Slovakia’s Wonderful Folk Festivals
By Loretta Ekoniak

Východná Folk Festival

One of the biggest regrets that I had after visiting Slovakia with my family, was that we missed one of Slovakia’s most well known Folk Festivals by one week! If we had known about it, we might have been able to be there for the Východná Folk Festival.

I don’t think that you can talk about Slovakia without talking about music. While it is true that Slovakia has wonderful classic musicians and its own popular music, it is in the folk music that one finds Slovakia’s soul. The Slovak people have used music to keep their traditions alive. In a country at the crossroads of central Europe, Slovaks have often been ruled by others, from the Hungarians to the Russians. Their songs and dances helped them to keep their traditions alive. The songs often portray the hardships that were theirs, but also contain the beauty of the countryside and the celebrations of everyday life. Each region of Slovakia has its own folk traditions that are seen in the dances and songs from that area. Thankfully, the country of Slovakia is keeping its traditions alive, especially through its splendid Folk Festivals.

(cont. on pg. 5)

A reminder again to please check your label and make sure that your dues are up to date. If we do not hear from you before the next issue and your dues are not paid through 2008, we will be eliminating your name from our mailing list. If you send in dues we will apply them to 2009 and consider you up to date as of this year. We simply cannot afford to continue sending newsletters for free. It is unfair to those of you who do pay your dues. From now on, after your dues have expired, we will allow 2 issues (which is essentially 6 months) before you are removed from our mailing list. Also, please let us know if there are any discrepancies or if you no longer wish to receive our newsletter.

4th Annual Mahoning Valley SlovakFest
by Loretta Ekoniak

Summer is in full force and everyone is looking for fun things to do with their time. Well, for the last three years, Ohio’s Mahoning Valley Slovaks have been providing just that. This August 16th, the 4th annual Mahoning Valley SlovakFest will be held on the grounds of St. Mathias Church in Youngstown OH from 11:30AM to about 8 PM. It was begun in 2006 by a group of people who remembered the great Slovak picnics of their youth, usually held by the area’s Slovak parishes or organizations. They wanted to carry on this summer activity and share their love of their Slovak heritage with everyone in this Valley. And of course, you can’t get more than 3 Slovaks together without there being food and music!

The SlovakFest kicks off with a wonderful Polka Mass at St. Matthias Church, on Youngstown’s Southside, an area where many Slovak families settled in the early 1900s. This joyful Mass will be offered at 11:30AM with the music provided by the Eddie Vallus Band. After the celebration of Mass, the festivities will move to the church parking lot and the former school, in the Father Snock Center at 2800 Shady Run Rd., Youngstown, OH 44502.

(cont. on pg. 2)
Mahoning Valley SlovakFest,  cont. from pg.1

Inside the hall, dinners will be served from noon till 3 with a choice of Lamb, Chicken or Halubky (stuffed cabbage).
Outside you will find halusky, klobassi, lamb, pirohy and more throughout the day. There will also be wonderful Slovak baked goods available!

Starting at 4PM, the Grammy nominated Del Sinchak polka band will be playing for those who love to polka or those who just want to sit and listen. As they say on their website, it has been said, "kde je Slovak, tam je spev." -- "where there is a Slovak, there is singing." And there will be plenty of music and singing at the Mahoning Valley SlovakFest.

The SlovakFest also has many Slovak items on display or for sale. There will be a silent auction of baskets filled with all sorts of items, and a raffle of $2000 worth of Get Go/Giant Eagle gift cards for gasoline or food! There will be children’s games, clowns and other activities throughout the day. Admission is free, so if you remember the Slovak picnics of your childhood, or if you don’t, but would like to make some new memories, plug us into your GPS, jump in your car, and join us on August 16th for a wonderful time at the 4th Annual Mahoning Valley SlovakFest!

Slovak Hour Host Needed for WKTL

By Faith Simko

For those of you that don’t know me, I’m Faith Simko and have been with the Slovak Radio Program since October 19, 1985.

