the same article, Slovak art scholar Hannah Hudecova said that "People here are strongly conservative and a little bit wary of the fact that Warhol was gay." She added that parents would not allow their children to participate in programs held at the museum, protesting the promotion of Warhol and the detrimental effect he would have on innocent children. The only way the museum could survive was by deepening the cultural schizophrenia - recreating Andy Warhol as a devout Greek Catholic and a model Rusyn.

Another symptom of the cultural schizophrenia can be found in much of the post 1989 Rusyn-language media, and ethnic Rusyn media published in a variety of other languages, e.g., *The New Rusyn Times*, published in English by the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. Mass media is rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Industrial Revolution, but played a major role in the modernization drives of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and North America. It is doing little, however, to modernize the Rusyns. While a degree of current events is featured in Slovakia's *Narodny Novynky* newspaper and *Rusyn* magazine and Poland's *Besida* magazine in particular, the bulk of their contents are focused on 19<sup>th</sup> century aspects of Rusyn culture - folk festivals, dance troupes, religious issues, village histories, etc. However, once again, Andy Warhol features into the Rusyn-language media in a big way as well - case in point, the "Klub Endi Varhola" page featured in every single issue of *Rusyn* magazine since it began publication.

Another recent example is the "Lemko [Rusyn] Language with Computers" course held from 29 June to 5 July 2002 in Warsaw at the Polish-Japanese Higher Education Center for Computer Technology. Lemko elementary and high school students participated in the course, which was organized by the Lemko Association and at the Pedagogical Academy in Krakow. The course had a special focus on Lemkos and the internet, its use for contact with Lemkos dispersed throughout the world and using Lemko Rusyn on computers.

Accompanying events included a tour of Warsaw, a song program made up of folk music, a concert by a Slavic choir and

a seminar on 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. Photos published with a report on the course in *Besida* (below) show



**Young Lemkos at the "Lemko Language with Computers" course in Warsaw** (photos: *Besida*, 5/2002)

Lemko children in folk costume on the school's steps. The folk aspects were outrageous, and the impression they provide is one of immense anachronism.

Of all the Rusyn-language media in Europe, only one periodical stands out as an exception: Serbia's *MAK*. Surprisingly modern themes such as drugs, sex and complex, emotional politics are this magazine's mainstay. One important side effect to this is the fact that by discussing such themes in the Rusyn language, *MAK* is helping to demonstrate the breath of the language, flying in the faces of critics who call the Rusyn dialects useful around the house but worthless for serious discussion.

### **The emerging middle ground:**

Raymond M. Herbenick's 1997 book, *Andy Warhol's Religious and Ethnic Roots: The Carpatho-Rusyn Influence on His Art* is an example which shows that the cultural schizophrenia has been noticed, in that the author is trying to tie Warhol closer to Rusyn folk and religious culture. The book applies Rusyn cultural influences - such as iconography and patterning - on Warhol's work. However, it was not well received, and does not present a compelling argument. Warhol simply will not conform to the standard understanding of Rusyn culture.

However, the fact that someone as alien to Rusyn culture as Andy Warhol has been adopted into the cultural pantheon does give hope for the culture's future. It shows that a degree of adaptation is possible in Rusyn culture. And in fact, a degree of adaptation is quietly taking place in various ways all over Europe and in North America. Slowly, a middle ground is emerging between the little girls in folk costumes and Warhol the decadent gay junkie.

There are numerous Rusyn-related films, the start of a Rusyn pop music scene, experimental literature, Outsider art, political cartoons...the list goes on and on. However, the basic problem is that Rusyns are not aware of what pop culture they in fact do have. The first and easiest thing to do is to devote more attention to these people and their work in the Rusyn media. Beyond that, the internet has not been fully exploited to further Rusyn culture, and attention must be directed there. And the World Forum of Rusyn Youth, convening for the first time in June 2003, will hopefully become a driving force behind the development of a true Rusyn pop culture.

So what exactly is this emerging middle ground, and how can it create a Rusyn pop culture? The next several issues of Outpost Dispatch will feature brief overviews of what may soon become a real Rusyn pop culture, in fields as diverse as film, music, literature, art and media.

*[photo on page 8: press photo from *I am From Nowhere*, director Georg Misch, 2002]*

## The Ten [Rusyn] Commandments

Vasyl' Kocan, Slovakia

Translated by Brian Požun. Originally published in Rusyn, 5-6/2002.

1. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation, I will remain its son.
2. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation until the next census.
3. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation, and I'll keep being a Slovak.
4. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation, but I'll always drink whiskey.
5. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, and my children were Rusyns, so long as they were not exposed to Western culture.
6. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation, but I will campaign for the Hungarian Coalition party in the next election.
7. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation, but I will praise the histories of other nations.
8. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation, but I will be a Rusyn-Ukrainian from time to time.
9. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation, but I will still cry over my current problems.
10. I was, am and will be a Rusyn, I was born a Rusyn, I will not forget my honorable nation, but I do not know how I will survive in the European Union and NATO.

