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The Magazine of Ukrainian Things

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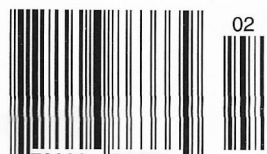
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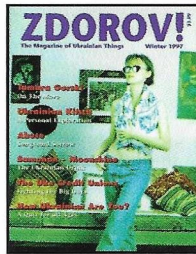
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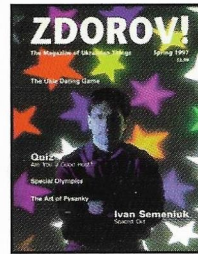
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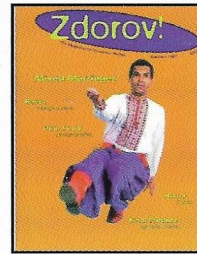
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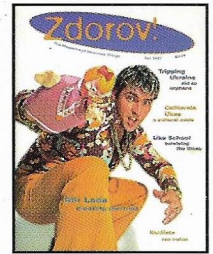
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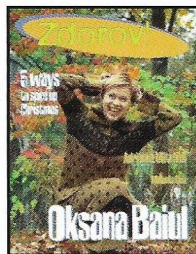
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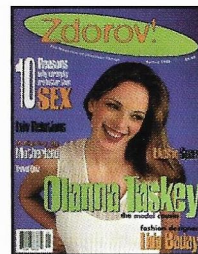
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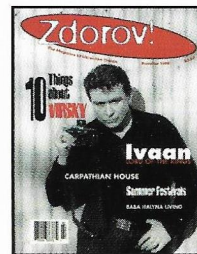
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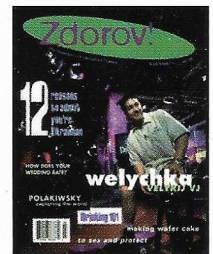
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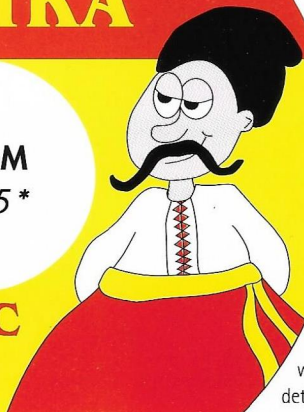
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what's inside... inside...  
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# Zdorov!

The Magazine of Ukrainian Things

## CIRCUS OF CIRQUE

Run away and join up

by Nestor Gula

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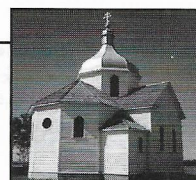


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by Jars Balan

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# Zdorov!

The Magazine of Ukrainian Things

Volume 3, Number 11

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## Editorial

Spring brought with it horrible news.

The *Eyetalian*, an English-language magazine for the Italian community, folded. As did *Que-Pasa*, a similar magazine for Spanish-speaking Canadians. *Toronto Life* and *Maclean's*, two huge Canadian magazines, both stopped publishing Chinese-language editions.

Ordinarily the failure of a magazine is not surprising news. Usually, out of five magazines that start up, only one will make it to the end of the first year. Or as Neville Gilfoy, the publisher of *Atlantic Progress* in Halifax puts it so eloquently, "the only way to make a small fortune in publishing is to start with a large fortune."

The problem with the collapse of these magazines is that it's a case of the ethnic press taking it on the chin. The reasons were all quite similar: a lack of national advertisers. Even though the *Eyetalian* boasted a circulation of around 10,000, they still were not able to get any major brand to advertise in their fabulous looking magazine. Without any of this type of advertising, the only ad revenue comes from the ethnic community's businesses. These are usually quite tapped because the community in general is asking for more financial support due to funding cuts. What a vicious circle. John Montesano, the editor of the *Eyetalian*, shares some of his thoughts on the challenges of publishing an ethnic magazine in our "Final Phrases".

Although *Zdorov!* is not yet economically self-sufficient, we are not in the position of even considering shutting down our operations. We have good support from our readers and advertisers. We have a strong foundation. Over the course of this summer and the coming fall and winter, we hope to build on this solid base and perhaps even make some money to pay the people who are currently toiling to produce *Zdorov!*

We would like to thank all our readers and advertisers for their continued support. As usual, we welcome your ideas, input, suggestions, and of course, if you've got a hankering to put pen to paper, your story submissions.

We can be reached at:

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Cover photograph of Adagio Trio courtesy of Cirque du Soleil  
Photo by Al Seibo



## Dear Zdorov,

Re: Baiul Again, Winter 1999

Without going too much into Oksana Baiul's drinking, or her reassuring interview with Nestor Gula that she hadn't drank since her car accident—only to find out that wasn't true (except to say that she wasn't being honest with others because she wasn't being honest with herself. That's the nature of the beast: alcoholism), I wish to respond to Gula's comment about Oksana, in her recent appearance on *Oprah*, sounding "a little too well rehearsed".

I myself noticed that at times Oksana does seem a little too stilted in her vocabulary and deliverance when she talks in English. I also noticed her, as late as the Feb. 1997 appearance on *Oprah*, saying

things like "I went to see an ice-skating show, and I was so exciting (sic) about that," and "Thanks (sic) God I have those kinds of friends," etc. (fellow skater Katia Gordeeva talked similarly the previous year). Couldn't we give her the benefit of the doubt and chalk that up to her still less than total familiarity and ease with English, especially when she's talking about such an emotionally wrenching subject? I happen to feel that Oksana should come clean about some things Gula mentioned in his article, but when it comes to her vocabulary, let's cut her some slack.

John Gordon King  
Calgary, Alberta

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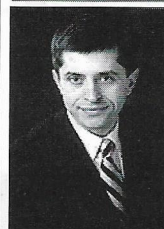
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## Dear Zdorov,

Re: Final Phrases, Spring 1999

I am surprised that I am actually responding to an article.

I am the kind of consumer of information that formulates ten rebuttals in my mind during a radio talk show, for example, but never makes the call. Same with newspapers/magazines. Read the articles—never tell the editor what I think.

However, this time I felt compelled to write to you. Mychailo Wynnyckyj in "Final Phrases" (*Zdorov!* Spring 1999) described the legacy of so many Ukrainian women so eloquently that it tugged at my heart.

The recognition for achievements of *Babusia's* generation are generally not revealed until she is no longer there to receive them. Many a Ukrainian woman has excelled within the Ukrainian community

but has been stopped short in the position of secretary, of whatever organization, when a male has been present to assume the role of the president. And why do they stop receiving wedding invitations once they are widowed?

Women have forever been the heartbeat of the Ukrainian family and community, and it is an injustice to allow them to grow and achieve in their lifetimes without the appropriate recognition.

This is not a comment on the age-old male vs. female thing. Yes, we have come a long way down that path, but why save *Babusia's* accolades for the *tryzna* (wake)?

LAT  
Toronto, Ontario

## Dear Zdorov,

Re: So I married a Ukrainian, Spring 1999

I am so happy that you have decided to tackle the oft-times controversial subject matter of mixed marriages in the way that you did.

Too often there is too much breast-beating and gnashing of teeth whenever this subject is broached. Why is it that we Ukrainians are so sensitive about members of our community, the diaspora to boot, marrying outside the community? As opposed to celebrating the event, we treat it as a sort of funeral with snide remarks about the person's choice of mate.

I am the product of a mixed marriage and my kids

are the products of a mixed marriage. Things are great.

I bring my genetic/cultural foibles to the house and so does my wife. My Irish mom complimented my dad wonderfully through their nearly 50 years of union.

Instead of treating a mixed marriage as a negative we should celebrate it.

Keep up the good work.

Sam Ratushyj  
Moncton, New Brunswick

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# 9 Pros & Cons of to moving Ukraine

## Pros

Houses/apartments are cheaper there

Everybody speaks Ukrainian

You can't get a job here

Booze is cheap

You'll be far away from your family

It's Europe

There's great business potential and opportunity

It's the country of your ancestors

You would like to go and explore new countries

## Cons

You still won't qualify for a loan

Everybody speaks Ukrainian

You won't get a job there

Booze is cheap

You'll be far away from your friends

It's Eastern Europe

There's serious organized crime and corruption

You were born here

You've never gone beyond the city limits

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# The Long Good-Bye

by Heather Olivetz

Lately, my husband and I have been getting downright sentimental. As we await the arrival of the wee Olivetz, we are slowly (and, truth be told, somewhat reluctantly) preparing to bid adieu to our carefree lifestyle.

All of a sudden, everyday occurrences are accompanied with one of two well-worn phrases. It's either "You know, this may be one of the last times we... or pretty soon we won't be able to...." We dig in to every hot meal like it may be our last (because it just might be). We pause to savour the sounds of silence in our home and cast an appraising eye over our walls (free of fingerprints) and our furniture (unsullied by flattened peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches). No Walt Disney movies clutter our video collection. We do not know (or care) which is the gay Teletubby. We have not heard a single song off the *Barabolya* CD. We relish the pleasure of getting into the car and going anywhere at a moment's notice. While we have not quite reached the point of parental no return—purchasing a minivan—there's little chance our next vehicle will be the cute and sporty Volkswagen Beetle.

Our vacation snapshots are well-thumbed as we sigh over the fun we had...once upon a time. Non-expectant friends tell us of their plans to hike across the Himalayas, or safari in Africa, or cycle through Ireland, and we turn green with envy. At the shopping mall, we shudder when we see those harried-looking parents sporting spit-up on their shirts, bags under their eyes and screaming toddlers at their feet. Egads, we think, in a few short weeks that will be us. To fortify ourselves for the long haul ahead, we are relishing our few remaining weekend mornings spent lazing in bed, having heard from reliable sources (parents of small children) that 8 a.m. is considered sleeping in when you have little ones loose in the house.