Many of you know that our former ASCA president, Mary Babnic, who was co-host for the program, was having problems with Macular Degeneration. As her condition fluctuated, I told Mary and Kay Franko (also listed as co-host), that once Mary felt she could no longer do the program, that I also would leave the program.

Because of Mary’s unexpected death on June 20, 2008, I have stayed on to be the Host. Since then, we have been looking for a Host and Co-host. It is now over one year since Mary’s passing. In October it will be 24 years that I’ve been at WKTL. I do not intend to stay, if no one comes forward. I will work with whoever might be interested.

If interested, please call me at 330-755-6510.

Thank you.

Looking for a Host and Co-host for the Slovak Radio Program on WKTL-Struthers, Ohio, 90.7 FM on Saturday Evenings from 9-10:30 P.M.

WKTL-FM 90.7 MHz
Struthers High School
Struthers, Ohio
"Wildcat Radio"
In the 19th century Americans eagerly heeded the advice of John Soule, “Go West, young man! Go West!” Fame and fortune beckoned them there. About the same time, German’s imperialistic plan to dominate Eastern Europe was expressed by “Drang nach Osten,” of “Drive to the East.” Actually Germans migrated eastward long before the 19th century. Many Germans came to and settled in the region of present-day Slovakia even in the 12th century.

America is a land of immigrants and prides itself on being a “melting pot.” Emphasis is placed not on the cultures brought to its shores by new-comers but on the blending of nationalities and cultures in a new American ethos. Europe’s tradition is quite different. There individual nationalities and their cultures are highly prized and as a consequence, minority nationalities are protected and supported by all European countries. A natural assimilation does indeed occur but the majority seems to preserve their identity. This is true in spite of wars and religious upheavals.

Slovaks and Germans have lived together for more than 900 years. All in all, the relationship has been mutually rewarding. Slovakia provided a hospitable environment and Germans enriched the population in many ways. Today Carpathian Germans, that is, Germans living in Slovakia, number about 5,500 and they enjoy the support of the Slovak government as well as aid from the German fatherland. They constitute about 1% of the population. Germans, however, have exerted an influence on Slovakia to a greater extent than their numbers would suggest.

German missionaries first brought the Christian Faith to Slovakia at the beginning of the 9th century. They came from Bavaria (Passau) and Austria (Salzburg) and when Pribina, the ruler of Nitra, built the first Christian church in Slovakia in 828 it was the archbishop of Salzburg, Adalram, who blessed it. Soon settlers came from Bavaria, Austria, Silesia, and even Saxony and settled in three main areas: Bratislava, the mining region of Central Slovakia and Spiš. Most colonists came in waves beginning in the 13th century and reaching their peak in the 15th. Germans were also invited by Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780) and her son, Joseph II, to repopulate many Slovak towns which had been devastated by the Turkish invasions (1529-1686).

When Germans first came to Slovakia their language baffled the natives and hence they were called “Nemci,” or mutes, that is, speakers of an unintelligible tongue, and yet with the passing of time many German words found their way into the everyday speech of Slovaks. This happened especially in the dialects spoken in areas where Germans lived. Some of these words are: dach (roof), meister (master), schuhster (shoemaker), farbe (color, paint), grundbuch (land register), grunt (lot), flasche (bottle), luft (air). Many of our early immigrants,

(cont. on pg. 4)
Germans, cont. from pg. 3

coming from the Eastern counties of Slovakia, used these words as a matter of course. Many Slovak towns have German names, for example: Pressburg (Bratislava), Käsmark (Kezmarok), Leutschau (Levoča), and many Slovaks have German surnames, for example: Bruner, Hoffman, Neubauer, Mickler, Eck.

Not surprisingly, German influence was prominent in Slovakia not only due to extensive colonization but also because Slovakia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1919. Vienna was the capital of the nation. It was the site of a famous university where many Slovaks studied and where some of the clergy were prepared for their ministry. It was the center of political and cultural life and Slovak patriots gathered there. Knowing German was essential. Knowing the language introduced people to German culture.