CD REVIEW

## Truly A Better Way

Maria Silvestri, Pittsburgh

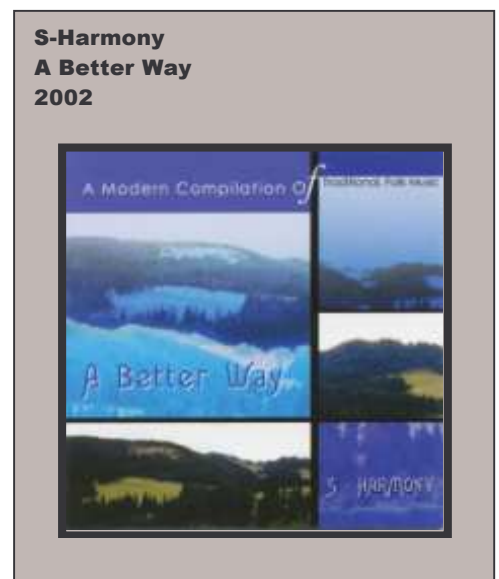
The latest release from S-Harmony, A Better Way, starts out with the haunting voice of Silvia Matolaková singing "Pol'ana, Pol'ana" - she's definitely not of the Hanka Servicka folksy style. The title, A Better Way, is an accurate description of their style - traditional folk songs that are both modern and catchy. This is the folk music that Rusyn kids want to hear, and it's a great introduction to Rusyn folk music because it leaves out some of the more nasal aspects of the genre. They present a happy medium between the traditions of Slovakia, where they grew up, and their current home in America.

A lot of the songs on this CD are positively fun to listen to. From the old-school rock and roll feeling of "Konopel'ky", to the Euro disco "Fuštana" there is a solid fast, danceable feel to the whole CD. "Mnohaja lita", a standard of Rusyns everywhere, is presented like a patriotic anthem, preserving its often-solemn usage - when sung well, in any occasion, it has an absolutely chilling effect. The S-Harmony version does the same as a choir of 100 could, although it's more appropriate for the end of a night out!

The highlight is "Červena Ruža '3.jaka' Maričko." It's a song many American Rusyns have grown up hearing, and it definitely gives credibility to the CD to hear such a familiar tune, albeit with a completely new sound. At the same time, the original meaning stays with the song: basically, a woman is so tired of her abusive husband that she leaves him and her children to go somewhere across the Danube - za Dunaj. Timely now that many Rusyns are now crossing the Danube back to the homeland, often returning the opposite of the American way that was never truly forgotten. This is a better way.

A Better Way is one of the rare CDs that can be listened to from beginning to end, and one that continues to be enjoyable to listen to. It has the possibility of becoming a sing-along or sing-in-the-shower CD for anyone who listens to it. It will be great to hear what Juraj and Silvia come out with next.