Of course, we're comatose on the weekends because we don't always have the most restful nights. It's not those nasty leg cramps that have us pregnant Ukrainian women sitting bolt upright in bed at three in the morning; it's the myriad of gut-wrenching choices we face. Forget the natural-versus-medicated childbirth dilemma, we're talking real earth-shattering decisions here. Plast or CYM? After which fallen Ukrainian

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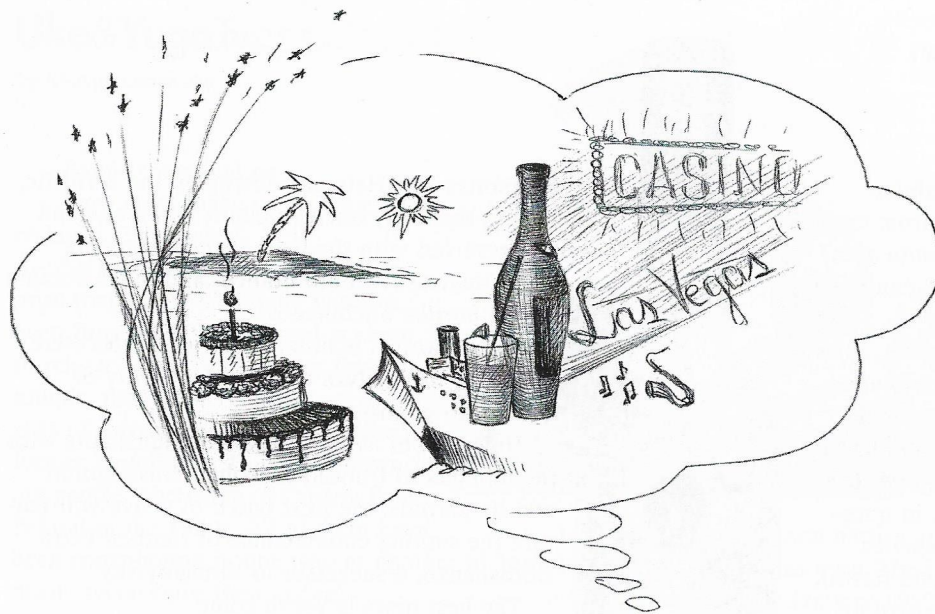
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meeting the more mundane challenges of parenthood: brushing up on research, writing and presentation skills, knowing that in no time we will be inundated with homework and science projects. In preparation for the demands of school, we are stocking up on bristol board, glue sticks and back issues of *National Geographic*. I am busy reviewing multiplication tables. My husband is memorizing the “i before e, except after c” rule. By golly, we made it through the education system once; we can do it again.

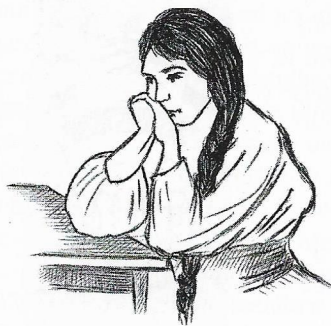
Yup, it's tough being a Ukrainian parent-to-be. But like our parents before us, and our parents' parents before them, somehow we'll

manage. Still, I'm sure the kid will turn out OK. And will blame us regardless. Just like his parents, and his parents' parents before them....

*In the face of impending parenthood, Heather Olivetz is trying to relax. For the record, those breathing exercises aren't helping much.*

hero/martyr/hetman do you name the child? Bandura lessons or Ukrainian dancing? Do you play the choral or instrumental version of *Sche ne vmerla* during the birth? Which Ukrainian school do you choose: the social one where you pay your tuition and are practically guaranteed your *matura* or the academic one where you actually have to earn your diploma? Whose poems are best for baby in utero: Shevchenko's, Franko's, Ukrainka's or (God forbid) Suess's? Is the best *sadochok* already full? Does this mean your child will never learn the right version of *Bula kitsia*, *harna kitsia*, thus traumatizing her for life? Suddenly, the breast-versus-bottle quandary pales by comparison.

Not to say that non-Ukrainian parents don't have their work cut out for them as well. We join them in



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# LCBO and the Hetman

by Frank Franco

Why are bottles of the Ukrainian "Hetman" vodka disappearing from certain liquor store shelves in the Toronto area?

Is it because the bottle is so damn good looking?

Is it because of good, nay great, sales?

Nope. Someone lodged a complaint...

It seems that a patron of the vodka (*that's horilka to you—ed.*) shelves had a problem with the particular *hetman* featured on the bottle. The kozak in question is Bohdan Khmelnytsky (spelled "Chmelnicki" on the ornate glass flasks). As the LCBO (*Liquor Control Board of Ontario for those out of province—ed.*) communication rep so eloquently put it, "The problem seems to be that the guy pictured on the bottle was a leader of Ukraine way back yonder."

To wit, Mr. Khmelnytsky was a Ukrainian member of the Polish Commonwealth's ruling class until a series of circumstances (including the rape and murder of his first wife) prompted him, in 1648, to lead one of the periodic kozak uprisings that had swept his country for some 80 years.

Mr. Khmelnytsky is popular among many Ukrainians who consider him a liberator and founder of the kozak State (Hetmanate). He's not that popular a figure among Poles and Jews, because his forces slaughtered many of both during his campaigns.



The importers of "Hetman" downplay the kerfuffle, maintaining that only one complaint was made and promptly resolved with the help of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Toronto branch, and other notable Ukrainian *horilka* aficionados.

The importers maintain that no bottles were pulled off the shelves and there is plenty of Hetman to go around.

However, to avoid further entanglements with the minders of Ontario's alcohol consumption and its patrons, the next batch to arrive will feature the smiling countenance of Hetman Petro Doroshenko, a successor to Khmelnytsky.

The best news is yet to come.

"Hetman" firewater is packaged in five (5) different bottles. Besides Khmelnytsky and Doroshenko, there are bottles with [Petro Konashevych] Sahaydachny, [Dmytro "Bayda"] Vyshnevetsky and [Ivan] Mazeppa (the Byron spelling).

Wow! A collectible *horilka* series! It's what we've all been waiting for! The bad news is that the various *hetmans* will not appear on the LCBO's shelves at the same time—so hoarding of the various bottles is advised. After the fifth bottle comes in you can have a proper five-*hetman* "Hetman" party.

A last bit of caution. Get the Khmelnytsky bottle soon. Once it's gone, who knows when it will be let back into our fair land....

*Frank Franco is buying a case of Hetman, when (if) he gets paid.*

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# Uke&YugoTunes

by Martyn Lotowsky

Bands come and go.

They start, make some noise and collapse. Eventually.

So it should not come as a surprise that a new Ukrainian band has been formed in Toronto and is about to release a CD. What makes this band unique, though, is that its core consists of recent immigrants from the former Yugoslavia. The band-mates are people who came to Canada from Poland in the 1980s. All of them have been contributing in one way or another to Toronto's music scene since their arrival.

Calling themselves Khudi a Motsni (Skinny but Bold), the band plays a melange of music from hard-and-heavy rock tunes to rock-ballad pieces. There are many other styles of music mixed into their arrangements. The origin of most of the songs comes from the former Yugoslavia—the members had to get the rights to re-record the songs for their CD. These were songs that they heard and sang before war engulfed the Balkans. The lyrics, in Ukrainian, are all original.

"The story of this band goes back to late 1997," says vocalist Laurentin Brelak. "Vlatko Lepki (guitars) and I recorded a song "Tak Yak Kakao" in Vlatko's home studio (presently known as VLATKO VDOMA studio)." Their aim was to record a couple of songs that were very popular back in their home country. The idea to have Ukrainian lyrics added to that music seemed appealing to them. They played these songs to people at




jam nights and parties and the genesis of Khudi a Motsni was born. The band as it stands now got together in January 1999.

The band has delusions of grandeur. "We want money, fame, women, women and... women, naturally... ha, ha, ha," laughs Brelak. "We play for fun, first of all. Being on stage, playing music that we like, those are things that make us happy. Seeing people who enjoy our sound gives us enthusiasm too, makes us work harder and be more creative." He says that their first priority is to release the CD, then they will look around for possibilities of playing at festivals and pub nights.

Other members of the band are: Dario Mihaljisin (drums), Igor Hemon (bass guitar), Petro Polansky (keyboards), Beata Wujcik (back vocal) and Elana Sulytski (back vocal).

---

*Martyn Lotowsky is a writer currently hiding out somewhere east of Toronto and scribbling furiously.*

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## Ukrainian Journalists of the World – Unite!

by Michael Bociurkiw

### Ukrainian doctors have one. So do engineers, lawyers and architects.

For the longest time, journalists of Ukrainian descent—or those who cover Ukraine or have an interest in Ukrainian issues—have had no effective means by which to communicate, network, seek peer support or just meet on a regular basis.

All that may change. An ad hoc group of journalists from across North America have started a dialogue with a view towards forming a professional association of Ukrainian journalists. At a gathering later this year (the date and location will be announced), we hope to discuss some of the goals and objectives of the proposed group. While geared to bona fide journalists—both full-time and freelance, some of the group's future activities might also appeal to academics, government officials,

members of multilateral institutions, information officers and public relations professionals. Editors and writers from new media organizations are also encouraged to join.

This endeavour is *not* an attempt to form yet another Ukrainian organization, but rather to create a new forum to keep all of us in better touch—and to create new opportunities for professional development and fun. In time, Ukrainian community organizations may find it useful to tap the collective knowledge and experience of group members when they need to tackle issues related to the mainstream media.

By no means do we plan to limit participation to Ukrainians. Those who have an interest in Ukrainian affairs should participate. The same goes for our colleagues in Ukraine.

Some directions this group will consider taking:

- Professional Development: seminars, lectures etc. on journalism-related issues, Ukraine and Eastern Europe current events
- Information Exchange: interactive Web site and newsletter
- Networking: using our combined knowledge/contacts/experience for such things as: story ideas; peer support and help when we face troubles; job searching and career counselling; contact sharing for stories
- Professional development and exchanges with journalists in Ukraine
- Social events

To date, a core group of more than a dozen journalists from television, radio and print have expressed interest in the formation of this new group. While most of the interest has come from people in North America, we also seek members from other countries—as well as Ukraine.

If you are interested, contact:

*Michael Bociurkiw*

PMB 162

16625 Redmond Way, Suite M,  
Redmond, WA

USA 98052

Ph: 425-985-7894 or 425-739-0167

Voice Mail/Fax: 416-352-5068

Email: [bociu@compuserve.com](mailto:bociu@compuserve.com)

# Watering Hole In Edmonchuck

by Marko Lech

There's finally a place to drink in Edmonton.

Not that Edmonton has no bars—there are a few in that city. Some of them are even quite passable. The news here is that finally someone has decided to open up a Ukrainian bar. For a city where 12 percent of the population is Ukrainian it's about time.