It is also worth noting that universal conscription was the law in Austria-Hungary before World War I and this brought many Slovak young men into the Austrian army where the manual of arms was in German. It too, taught Slovaks basic German words and expressions.

German settlers in Slovakia were mainly engaged in mining, trade guilds, finance and marketing. Few worked in agriculture. They brought German “know how” to Slovakia and improved the life of the population. This went beyond language and influenced the everyday life of the people. Trade guilds were part of the feudal life style and were important even up to the industrial revolution. Slovak buildings and towns reflect German architectural styles and Levoča’s magnificent St. James Church with its carved wooden high altar clearly is an example of German medieval art.

Next to the Czech Republic, Austria is Slovakia’s best neighbor, and Austria is a German nation. Both nations share the Danube River and travel between Bratislava and Vienna is easy and convenient. Vienna’s airport provides Slovakia access to international connections not available in Bratislava and Austria is a reliable partner in trade and commerce.

During World War II Slovakia was a coerced ally of Hitler’s Germany as were many European nations at the time. Nevertheless, Slovakia’s President Jozef Tiso managed to preserve a measure of independence for the people and spared them many of the horrors of that terrible war.

Germans were never a political problem for Slovakia though some were forcibly and unfairly deported after World War II by the Czech President Beneš. Many of the early German settlers have been assimilated into the Slovak population and those who have preserved their ethnic identity are loyal and productive citizens. As a consequence, German is a foreign language second only to English taught in Slovak secondary schools. In 1999 independent Slovakia’s second president was elected. He was Rudolf Schuster, of ethnic German background. This is an excellent example of how well the German ethnic minority is integrated into the life of the Slovak nation.
Margarete Hurn, author of *A Foreigner's Guide to Living in Slovakia*, says that one of the first things that struck her when she came to Slovakia to teach English, was that, unlike most European countries, where folk culture is for “old people”, this isn’t so in Slovakia, where you will find Slovaks of all ages enjoying the wonderful celebrations of Slovak folk culture!

So let me tell you about some of the Folk Festivals that you can find if you visit Slovakia. Hopefully, you will get a chance to attend one if you have the chance to travel to Slovakia!

Remember, many of the towns and villages have their own smaller festivals that are only advertised locally! Many festivals take place during the summer, leading up to the harvest festivals, but you can find some type of festival going on just about any time of year.

In April you can find the **International Day of the Roma**. This annual festival is always celebrated in Poprad, where dozens of professional and amateur Roma (gypsy) groups perform a variety of traditional dances and musical performances.

In May you can find the **International Folk Costumes Dolls Festival** in Vysoké Tatry, Kežmarok, Svit and the village of Veľká Lomnica. Children’s folklore comes alive with live presentations of beautiful folk costumes (kroj), songs and dances and also by the display of folk costume dolls dressed in traditional costumes.

June sees the Slovak Folk Festivals really start to take off. There is the **Eurofolklore Festival** in Banská Bystrica, the **Cassovia Festival** in Košice which includes a bryndzové halušky cooking and eating contest, the 50th **International Folk Festival** in Myjava, the **Zamagurie Festival** in Červený Kláštor, the **Festival of Tinkers** in Žilina and in Svidník, Kamienka and Humenne **Festivals of Ruthenian and Ukrainian Folklore**.

July sees two of the most well known and biggest of Slovakia’s Folk Festivals: the 55th annual **Východná Folklore Festival** beneath the Vysoke Tatras and the 44th annual **Folklore Festival Poľana** in Detva. And a unique folklore festival the **International Festival of Novohrad** is held simultaneously in two countries, Slovakia and Hungary, at the end of July and the start of August!