S-Harmony: A Better Way can be ordered for \$17.00 (including shipping and handling) from Carpatho-Rusyn Society Sales, 347 W. Beil Ave. Nazareth PA 18064.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday, 4 October - **Czech Independence Day Celebrations - Czech Street Festival**. 83<sup>rd</sup> Street, between Madison & Park Avenues, Manhattan NY. 1:00 - 7:00 p.m. Held every year since 1998 to celebrate the founding of the first Czechoslovak state, of which Subcarpathian Rus' was part. Organized by the [Czech Center](http://www.czechcenter.com). For information call (212) 288-0830 or visit [www.czechcenter.com](http://www.czechcenter.com)
- Sunday, 5 October - **Carpatho-Rusyn Society Annual Picnic**. Croatian Center, Millvale PA. [Slavjane](#) to perform at 3:00. Organized by the [Carpatho-Rusyn Society](#). For information call Jack Poloka at (412) 331-3124.
- Saturday, 11 October - **Ethnic Genealogy Conference**. Center in the Woods, Rt. 88, California PA. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dedicated to Italian and Rusyn genealogy techniques, with the Rusyn part given by Carpatho-Rusyn Society President John Righetti. Registration fee of \$50 includes all materials and lunch. For information, contact Mary Elaine Lozosky at (724) 938-3554 or [melozosky@yahoo.com](mailto:melozosky@yahoo.com)
- Saturday, 11 October - **Discussion with Paul R. Magocsi**. St. John's Church Auditorium, 364 Mill Hill Ave. Bridgeport CT 1:30 p.m. Free. Organized by the [New England Chapter of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society](#). For information, contact Orestes Mihaly at (914) 273-9019 or [okmihaly@yahoo.com](mailto:okmihaly@yahoo.com)
- Sunday, 12 October - **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Golden Valaška Awards Luncheon**. Russian Hall, 4 Woodhull Ave., Singac (Little Falls) NJ. 1:00 p.m. Members - \$30; Non-Members - \$35. This year's award will be presented to Paul Robert Magocsi, in recognition of his prolific scholarship on the Rusyn experience. Organized by the [New Jersey/New York Chapter of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society](#). For information, contact Leona Hrehovcik at (973) 256-1839 or [leemaren@optonline.com](mailto:leemaren@optonline.com)
- Saturday, 26 October - **First Annual Tucson Slavic Festival**. St. Melany Byzantine Catholic Church, Corner of Sahuara and Bellvue Avenues, Tucson AZ. 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The [Rusyny](#) Carpatho-Rusyn Dance Ensemble will perform. For information, call Fr. Bob Rankin at (480) 886-4225.
- Saturday, 1 November - **"The Carpatho-Rusyns of Western Pennsylvania" historical and genealogical conference**. Heinz Regional History Center, 1212 Smallman Street, Pittsburgh PA. Co-sponsored by the [Carpatho-Rusyn Society](#) and the [Heinz Regional History Center](#). For more information, contact John Righetti at (412) 749-9899 or [rusynone@excite.com](mailto:rusynone@excite.com)
- Saturday, 8 November - **"When Small Peoples Dream Big Dreams: The Lemko Rusyn Republic, 1918-1921" lecture by Bogdan Horbal**. Wayne Public Library, 461 Valley Road, Wayne NJ. 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Free. Organized by the [New Jersey/New York Chapter of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society](#). For information, contact Jerry Chanda at (609) 882-4872 or [molossia@aol.com](mailto:molossia@aol.com)
- Thursday 20 November, to Sunday, 23 November -- **American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies 35<sup>th</sup> Annual National Convention**. Toronto, ON. Several Rusyn-related papers to be presented, including: *A Success Story for Russian Pan-Slavism: The Russophiles of Subcarpathian Rus'* by Elaine Rusinko; *Documenting Identity: The Discourse of Census Categories and Rusyn Self-Determination in the 2001 Ukrainian Census* by Jennifer A. Dickinson; *Carpatho-Rusyns: Depiction and Self-Depiction in Cinema* by Patricia Ann Krafcik; and *Carpatho-Rusyn Identity in Rare Books of the Eighteenth, Twentieth Centuries* by Nina Masej.
- Friday 21 November - **RO:NA Movie Night**. Toronto, ON. Patricia Krafcik will give a short presentation on Rusyn cinema and Rusyns in cinema, followed by screenings of *The Warhol Nation*, *Rusky Potok: A Lesson in Democracy in Czechoslovakia*, and *Elvira's Haunted Hills*. Organized by [Rusyn Outpost: North America](#). Details still pending - for more information, contact Brian Požun at [bpozun@aol.com](mailto:bpozun@aol.com)
- Friday and Saturday, 5-6 December - **31<sup>st</sup> Annual Makovic'ka Struna Rusyn Folksong Competition**. Bardejov Slovakia.

## Outpost Dispatch

NEWSLETTER OF RUSYN OUTPOST: NORTH AMERICA

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## WEB LINKS

RUSYN OUTPOST: NORTH AMERICA (Pittsburgh, USA)

<http://www32.brinkster.com/outpostna/>

CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY (Pittsburgh, USA)

<http://www.carpathorusynsociety.org/>

RUSYN ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA (Kitchener, Canada)

<http://rdsa.tripod.com>

RUSIN ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA (Minneapolis, USA)

<http://www.geocities.com/rusinmn/>

CYBERRUTHENIA Become a citizen of the Rusyns' first virtual state !

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cyberruthenia>

LEMKO.ORG The peoples of the Carpathian Mountains, commonly known as Lemkos

<http://lemko.org>

RUSYN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CENTER Media by and about Rusyns

<http://rusynmedia.org>

RUSYN RADIO ON THE INTERNET The first all-Rusyn radio station

<http://www.rusyn-radio.dns2go.com/>

RUSYN POP CULTURE Weblog dedicated to Rusyn pop culture on the Internet

<http://rusyn-pop.blogspot.com>

WIRTUALNA LEMKOWYNA Website of Real Lemkos

<http://www.lemkowyna.prv.pl/>

WORLD ACADEMY OF RUSYN CULTURE Dedicated to preserving and promoting Rusyn culture

<http://www.rusyn.org>

ZVOLOČ Svidnik imaginary underground

<http://www.zvoloc.host.sk/>

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**Young man, when I was young, I too was a Rusyn!**  
(Fedor Vico, Prešov, Slovakia)

*Outpost Dispatch* is the official newsletter of **Rusyn Outpost: North America**, a cultural organization dedicated to preserving and cultivating a Rusyn identity among young ethnic Rusyns in the United States and Canada. **Rusyn Outpost: North America** is the North American affiliate of the **World Forum of Rusyn Youth**, based from 2003 to 2005 in Prešov, Slovakia. For more information, contact [RusynYouthNA@aol.com](mailto:RusynYouthNA@aol.com)