Proprietor, Lisa McDonald—yes, she is Ukrainian—had a dream. Years ago when she visited places like Yuriy's, Lys Mykyta's, Ellenville and Trembita (all of these are in the eastern bit of North America, from an Edmontonian's perspective) among many others, she wondered why a comparable happening place did not exist in her little Ukrainian village. (*by the way, Yuriy's is no more—ed.*) It took ten years, a BEd, 3 weddings and a ticking biological clock—but it's finally a reality: Na Zdorovya Ukrainian Pub.

Lisa managed to score a sweet location for her pub. The premises will be located at 10921—101 Street, which is on the corner of 101 Street and Kingsway Avenue. Strategically placed halfway between the Catholic and Orthodox Cathedrals, a few blocks from UNO and the Ukrainian Centre. Down the street from Marchyshyn's meat store and Park Memorial funeral home. Just north of Edmonton's downtown core, it's about 13 kilometers from West Edmonton Mall, which is a good hike in the summer and a brisk sprint in the winter. For the commuters there's lots of free parking.

Na Zdorovya is opening on June 21st and will have grand opening celebrations throughout that first week. The bar will have entertainment facilities, a pool table and juke box and will feature special events like Vodka Wednesday's, big screen showings of Taras Bulba and European sports and Edmonton's first (as far as she knows) Ukrainian open stage.

Food and beverages will be pub fare with a Ukrainian twist. Try the Kubbie Chips, deep fried *pyrohy/varenyky* (pizza flavoured to boot), garlic wings and



The *na zdorovya kozak* was drawn by premier Edmonton cartoonist Greg Huculak and is protected by all copyright laws.

more. The bar's specialty drink is really unique. You can't be at Na Zdorovya without having their Kozak shot—Hetman Vodka with a garlic sliver!

- For more information check out the awesome Website at [www.nazdorovya.com](http://www.nazdorovya.com)
- If that ain't enough info for ya, call (780) 421 8928.

And by the way, "*na zdorovya!!!*"

Marko Lech is a patient teacher living in Edmonton and quietly pining for the fjords.

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# CyberUkes



Chornobyl has entered the standard lexicon of all languages. On April 26, 1986, when reactor unit 4 at the Chornobyl Nuclear Facility exploded, it became the disaster of disasters—the ramifications of which are still being felt and will linger on long after this and future generations have passed away.

As a watershed event, the disaster at Chornobyl will stand as one of the most important events of this century—perhaps even of this millennium.

Imagine my surprise when I stumbled upon the crude Web site that is the Chornobyl Information Center. The site can be found at [www.ic-chnobyl.kiev.ua](http://www.ic-chnobyl.kiev.ua). In this day of Java scripts and Web animation, this is a very crude looking site that loads extremely slowly—quite a surprise for a site that is so basic: standard grey background and no frills. At the bottom it proudly proclaims that it is powered by both Apache (an Internet http server company) and BSD (a free UNIX derivative operating system), and sponsored by Obolon, the Ukrainian beer company whose colourful logo really stands out on the site.

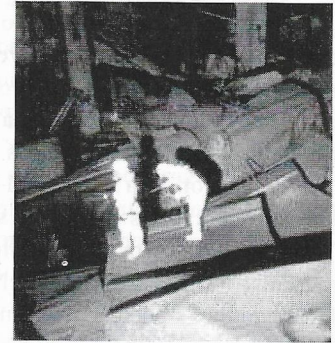
Despite its graphic simplicity the site is a great source of information on this disaster. It has links to the U.S. Department of Energy's International Nuclear Safety Program highlights most of the major information they have on the

reactor used in the Chornobyl Nuclear Facility; The Uranium Institute, which has a great description of the Chornobyl accident; the Nuclear Energy Agency's publication on radiation protection; the International Atomic Energy Agency Bulletin on Chornobyl, as well as

articles from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences' Department of Radioecology dealing with the effect of the radioactive fallout from the Chornobyl disaster. This is a wealth of scientific information all contained in one place. In the guest book one visitor commented that he was amazed at the openness of the Ukrainian government for making this information so easily accessible.

One of the other good attributes of this site is the fact that they have links to sites where you can download that elusive KOI8 font so you can read Ukrainian and/or Russian sites. It also contains 33 pictures of the Chornobyl Nuclear Facility, all post-accident. This last page takes an eternity to load. The site also has contacts, enticing visitors to Chornobyl with an address phone number and fax for the nuclear installation. An interesting diversion for a visit to Ukraine.

Beyond its crudity, this site is excellent for anyone wanting to know more about the Chornobyl nuclear disaster.



## The Largest Ukrainian Web Site on the Internet

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## Ukraine's Forbidden History

Tim Smith, Rob Perks, Graham Smith

108 pgs.

Dewi Lewis Publishing/London, UK/1998

ISBN: 1-899235-56-6

Recently, Vaclav Havel—the 'poet president' of the Czech Republic—spoke to the joint houses of the Canadian Parliament. The theme of his talk was the end of the nation state.

My guess is that this would not sit well with most Ukrainians living in the diaspora, especially those brought up on the lethal combination of Shevchenko and *hopak*.

*Ukraine's Forbidden History* is a snapshot of the story of the much-belated emergence of the Ukrainian nation state that in some way represents a home to many *Zdorov!* readers.

The authors, all historians from the U.K. with non-Slavic names, have put together a collection of photographs and testimonies from real people, linking them by way of a chronological summary of Ukraine's 20th century history. In essence, it is a documentary of the

suffering and sorrow that too many individuals and their families have endured in the name of their own liberty as individuals, as well as in the name of the nation to which they happen to belong.

Out of the ashes and the smouldering bones a nation state has arisen that is diverse from within and has at best a tenuous sense of self. This is clear from the photos of contemporary Ukraine and the testimonies of the people interviewed in Ukraine today. Though it seems to be formatted in coffee table style, it is chock-full of lush, riveting and shockingly sad photographs that do not necessarily lend themselves to a casual perusal during Saturday afternoon tea.

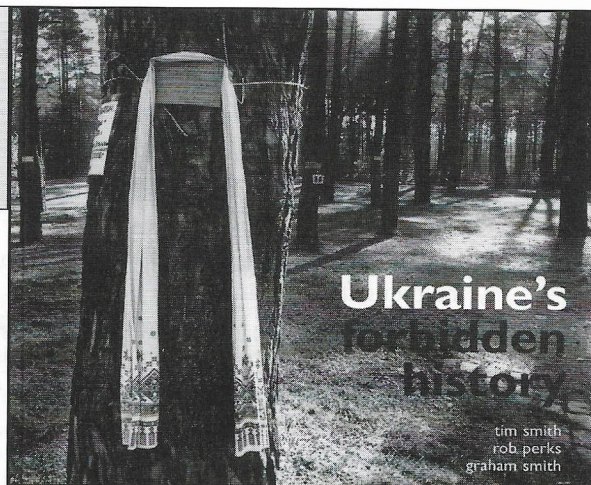
It is clear from this book that, in spite of many people's love for Ukraine and desire for an indepen-

dent state, the nation state idea has not served many Ukrainians (and others living in Ukraine) well. It has brought hope, but it has brought much suffering and dislocation.

Havel recognizes that even powerful nation states are losing legal power and emotional vibrancy. It's too bad that Ukraine and its citizens are just now getting off of their knees.

With this book in one hand and Havel's words in the other we diasporic Ukrainians can start to make sense of that place called home.

reviewed by Taras Gula



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# Reviews

## Letters to Maggie

Helen Potrebenco

51 pgs.

Lazara Press/Vancouver, Canada/1998

ISBN: 0-920999-34-4

As I picked up *Letters to Maggie*, I was intrigued by the thought of reading Helen Potrebenco's letters to Maggie Benston. After Maggie's death in 1991, Helen decided to keep on corresponding with her friend and keeping her informed of her views about what was going on in the world.

Maggie Benston was a singer, author, teacher, feminist, scientist, researcher and social activist all rolled into one. She was also a respected professor of Chemistry, Computer Science and Women's Studies at the Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, where in 1996 a Maggie Benston Student Centre was opened in

If I had some money, I would start a halfway house, J— said ...what's the good of it? The more halfways, the more homeless. I want to get a bulldozer and start mowing down all the million dollar houses. It would take less money to run a bulldozer than a halfway house and be way more effective. But I don't have the money for a bulldozer.

her memory. Maggie was Helen's mentor and friend, and her impact on Helen was so significant that Helen felt compelled to write her letters even after her death.

In the opening letter Helen writes fondly of her memories of Maggie. She recounts the times they shared a house and went to protest marches together. In the remainder of the letters, it's Helen we learn about. In them, Helen records her views and reflections on a varied melange of topics—culture, work, literature,

## LETTERS TO MAGGIE

by Helen Potrebenco

homelessness, the elderly and children, to name a few.

We come to know Helen as a feminist with a strong socialist bent. After reading the letters titled "On Culture," "Lives of the Rich and Famous" and

"Work and Literature," her strong socialist opinions can turn exhausting, even overbearing for the more conservative-minded reader. Let's just say that rich white conservative males who enjoy philosophy and classical music would be in for quite a heated discussion if they would ever grace her presence.

These letters, however, are more than just a platform for Potrebenco's socialist-feminist ideology. She also raises original insights into human nature and tells a damn good story. Her sense of humour, her wit her in-your-face style is carefully merged with a startlingly deep sensitivity to the disenfranchised and dispossessed in our society.

reviewed by Ulana Snihura

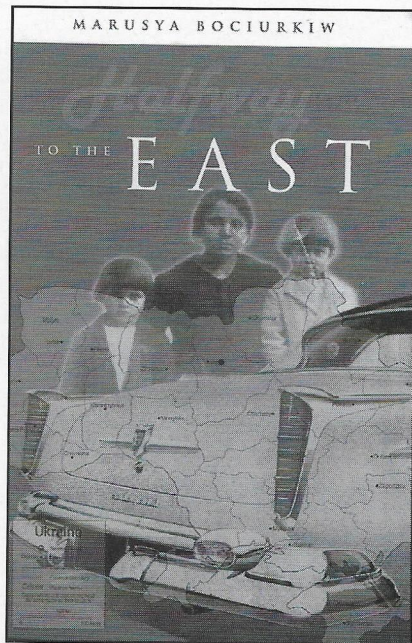
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## Halfway to the East

Marusya Bociurkiw

92 pgs.

Lazara Press/Vancouver, Canada/1999

ISBN: 0-920999-38-7

*Halfway to the East* is a collection of poetry that takes its reader on Marusya Bociurkiw's search for belonging.

Bociurkiw is an accomplished author, media artist and academic. Her writings have appeared in various anthologies and journals, and her previous book was a collection of short stories titled *The Woman Who Loved Airports*.