August has the 47th **Jánosík Days** in Terchova, celebrating the Slovak national hero, and Liptovská Teplicka has the **Festival Under Kráľová Hoľa**; and the **Podroháčske Folklore Festival** is the oldest regularly organized folklore events in Orava.

September has Snina’s **Slovak Romany Festival Ternipen** and the oddly named **Salamander Festival** in Banská Štiavnica, a town festival bringing together miners and foresters not only from Banská Štiavnica itself, but from all over Slovakia, and of course there is a **Grape Harvest Festival** in Pezinok.

October has the **Detva Roma Festival** and the **Traditional Fair of Levice** to name a couple.

In November, the interesting **Hontianska Parada** event is a regional Agro tourism festival of folk culture which takes place in the Hrusov woodlands. All kinds of traditional farming activities are on display alongside folk music, songs and dancing.

One thing is certain…I’ve only scratched the surface of Slovakia’s wonderful Folk Festivals! Please check out the links at the end of this newsletter to find out more!
Cleveland chosen as site for annual genealogy conference

By Ronald Garchar and Loretta Ekoniak

The Czecho-Slovak Genealogical Society International (CGSI) will host its next Genealogical and Cultural Conference in Cleveland, Ohio, October 14-17,2009 at the Holiday Inn Cleveland South-Independence. The four-day conference will feature a number of speakers on an array of genealogical, cultural and historical topics of interest of those of Slovak, Czech and Rusyn ancestries. The conference will also include an extensive display of folk dress and artifacts. A display of ethnic music and dance performances by area folk ensembles will also be featured.

With about 3,000 members drawn from 48 states and five foreign countries, CGSI is the world's largest non-profit organization devoted to the genealogy of the ethnic groups that comprised the former Czecho-Slovak Republic, namely the Slovaks, Czechs and Rusyns. The Cleveland area is home to more than 50,000 of Slovak ancestry and about the same number of Czech heritage as well as thousands of Rusyn ancestry. Many of the early Czechs found work with John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil while the Slovaks came to Cleveland to work at the steel and mining companies. The first Czech bishop in America was the Most Rev. Josef Maria Koudelka who was an auxiliary bishop of Cleveland in the early years of the 20th century and who enjoyed a close association with both the Slovak and Czech communities nationwide. The leader of the Slovak (cont. on pg. 8)

RECIPE CORNER

This is a new feature for our newsletter. Of course, everybody has a slightly different recipe for those wonderful ethnic dishes we grew up with so if there is a recipe you would like to have, or if you have a recipe you would like to contribute, feel free to send it to me by

Email at: loretta.ekoniak@gmail.com
Snail mail: 9660 New Buffalo Rd., Canfield, OH 44406

Holubky (stuffed cabbage)

1 cup rice  ground pepper
2 eggs  garlic powder
1 med. onion, grated  2 lbs. ground chuck
1 tsp salt 8-12oz. can tomato
2 tbsp vinegar  puree or sauce
large cabbage head  water

1. Parboil rice (boil 2 minutes); drain water into cooking pot you will use, let rice cool

2. Mix all ingredients in large bowl except tomato sauce, vinegar and water

3. Steam cored cabbage head and loosen leaves, trim off the heavy center vein to make rolling easier

4. Place 1/3-1/2 cup or more of meat mixture into the center of a cabbage leaf depending on size of leaf

5. Roll leaf partly around meat then fold one end of cabbage over the mix and finish rolling. Gently push the other end of the cabbage into the meat to hold the roll closed.

6. In the cooking pot, you can add the cabbage trimmings or a small can of sauerkraut to the bottom; add the cabbage rolls, pour in tomato sauce and add the vinegar. Add water to nearly cover the cabbage rolls. Bring to a boil.