The poems, written in memoir style, carry the reader into the writer's personal and arduous journey through history, culture, and finally on to self-discovery. In the beautifully written "I Hear Them Singing all the Time," Bociurkiw laments that

my people come from a country whose name  
means border.

This theme of displacement and longing is constant in the writer's work. With just a few words, she flawlessly portrays the harsh reality of an immigrant in a new land—the lack of acceptance upon arrival and the yearning to go back. So emphatic are the voices coming off the page that the reader can almost hear the song

Hey, hey...

in the background.

In *Halfway to the East*, we find Bociurkiw's generation searching for cultural identity. Wherever she travels, wherever she lives, the poet continuously finds herself struggling to connect with the old world—with its history, its culture, its language.

Where I live: edge of British against  
Asia...

Where I was born: frontier town flatlined  
into wide horizon...

Where I have not been: the ancient bedrock  
of Baba's memory...

In the section "Eternal Memory," we once again encounter the theme of displacement and belonging.

We relive Bociurkiw's memories of her *baba* through the celebration of Easter. The connection with her grandmother instills in the poet a sense of historical and cultural belonging, a feeling of having roots. Until one day someone in her family tells *baba* the word "lesbian." Suddenly Bociurkiw's fleeting sense of belonging is ripped apart because of her homosexuality.

You are not my family,

her *baba* tells her, mincing no words as she coldly and brutally uproots her granddaughter.

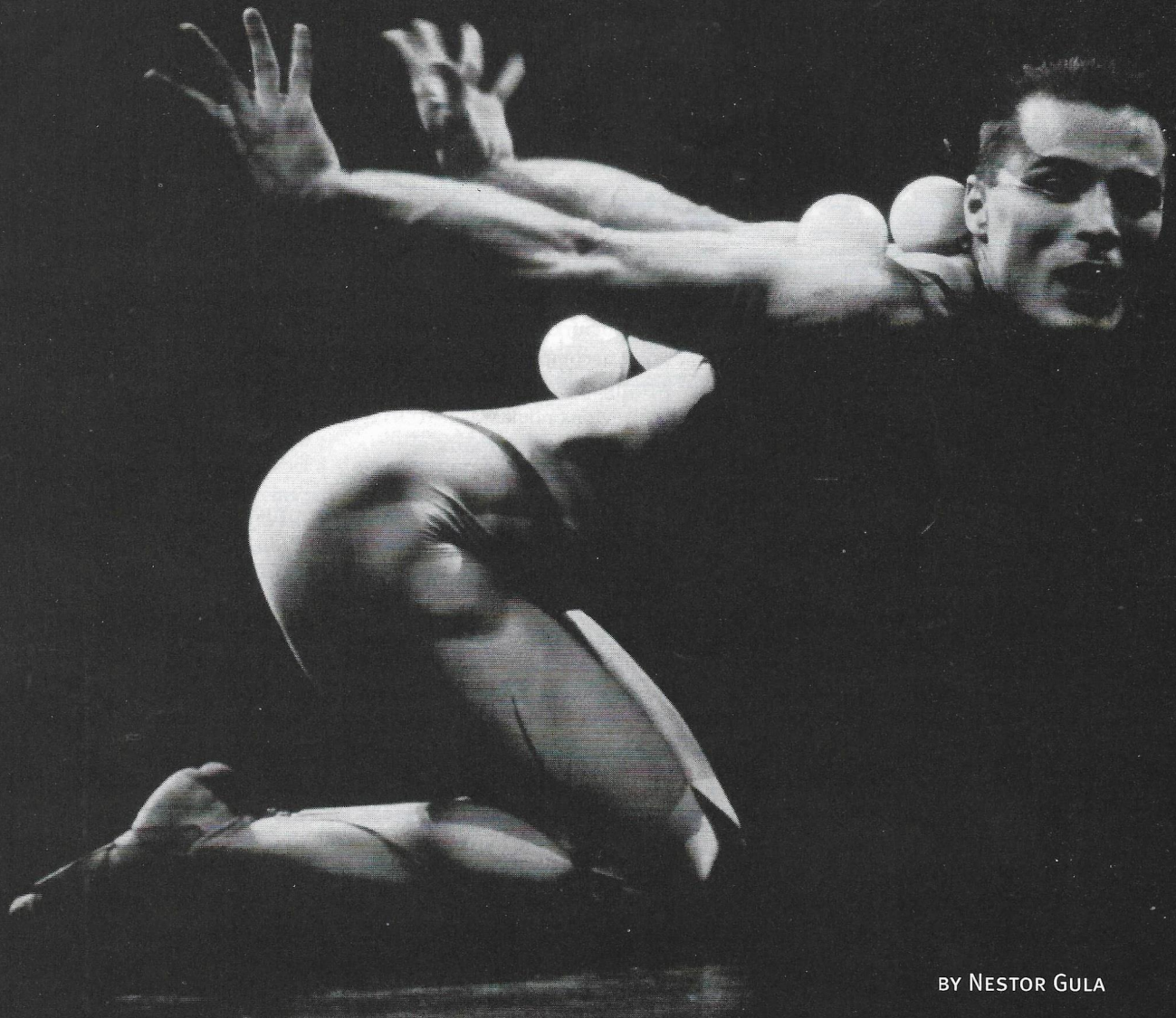
Years later, Bociurkiw struggles with this harsh affront through the written word, outlining her yearning to regain what was lost. In "River" she searches to find her way back, and ends on a slightly uplifting note,

I dreamt my grandmother welcomed me to her  
home again. I know the river cries with  
me.

The book's final section "Anything To Do With Roads" begins with Bociurkiw and her lover travelling along the roads of Canada on their way home for Christmas. On this journey Bociurkiw finally finds her home—on her balcony eating barbecued chicken and playing scrabble with her best friends and childhood pal.

...home is where you least expect it...

reviewed by Ulana Snihura



BY NESTOR GULA

## Running away to join the *Cirque du Soleil*

### The circus is for kids.

That's my attitude as the lights dim in the "big top" tent on a blustery November day in Ottawa. This is Canada's famous Cirque du Soleil and I'm about to see a performance of their show *Saltimbanco*. *Saltimbanco* is a 16th-century word for "showman" or "street performer". The show, billed as a celebration of urban life, first premiered more than six years ago in 1992, and is now priming itself for a three-year tour of Asia and the Pacific. The performers would soon be off to Australia. (Where they are right now.)

I'm here to interview a family of Ukrainian acrobats who have been given the enviable show-opening slot. I know I should be more enthusiastic, but I never liked circuses, even as a kid. As the show begins I sit quietly, armed to the teeth with grumpy cynicism.

Wow, ma! What have they done with the circus?

I was expecting a tacky flourishing, entrance. Instead I found myself accosted by a mass of colourful but weirdly dressed clowns as they made their way through the audience, playfully pinching cheeks and pulling people's hair. The band started to play—yes, live music. The emcee came on, did a few tricks, uttered some clever lines and scurried off stage to make room for the opening act.

And what an opening act.

Andrei Vintilov, his wife Oxana and daughter Darya stun the crowd with their fluid, languorous contortions. Their magical act, called the Adagio Trio, abounds with mystic symbolism—the parents holding up the diminutive Darya as their future and as the future of all humanity. Andrei is dressed from head to toe in yellow, Oxana in blue. Hmmmm, the colours of the Ukrainian flag. Coincidence? I don't think so. "Yes," explains Cirque du Soleil's publicist Brigitte Bélanger, "the costumes for this act were designed when the show first opened in 1992." Long before the Vintilovs were part of the show, she adds. And no, a Ukrainian did not design the costumes.

The true star, mesmerizing the audience throughout, is nine-year-old Darya. Her body doesn't rest for a second and her limbs move in astonishing synchronicity with those of her parents. In graceful acrobatic motions, the three bodies intertwine, balancing themselves in perfect harmony and proportion. So dynamic was this living sculpture created by moving bodies, I was afraid to blink for fear of missing a tiny manoeuvre.

Like all circus performers, the Vintilovs have been perfecting their craft most of their lives. Andrei and Oxana (who hail from Sevastopol and Kyiv respectively) were in the sport-acrobatics program in Kyiv before Andrei made the skip to the main circus school in Moscow in the mid-eighties. They married in 1988 and Darya, whom they call Dasha, was born in Kyiv a year later.

In 1994, while on tour with the Moscow Circus in Japan, Andrei caught a performance of Cirque du Soleil's Saltimbanco. "I showed my portfolio to the producers there, they took it and gave me a call a few months later," he says. He's been with the Cirque ever since. Oxana, who was working as a gymnastics trainer in Slovakia at the time, joined her husband in Montreal. Together they performed in Quidam, launched in 1996, and toured with the show in North America for two years. The young couple left Quidam one year before its North American finale to hone their opening act for Saltimbanco.

Andrei and Oxana love the "carny" life. "As a wife and mother it's interesting because you travel everywhere," says the 30-year-old Oxana. Andrei agrees. "It is not as difficult as it may seem. We usually come to a city and stay there for several months. Cirque du Soleil has teachers for our children. We love this life."

The Vintilovs' final Quidam performance was in California, and afterwards they bought a car and drove all the way across the continent to Montreal. "We drove for about a month and saw much of America. This is a great education for our children," says Andrei.

Currently in Australia with Saltimbanco, the two acrobats and their family have never looked back on

their decision to join Canada's premier circus company with its innovative and unconventional performances. "The circus in Moscow, and most circuses, are very traditional," explains 32-year-old Andrei. "With Cirque du Soleil you get a show, all the elements are fused together to form a single entity."

The Vintilovs expect to be with the Cirque for a long time, as does their daughter Darya, who nods eagerly when asked. As for their three-year-old Montreal-born son Maksym, Andrei and Oxana have high hopes for his entertainment career as well—they just haven't put him through the paces yet.

I saw another Cirque du Soleil show.

This time with my wife, and with far less cynicism. Some would have even described me as eager. I was a convert by now. Dralion is Cirque du Soleil's latest creation and it is a meeting place of East and West—the dragon representing the East and the lion representing the West. It is the first show to be designed and produced by a whole new team; all previous shows were created by the original creative team. Dralion was starting out on its three-year North American tour in Montreal in mid April.

This, by the way, is how Cirque du Soleil is organized: a host of touring shows—there are three now—hitting the beaches of various continents of the place we call earth. After a three-year stint, a show moves on to infiltrate a new continent. Besides touring, Cirque du Soleil also has four permanent shows in the United States: La Nouba at Orlando's Walt Disney World Resort; "O", an aquatic show featuring synchronized swimming, at the Belagio hotel in Las Vegas; Mystere at the Treasure Island resort also in Las Vegas; and Alegria, which is doing a three year stint at Cirque du Soleil's permanent site in Biloxi, Mississippi. As I write this in early June 1999, Cirque du Soleil is working seven shows on three continents. Not bad for an artistic company started by Montreal street performers in 1982.

But back to Dralion.

Dralion features 54 performers, 35 of which are Chinese acrobats. There is only one Ukrainian, Viktor Kee (real name Viktor Kiktev). In his act Viktor takes mundane circus juggling—there's that old cynicism again—and turns it into... something that has to be seen. Yes, that's a cop out, but that's how good his performance is. It's a heady mix of acrobatics, juggling and balancing prowess.

Starting out by crawling out of a mechanical spider, (I thought it was a cockroach at first), the 28-year-old Ukrainian catches several balls tossed to him by a trapeze artist suspended ten meters above and starts his amazing antics. He catches and balances balls on the small of his back, his shoulder, and just about any other body part he can maneuver. Handling up to seven balls

at a time with aplomb and dexterity—all the while performing an acrobatic dance in time to the music—Viktor has the audience erupting in applause and bona fide gasps of wonderment. Especially the guy sitting next to me.

Viktor's musculature alone is enough to wow the audience. I don't know if it was his sheer body-hugging suit with red flames covering strategic spots, or if it was his smooth muscles peeping out in between, but he certainly made this male feel downright crappy about his own body. Unlike bodybuilders with their obscenely bulging muscles, Victor is so well-proportioned it made me ill. Until I met him the next day at Cirque du Soleil's cafeteria behind the "big top" tent. He's a small guy, shorter than me and I'm about 5'10". He's also slight of build weighing in at just 155 pounds. Looking at him I understood that his on-stage physical presence was clearly magnified next to all the tiny Chinese acrobats.

It is no wonder Viktor turned into a performer—his mom is a dancer, his dad a musician and his older brother Sasha the bass player for the popular Ukrainian band Tabula Rasa. Born in the town Prylukiv just outside of Kyiv, by the age of six Viktor was already performing in a children's circus. Six years later, his love affair with juggling began and he entered Kyiv's circus school to major in it. I asked if this was where he started working on his innovative act. "No, no," he says, "We just juggled the traditional way, the way you were supposed to in the Soviet Union."

After four years of intense training, Viktor lined up a gig juggling in Kyiv's Music Hall. It was here the aspiring performer met Nikolai Baranov, a circus coach and seminal figure in Viktor's life. Under Baranov's guidance, Viktor developed the fantastical act he performs in Cirque du Soleil today.

At 20, Viktor began performing in Europe, first in Poland and then gradually moving westward to Germany, Switzerland, France. His résumé is thick and substantial, and the locales in which he's plied his trade sound like the "who's who" of entertainment venues: the Moulin Rouge and the Lido in Paris, the Mirage in Las Vegas, Friedrich Stadt Palast in Berlin, plus numerous others. In 1994, the limber juggler won the Silver Medal and the "Eduardo Rasspini" prize at Cirque de Demain, the world-famous international circus festival in Paris.

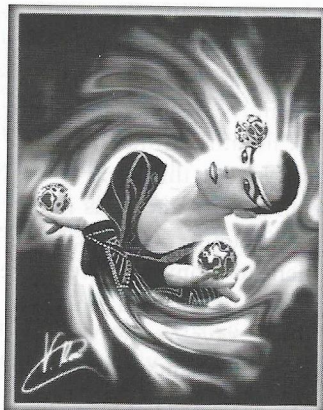
The Cirque du Soleil added Viktor to its team only a month before Dralion's premier in Montreal on April 22, 1999. Cirque organizers contacted him about bringing his act to Dralion. "We signed a three-year contract," says Viktor. "After that, who knows." Viktor says he's never planned anything beyond a year or two. "This is the longest contract I have ever had," laughs the young acrobat-cum-juggler.

The biggest difference of performing in Dralion, says Viktor, is facing an audience focused on him alone. "When I was a guest star at the Moulin Rouge or any of the other cabarets, the audience's attention was not always there," he explains, "The Moulin Rouge is about girls and that cabaret. It's about the show, not the separate circus acts. Here people come to see the circus acts."

Viktor has already bought a house in Orlando, Florida, where several of his friends also live. "Now when I'm on tour I will rarely see my house," remarks Viktor. "For only for one month of the year. For my vacations I go home." When he is away, which is nearly always, friends of Viktor's take care of the house. "They are probably having wild parties and playing pool," he jokes. "As long as they clean everything up before I come, it's okay."

Both the Vintilovs and Viktor give full credit to Cirque du Soleil for putting on such a professional show. "All of Canada should be proud," says Viktor. Indeed, going to Cirque du Soleil is an all-encompassing magical event. Even the big top makes it worth the trip. This modern-day version of the traditional circus tent is a marvel of innovative engineering, an elegant and exquisite structure with quirky details like fences doubling as benches.

If you haven't seen the Cirque, go see it. If you're a cynic like me, then definitely go see it. You'll discover the circus ain't what it used to be. **Z!**

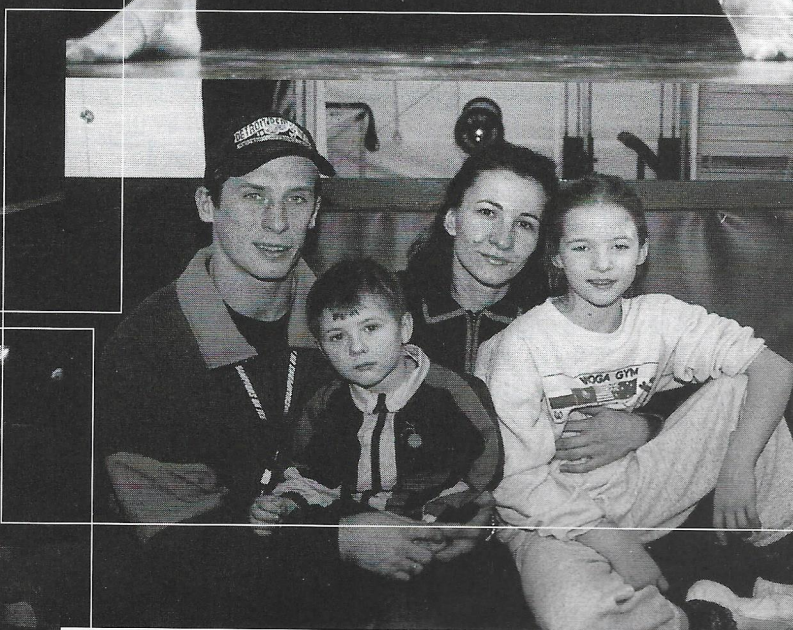
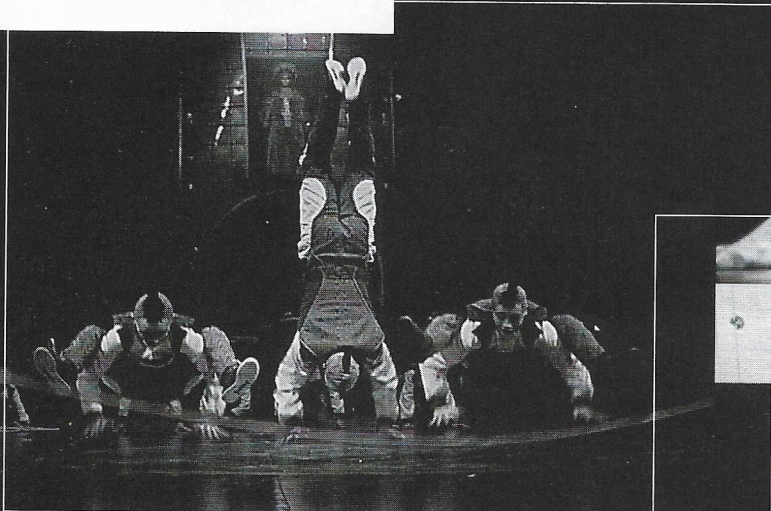


All photos by Al Seibo courtesy of Cirque du Soleil except photo of Vintilov family by Nestor Gula

Opening photo: Viktor Kee  
goes on his knees

Photo opposite page:  
reproduction of Mr. Kee's  
postcard/flyer

Photos this page  
clockwise from top:  
Mr. Kee in full concentration;  
the Vintilovs relaxing before  
performing the Adagio Trio  
(l. to R.: Andrei, Maksym,  
Oxana and Darya);  
the cast of *Saltimbanco*  
clowning around;  
Chinese acrobats in *Dralion*



“Savanna Desert”

by Roma Ihnatowycz

## Of Smetana and Other Creamy Goodies

For anyone who's travelled or lived abroad, a return home is often followed by mouth-watering recollections of much-missed regional delicacies. I still crave the sweet breakfast pastries of Mallorca, last consumed over a decade ago. Or the chunky hard-crust dark breads of Germany, as well as the multifarious and unique cheeses of France, ne'er to be found on this side of the Atlantic.

With Ukraine, it's a mixed bag. Some people miss the readily available and inexpensive caviar. For others, it's the heaping piles of wild hand-picked berries sold in markets in the summertime. One former resident yearns for the naturally smoked and salted ham, lamenting the saline-injected watery stuff sold in Toronto shops. Yet another has a father who so longs for the country's famous *salo* that his daughter brought him back a few kilos, only to find it confiscated at the American border. I still wonder how she explained her attempt to bring huge folds of pork fat home to the U.S. customs officials.

Personally, I have and always will have a penchant for the good old-fashioned sour cream as well as the fresh creamy cheese known as *svizhiy syr*. I can do without the caviar and I'd be more than happy to give away the *salo*, but, oh how I miss Ukraine's superior dairy products.

During my bi-weekly trips to the local market in Kyiv, my favourite stop was the white-tiled dairy room, full of hefty *babas* proudly displaying their homemade nobs of butter, sweet milk, jugs of *smetana* and immense slabs of white farmer's cheese. Passing by these shops was like running a dairy gauntlet, with *babas* standing alongside wielding long wooden spoons dripping with *smetana*. "Try some of mine, the freshest *smetana* you've ever tasted," they'd yell.