7. Lower heat, simmer covered, until tender, about an hour or so. ENJOY

You can use the same filling to make stuffed green peppers also!
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Večný Odpočinok/ Eternal Rest
Cards of sympathy will be sent to families of our members who died since our last issue. Memorial candles will be lit in their memory at their parish churches:
Father George Duritsa          Huntsburg OH
Father George Popovich          Austintown OH

Father George Popovich, 83

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by the Most Reverend Bishop Murray, S.J. on June 22 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Austintown for Father George Popovich who died Thursday, June 18. He was born in Youngstown, the son of Philip and Anna Popovich, June 4, 1925. He graduated from Ursuline High School and St. Mary’s Seminary in Cleveland, OH. Father was ordained on May 26, 1951 by Youngstown Bishop Emmet Walsh. His services in the diocese of Youngstown and his interests were many. He served as the first Diocesan Priests Personnel Director, on the Priest’s Senate, as chairman of the Liturgy Commission, Judge on the Marriage Tribunal, a consultor to Synod 76, and as Knights of Columbus Chaplain for numerous councils in this area. He is kindly remembered as Associate Pastor at St. John the Baptist Parish in Campbell, and as Pastor at St. Ambrose, Garretsville, St. Bernadette, Masury, St. Paul, Salem and SS Cyril and Methodius in Warren. His last assignment was as chaplain to St. Joseph Riverside Hospital in 1984 where he served until December of 2008 and where he was affectionately known as “Father Sunshine”. His love for Notre Dame where he did post graduate studies and sports is well known. He will be missed by family and friends. Sympathy is extended to his sister, Dorothy Schrader, brothers Frank (Jennie), Thomas (Nancy), and sister-in-law Pauline Popovich and to his nieces and nephews including the Reverend Stephen Popovich, Pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish.

Father George Duritsa, 85

Father George Duritsa, pastor emeritus of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish died at the age of 85 on June 5th at Blossom Hill Care Center in Huntsburg, Ohio. A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated on June 9th at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in McDonald. Father Duritsa was born in Farrell, Pa., the son of George and Margaret Duritsa on January 16, 1924. He graduated from Farrell High School and joined the Navy at the start of WWII. After service in the Navy amphibious forces in the Pacific theatre and theological studies in Kentucky, St. Mary’s Seminary in Cleveland, OH, and the North American College in Rome, he graduated from Gregorian University in Rome and was ordained a Catholic priest by Bishop Martin O’Conner in Rome on Dec. 19, 1953. His Youngstown assignments included work at numerous parishes and teaching philosophy at Youngstown State University. He will be remembered as chaplain for the Vienna Air Base, the Vienna Radar Station and for St. Elizabeth Health Center, as Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish for 25 years and as Administrator of St. Elizabeth Parish, Campbell, from 1997 to 2003. Our sympathy goes out to his sister Carol (Fred) Triggs, his nieces and nephews and to his many friends.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Here we are in August already! The 4th Annual Mahoning Valley SlovakFest is around the corner, and we will be raffling off a collection of Slovak books, crafts and other Slovak items at our table. SlovakFest will be rapidly followed by the Canfield Fair, where, as usual, we are looking for volunteers to help man the Slovak Booth in the International Building. If you would like to help at either event, or have items you would like to loan for display at the Slovak booth, please contact me or any of the other officers. Again, I encourage you to participate at these events and to contribute to our newsletter to help keep our heritage vibrant.

Loretta Ekoniak, president
loretta.ekoniak@gmail.com

Loretta Ekoniak, president
loretta.ekoniak@gmail.com
community was the Rev. Stephen Furdek who was the founder of the First Catholic Slovak Union and assisted in the establishment of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association. A bust of the Rev. Alexander Duchnovich (1803-1865, a Rusyn priest and nationalist was unveiled in the Cleveland Cultural Gardens in 1952. Cleveland is home to a Czech Cultural Center as well as the Slovak Institute. In addition, many other institutions and organizations in the Cleveland area can be traced to the Czech and Slovak heritage.

This conference has something to interest everyone! You can start on Wednesday or Thursday with tours of Cleveland’s Czech, Slovak and Rusyn neighborhoods, or the Western Reserve Historical Society and the First Catholic Slovak Union headquarters where you can view the Baine/Cincebeaux Folk Dress mini-Exhibit.