And try I did, stretching out my hand for the requisite dollop of sour cream in my palm that I, like

other shoppers, then licked off to taste. Everyone sampled the cheese as well, usually a tiny sliver sliced off the massive rectangular block still sitting on the cheesecloth used to make it. "It's so fresh, it's as smooth as butter," was a common selling line.

So it was. Fresh, creamy, moist—nothing like the plastic-wrapped chunks sold in North America. These dry and crumbly squares, most commonly used to fill *varenyky*, are a far cry from the Ukrainian original. In Ukraine, the cheese is so rich and tasty that most people eat it fresh with just a bit of sour cream and a sprinkling of sugar.

There are reasons for this. Ukrainian cheese and *smetana* are both made with whole unpasteurized milk that has been allowed to sit and sour naturally. The milk forms curds that are then strained through a cheesecloth and end up as old-fashioned farmer's cheese. The cream that rises to the top of the milk is left to rest at room temperature, sours from its own natural bacteria and turns into *smetana*. It is the slightly more sour cousin of France's famous *crème fraîche*. In fact, the longer it sits, the more sour it becomes. It can be whipped and sweetened to fill cakes, and, when added to hot soups, it blends in smoothly rather than curdling into tiny unappealing clumps.

In Canada, the sale of unpasteurized milk or milk products is forbidden, thus making real sour cream and cottage cheese an impossibility. In the U.S., each state has its own regulations governing dairy standards. In both countries, consumers are usually purchasing a skim milk product that has been soured with an added souring agent.

While I may not spoon the Canadian version of sour cream into my mouth as a late-night snack—a regular habit of mine in Ukraine—the products manage wonderfully well in a host of traditional Ukrainian dishes ranging from cheesecake to *nalysnyky* (crêpes).

One of my favourites is the following garlicky, herb-studded cheese spread, a simple dish quite unknown to most. It's super over dark bread, or as a filling for a pita sandwich. Just spoon it into the pita pocket, add a few slices of tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, some alfalfa sprouts, and voilà, you've got the perfect vegetarian lunch.

## SYRNIY PASHTET

1 cup creamed farmer's cheese\* (250g package)  
3 garlic cloves, pressed  
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped  
1/3 cup fresh parsley, chopped  
1/3 - 1/2 cup sour cream  
salt and pepper to taste

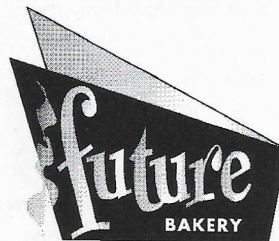
Blend all the ingredients together with a spoon, using enough sour cream to create a moist creamy mixture.

*\*Standard farmer's cheese is sold in rectangular blocks. A creamed version, which is much more practical to use, is usually sold alongside in smaller, flatter packets. If it is unavailable, use the regular block-like farmer's cheese, preferably swirling it a bit in a food processor to cream it.*

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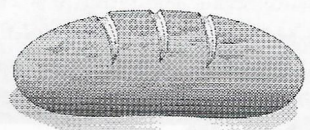
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# Cruising Kalyna

by Jars Balan  
photos by author

## A Guelder Rose by Any Other Name... ALBERTA'S BORSCHT BELT IS NOW A TRAVEL DESTINATION

Here's a question for history buffs or for a future Ukrainian edition of Trivial Pursuit: which former school district in rural Alberta was named after a Galician terrorist?

Need a hint? Well, it doesn't begin with the letter B\_\_\_. Still stumped? How about the Myroslaw school district, organized in 1909 and named in honour of Myroslaw Sichinsky (1886-1979). A radical activist who in 1908 became (in)famous for assassinating Count Potocki, the Polish viceroy of Galicia, Sichinsky later escaped overseas where he was regarded as a national hero by many of his immigrant countrymen. Among his admirers were some homesteaders farming near the Borszczow district—the Borszczow that is south of Ukraina and east of Edmonton, stupid—who obviously thought that he would be a great role model for the younger generation. One wonders if the provincial board of education had any inkling of whom the ratepayers were paying tribute to when they decided to call their school district Myroslaw...

Other east central Alberta schools that bore the names of similarly historic figures were Mazepa, Ruryk, Sheptycki and Oleskow. And lest anyone doubt the origins of the people who established them, there were school districts called Kiew, Brody, Kolomea and Jaroslaw, not to mention Chernowci, Lwiw, Cossack and Sich.

Undoubtedly the most colourful monikers were the Ukrainian-Canadian hybrids such as Ukalta, Dickiebush—a blend of dykyi (i.e. wild) and bush—and Kolokreeka. The latter perfectly describes the setting of a Methodist mission school that operated between 1908 and the early Depression years in the picturesque White Earth Creek valley near the modern-day town of Smoky Lake.

Although today many of the old schoolhouses have been torched or stand derelict, others enjoy a second lease on life as farm buildings, homes, community halls and even churches. Country people are practical by nature and were into recycling long before it became fashionable. So, a surprising number of these one-room schools still linger on in new incarnations almost half a century after they were closed due to amalgamation.

Not only that, they are now being packaged and promoted as tourist attractions, along with other historic landmarks found within what is increasingly being referred to as the Kalyna Country Ecomuseum, or simply "Kalyna Country."

Encompassing Canada's oldest and largest Ukrainian agricultural settlement, Kalyna Country is a heritage district that is three times the size of Prince Edward Island. Forming an arc to the north and east of Alberta's provincial capital, the Ecomuseum is easily accessible by car, beginning just ten minutes from Edmonton city limits and extending to a two-and-a-half-hour drive at its most remote border. So it's all doable in a day-trip from the Big Perogy, though there's plenty to keep people occupied for a weekend or longer.

Kalyna Country's best-known attraction is probably the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, a.k.a. *selo*, a sprawling open-air museum that recreates life in a typical east central Alberta community between 1892 and 1928. Think of it as a Slavic Williamsburg or Upper Canada Village, complete with costumed role-players working in gardens and tending livestock. The Ecomuseum is also home to the Vegreville Pysanka and to the annual Ukrainian festival that shares the giant egg's name.

Perhaps best of all, Kalyna Country offers a bumper crop of the onion-domed Ukrainian churches that are as



iconic a part of the Canadian Prairies as the fast-disappearing grain elevators. More than a hundred Eastern Rite sanctuaries—ranging from modest pioneer chapels to impressive architectural treasures—dot the highways and backroads that crisscross the gently rolling countryside. Some are so humbly moving that they are enough to make an agnostic waver, while others will have you wishing you had brought along those extra rolls of film.

However, don't delay seeing them: the ravages of time and eparchal "downsizing" are taking a steady toll on the structures, which sadly may be reduced to a mere handful in a matter of decades. Several have already been moved to distant locations, like St. Onuphrius Ukrainian Catholic Church, which is now on permanent display at the Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. Others have become lakeside churches at summer camps. The future of the remaining churches is a major concern for members of the Ecomuseum Trust Society, whose mission it is to assist in the long-term preservation of historical buildings.

Of course, in Kalyna Country you can just forget all your troubles and eat *pyrohy* and *holubtsi* to your heart's content—often at local eateries run by Chinese and Lebanese restaurateurs who'll even say a few words in Ukrainian to you. And if you are into some of the more exotic regional cuisines, you'll definitely want to try a buffalo burger or maybe some bannock with your *kalyna* jelly.

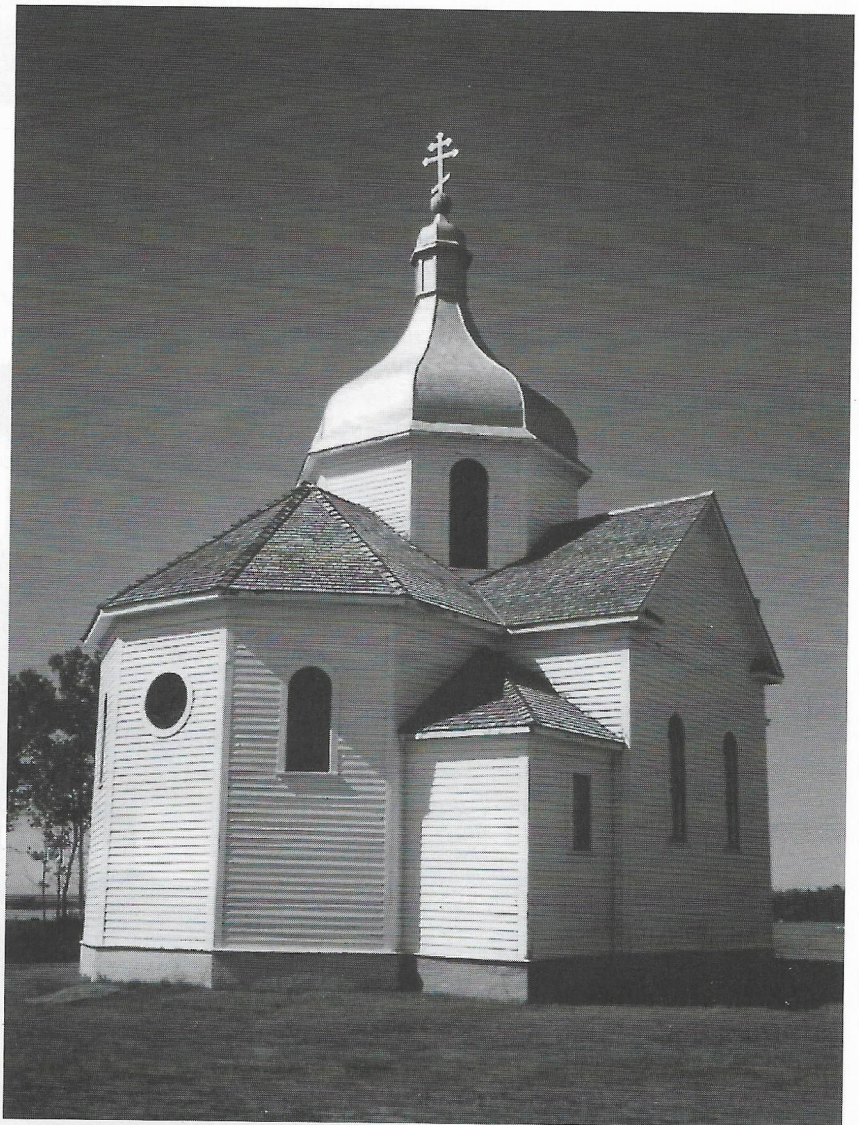
In terms of Ukrainian content, Kalyna Country can boast of having been both a major spawning ground and a battleground for leading community activists of various political and denominational stripes. It has also been a drawing card for prominent Ukrainian personalities from the late nineteenth century to the present day. First visited by the agronomist Josef Oleskow on his

1895 fact-finding tour, Kalyna Country has played host to a long list of luminaries over the years, including the saintly Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytski, the charismatic Patriarch Mstyslaw and the former dissident-cum-Ukrainian ambassador and Rada member, Levko Lukianenko.