The Thursday evening mixer will let you meet the authors of recently published books concerning Cleveland’s ethnic settlers. Meet the authors of “Cleveland Slovaks” and “Cleveland Czechs”.

Friday’s opening Keynote address by John J. Grabowski, is titled Creating Diversity: The Role Czech and Slovak Immigration in the Globalization of Northeastern Ohio.

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday are filled with cultural and genealogical sessions along with various evening entertainment by area Czech, Slovak and Carpatho-Rusyn groups.

You can sign up to attend the whole conference or as little as one day, and if you sign up before September 1st, there is a discount.

Those interested in learning more about this year's conference should write: CGSI at P.O. Box 16225, St. Paul, MN 55116-0225 or call (651) 450-2322, or check CGSI’s website at www.cgsi.org.

The 16th Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Sorrowful Mother, Patroness of Slovakia

The 16th Annual Pilgrimage in honor of Our Sorrowful Mother, Patroness of Slovakia, will be held Sunday, September 13, 2009 at Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine, Lipkey Road, North Jackson, OH.

Devotions will begin at 3:00 pm with Anointing of the Sick. The Way of the Cross and Confessions will follow.

A Slovak Mass will be at 4:00 pm with Rev. George M. Franko as the principal celebrant. Attending clergy will concelebrate. Rev. William B. Kraynak, Pastor of Saint Joan of Arc Parish, Canton, Ohio will be the homilist.

Dinner will be served in the Shrine Dining Hall following Mass. Tickets are $15 for adults and $6 for children under 12. Dinner is optional.

Tickets will not be available at the door. They may be purchased from members of the Slovak Catholic Federation or by calling 330-782-9126. Everyone is invited to the Pilgrimage.
A Job Well Done

We would like to extend our congratulations to three of our members in the clergy: Father John Reiss, as he celebrates the 40th Anniversary of his Ordination to the priesthood, Father William Petrunak as he celebrates 50 years of service in the priesthood and in Catholic education, and Father Gabriel Yablonski who is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of his Ordination.

God bless.

Would you like to find out more about things in this issue?

Slovak Folk Festivals
www.slovakia.travel/
This is the national tourism portal for Slovakia. Enter and look for the Event Calendar
www.hoteltravel.com/slovakia/guides/festivals.htm

Czechoslovak Geneological Society International
http://www.cgsi.org

Germans in Slovakia
http://www.feefhs.org/links/Slovakia/dg-gps.html

***These sites have been checked by McAfee Security Site Advisor ***

AMERICAN SLOVAK CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF THE MAHONING VALLEY
Membership Application/Renewal

Name _______________________________________________________________ NEW _____

Street Address _____________________________________________________ RENEW _____

City __________________ State ______ Zip ______ Email __________________________

______I would prefer to have the PDF version emailed to me when available

DUES ARE $5/YEAR
PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE AMERICAN SLOVAK CULTURAL ASSOCIATION (ASCA)
MAIL TO: Ron Garchar, 6917 Slippery Rock, Canfield, OH
### ASCA OFFICERS

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Contributors in this issue:
- Loretta Ekoniak
- Rev. George Franko
- Ronald Garchar
- Faith Simko
- Anamarie Vidis

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2009

Membership meeting at SS. Cyril & Methodius Church Hall  
252 E. Wood St., Youngstown, OH 44502

next meetings:

**Thursday August 13, 2009**  6:30 p.m.  
**Thursday November 12, 2009**  6:30 p.m.

**Slovak Radio Program**

Saturday 9-10:30 p.m.  WKTL 90.7 FM  
Struthers, OH 44471  
Tel: 330-755-8578
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Please check to see if your dues are current!!
NEXT MEETING DATE August 13, 2009  6:30 p.m.
SS. Cyril & Methodius Church Hall