The celebrated artist William Kurelek was born and spent part of his childhood in the Bukovynian heart of Kalyna Country, returning several times as an adult to seek inspiration for his paintings. Still earlier, author Illia "Elias" Kirak spent two decades working and teaching in settlements throughout the Ecomuseum, which he used as

the fictional backdrop for his three-volume saga *Syny zemli* (Sons of the Soil). Among the many "firsts" to which the region lays claim is that it was the site of the earliest Ukrainian-language theatrical presentation in Canada, circa 1900, and that it elected the trailblazing Ukrainian representatives to both a provincial legislature (Andrew Shandro) and the federal parliament (Michael Luchkowich).

In short, Kalyna Country has been an important focal point of Ukrainian-Canadian life for much of the past century, and it continues to be a well-spring of cultural creativity on the eve of the second millennium.



Church of the Holy Transfiguration in Star, Alberta.

But there's more to the Ecomuseum than the borscht that courses through the veins of many of its inhabitants. Besides offering lots of eye-widening scenery, from classic table-top prairie flatness to rolling parkland terrain, Kalyna Country is home to Elk Island National Park, three provincial parks, the world-renowned bird watching sanctuary Beaverhill Lake and a growing number of designated natural areas. So if you're a nature buff (and there's even a nudist colony near Tofield), you can find plenty of interesting ground to cover with a good pair of hiking boots, a knapsack and binoculars. Bring a tent or camper if you like living in the great outdoors, but be prepared to find it difficult to get much sleep.

That's because the midsummer days are extremely long around the 53rd parallel, enabling you to cram a lot of activities between sunrise and sunset. And if the coyotes are out, their mournful baying can be somewhat distracting for city-slickers

used to the lulling sound of traffic.

Whereas the "wild" life in Kalyna Country tends to be on the furry and feathered side, the rich history of the landscape means it is crawling with ghosts from the past.

The majestic North Saskatchewan River Valley, which winds through the very centre of the Ecomuseum, has the distinction of being the waterway used by the first European explorers to set foot in Alberta and the conduit of the early fur trade, missionary initiatives and agricultural settlement. Six former trading posts once operated in Kalyna Country, two of which have been developed as provincial historic sites: Fort George - Buckingham House (1792-1802) and Fort Victoria (1864-1897).

Coming soon to local Kalyna Country communities are the Krause Grain elevator, currently under restoration in Radway, and the Newbrook Observatory, slated to open as an historic site in 2000. The latter, a relic of the Cold War era, earned itself a place in history

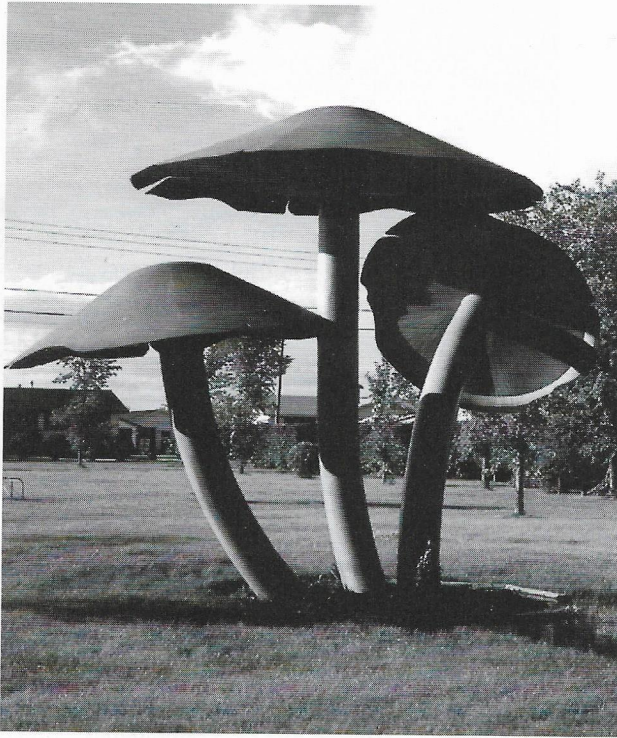
by being the first "astronomical observatory" (funded by the Canadian and American defense departments before the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line was built) to track and photograph the alarm-ringing flight of Sputnik in 1957.

In all, there are more than twenty local museums in Kalyna Country. But if all that history starts wearing you down, you can always kick up your heels at one of the many fairs and festivals that take place at the height of tourist season each year. There are several small-town rodeos, a Native pow-wow at Saddle Lake and events that climax with a demolition derby involving massive combines in a fight to the death.

Hey, you don't even have to be an ethnic Ukrainian to get into Kalyna Country, though it may help you to understand the English spoken by many of the locals. Some of the Poles (at Skaro), Germans (Josephberg and Bruderheim) and Romanians (Boian) who settled Kalyna Country came from villages inside the modern-day borders of



*An abandoned pioneer home in Smokey Lake county*



*You've seen Vegreville's giant Pysanka—how about Vilna's magical mushrooms?*

Ukraine, and Ukrainian Jews once ran businesses in downtown Vegreville and Lamont. There are even Métis Kalynians with names like Strynadka, whose Cree accents and copper complexions testify to the generally friendly relations between the inhabitants of two First Nations reserves and their Ukrainian neighbours.

So how come you haven't heard of Kalyna Country before? Well, Kalyna Country was started during the 1991-1992 celebrations marking the centennial of Ukrainian settlement in Canada. The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, in collaboration with the Alberta Historic Sites and Archives Service, thought it would be a good idea to put a representative sampling of Ukrainians into a museum before their rural Western Canadian legacy is completely lost or forgotten. The first half-dozen years were spent establishing the organizational groundwork for Kalyna Country and educating residents about the latent tourism potential of their communities. The latter task is easier said than

done, since many people on the prairies are fish in water when it comes to appreciating the unique beauty and exoticism of their hinterland habitat.

Now that a solid foundation has been laid in terms of creating local awareness, Kalyna Country is starting to advertise itself as a tourist destination. There are increasingly more bed and breakfasts opening up throughout the Ecomuseum territory, as well as tea houses, specialty gift shops and interesting places to eat. Why, Vegreville even has a decent cappuccino bar! Although Kalyna Country still has a long way to go in order to rival the comforts of better-established places like Stratford or the Napa Valley, it is starting to develop a service infrastructure and a distinct flavour that might best be described as an Alberta equivalent to Cajun Country in Louisiana.

Except that instead of zydeco music and creole cooking, you've got *tsymbaly* bands and borscht with *mamalyga*.

What are you waiting for? Why not experience Kalyna Country before it becomes overrun with trendy eateries, boutiques, antique shops and factory outlets? That's at least a decade away (probably longer), depending on the direction of the global economy.

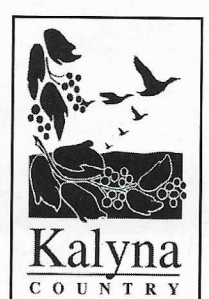
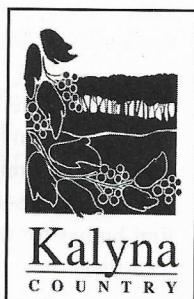
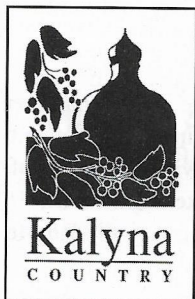
Until then, you can enjoy the down-home hospitality and authentic small-town charm of an Ecomuseum that is still in the early years of creation. Later, you'll be able to tell your friends that you first "did" Kalyna Country when it was just starting to be discovered by the millennial invasion of ecotourists looking for a different kind of travel experience. That will have been before the cost of accommodation had tripled, assuming you'll be able to find an available room on a summer weekend....

PS: Kalyna Country accepts Canadian currency. **Z!**

*For more information, see the Web site at [kalyna.country.ab.ca](http://kalyna.country.ab.ca), or write to the Kalyna Country Ecomuseum, Box 756, Lamont, Alberta, T0B 2R0. And tell them that Jars sent you.*

---

*Jars Balan is a freelance writer and independent scholar in Edmonton. He is the volunteer executive director of the Kalyna Country Ecomuseum.*



# Tripping Ukraine

## BukovynianView

by Andrij Kostyniuk

The first shock came when a woman advised me to tell people I was Polish.

We were on a bus crossing the Romanian border going to Chernivtsi, the capital of Bukovyna, where a number of my relatives live. I hadn't been able to make contact with them recently, and she explained that until I actually met up with them, not letting people know I was a "rich" Canadian was the best way to keep trouble at bay.

I was eager to visit Ukraine ever since my friends came back with stories of cheap *horilka*, beautiful women, great feasts and inhuman sanitary conditions (nothing about trouble, as far as I recall). Now, thanks to Help Us Help the Children, I was here to work as a counsellor at their annual summer camp for children from *internaty* (orphanages) and had come a few weeks early to visit family.

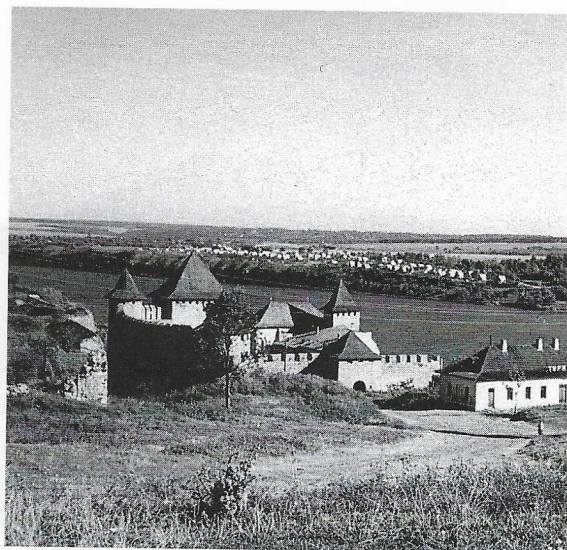
Eventually and uneventfully, I managed to find my uncle's *kvartyra* (apartment). I'd met my

uncle Lyubomyr in 1991 when he visited Canada. He'd made the difficult decision of turning down employment in Canada and had returned to Ukraine following the declaration of independence. Like everyone else, he'd had high hopes for a new, strong independent Ukraine rising from the ashes of communism.

Within minutes of my arrival, the table was covered with exactly what I had been craving—tons of traditional Ukrainian food, and my aunt was apologizing profusely for its poor quality (and lack thereof). Although I'd heard stories about the generosity and good nature of *Bukovyntsi*, I was still overwhelmed by the warmth of their greeting.

The following day I was taken on a tour of the city.

Chernivtsi, like most Ukrainian cities, is a little run down at the moment, but it has an impressive history. This historical and cultural crossroads had been ruled by everyone from the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires to



The kozak fortress of Khotyn

Russia and Romania. (The latter currently controls the southern half of the traditional Bukovynian lands.) The varied architecture and numerous languages heard on the street underscore this rich past.

Our first stop was a visit to the Museum of Traditional Architecture, which used to be a top draw for tourists. Now overgrown and unkempt, with no other visitors and a couple of elderly people doing almost nothing for no pay, it acts as an interesting metaphor for the current state of the country.

We were walking down the path with the elderly *ekskoorzovod* (guide) when three or four fat little black and white puppies came running down a side path. Somebody noted how cute they were and the lady said, "Yes, there are eight of them." Then, with only a hint of sadness in her voice, she added "*Meni kazaly s'ohodni utopyty* (They told me to drown them today)."

*Holy shit!*

This hit me like a sledgehammer. Nobody said anything for a moment and my mind ran wild with plans of humane rescue—take a few home, find homes for them, pay the lady to feed them.



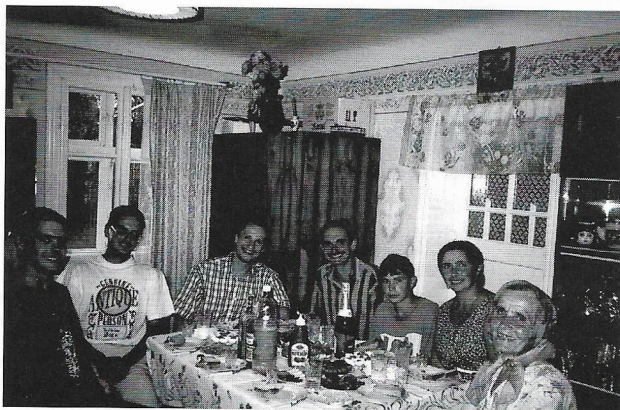
Andrij and his cousin Andrew hangin' out in downtown Chernivtsi

But no. I quickly came to accept the brutal reality. People were barely managing to feed themselves and their neighbouring pensioners, let alone eight cute, cuddly little puppies.

The sun beamed down harshly on this scene, the guide wiped her brow and the tour continued. "This next group of buildings shows how the common peasant lived in Halychyna...."

A few days before I had to be at camp, I went with my uncle to see the ancient *kozak* fortress of Khotyn. Perched high above the Dniester river, it was the site of a great battle in which Hetman Doroshenko and his heavily outnumbered *kozaky* had repulsed an entire army of Turks.

When we arrived, the place was all but deserted—the ticket stand was closed, there were no admission gates, no signs, and only two or three local tourists. The next few hours were spent climbing around the castle, up towers, around the ramparts, with the river rushing hundreds of feet below. The wind blew ceaselessly



*Andrij and family feasting and smiling*

under a blue sky and over the few ancient-looking villages situated on the opposite bank. Sitting alone at the top of a tower, staring out over the mighty Dniester, I could almost hear the voices of the *kozaky* who lived and died here.

That night, after another splendid fatty feast, my uncle and I were

getting into a discussion over the remains of the dinner bottle. Considering the current economic and social situation,

I naively asked if he hoped someday to leave Chernivtsi with his family and seek better fortune abroad. "Hell no," he replied, echoing a sentiment I'd hear more than once during my travels in Ukraine. "This is my country and I love it," he said and, after a dramatic pause, "if only they'd make it a little easier for us to live here." ❗

*Andrij Kostyniuk is a Torontonion who fled that vale of tears and now resides in picturesque Nelson, B.C.*

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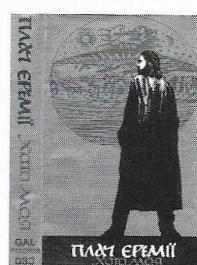
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# A Healthy Shot

So, you're shopping at your favourite Ukrainian deli. You're checking out what's on special and you spot a very attractive man/woman next to the *varenyky* aisle. You smile at this good-looking creature and he/she smiles back. Instantly, your visions of living happily ever after are shattered as this person's smile reveals yellowed teeth and bluish gums.

No, this isn't some extreme form of patriotism. Unfortunately, it's nothing more poor dental health. A healthy smile is priceless. Read on and find out how to protect it.

Taking care of your teeth before problems start is extremely important. Good oral hygiene can prevent the following problems.

## Halitosis (bad breath)

Most of us have had bad breath at one time or another. Whether it is barely noticeable or strong enough to turn people off, bad breath can spoil your self-confidence and cause embarrassment. Any number of things can cause halitosis. If there is a noticeable breath problem that is not eliminated by brushing your teeth, it is most likely caused by large numbers of bacteria in the mouth, throat, lungs and sinuses. Growth of bacteria is controlled in part by the immune system. With chronic bad breath, there is usually an overgrowth of bacteria somewhere in the body, or the person may be suffering from an illness such as diabetes, kidney failure, infected tonsils or stomach problems.

Bad breath may also be a result of drugs such as alcohol or tranquilizers: these substances can make breath very unpleasant. Hormonal changes and stress can also contribute to bad breath. When you are stressed, your mouth can get very dry. A thick coating on the tongue may result and this coating can lead to a very unpleasant odour.

One of the most common but least serious causes of offensive breath is the food we eat. Onions and garlic or heavily spiced and fatty foods can cause temporary halitosis. Friends who have indulged in the same foods as you will not

## Brush Your Teeth Kids

by Aleksandra Basarab, RN

find your mouth odour unpleasant. In fact, they probably won't notice it. So go ahead and bite into that *chasnyk*!

## Gum disease

Gum or periodontal disease is an infectious and inflammatory disease caused by the bacteria in plaque. Simply put, the plaque irritates the gum tissue. The gum can actually separate itself from the tooth and create detached areas or "pockets," which can become breeding grounds for even more bacteria. As with an infected cut on your hand, the area gets red, swollen and tender. This is what causes gums to bleed, and bleeding is not normal. In many people, if this process is not stopped, it will eventually affect the bone and tooth loss may occur. The first sign of a big problem is gingivitis (an early stage of gum disease). Swollen and bleeding gums, especially when brushing your teeth, are indicators that your gums are not healthy. Fortunately, with proper dental care, gingivitis is reversible in most cases.

## Tartar

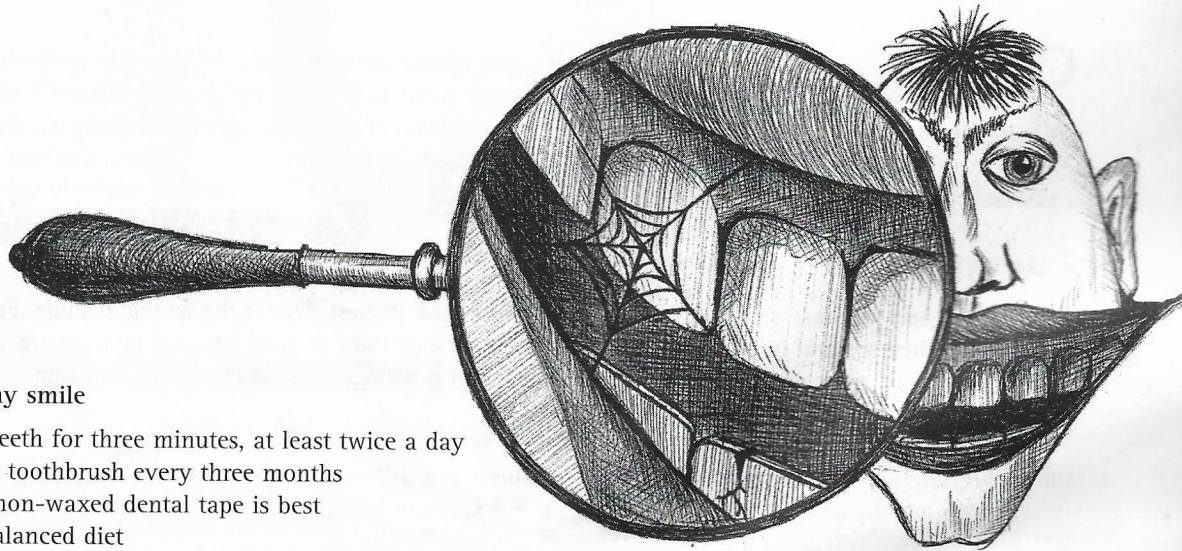
By tartar, I am not referring to the Tartar hoards from the East, the dire enemies of Taras Bulba. In the dental world, hardened, advanced plaque is known as tartar.

## Cavities

Plaque can also lead to cavities. Eating sugary or starchy foods produces acids that attack tooth enamel. With repeated attacks, the enamel gradually breaks down, forming a cavity and exposing the sensitive part of the tooth. Being toothless does nothing to enhance your appearance, so be good to your teeth.

## Smoking

Although you've heard this one before, smoking stains your teeth, produces bad breath and contributes to gum disease. Your mouth should not look and smell like an ashtray. Your best bet is not to smoke.



### Steps to a healthy smile

- Brush your teeth for three minutes, at least twice a day
- Change your toothbrush every three months
- Floss daily: non-waxed dental tape is best
- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Check your gums for signs of gum disease
- Quit smoking
- Don't abuse alcohol
- Visit your dentist at least twice a year, more often if you have problems with your gums

The last time I checked, there was no shortage of Ukrainian dentists and dental professionals. Just pick up the phone and schedule an appointment; they'll be able to answer all your questions. You can also contact your local health department for further information. Remember, bad teeth are not hereditary: just because your grandfather Ostap was toothless does not mean you will be. If you have healthy teeth, be sure to show them off a lot and SMILE!

*Illustration by Slavko Smetana*

# Calling all writers:

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# Quiz

## How

# Ukrainian is your car?

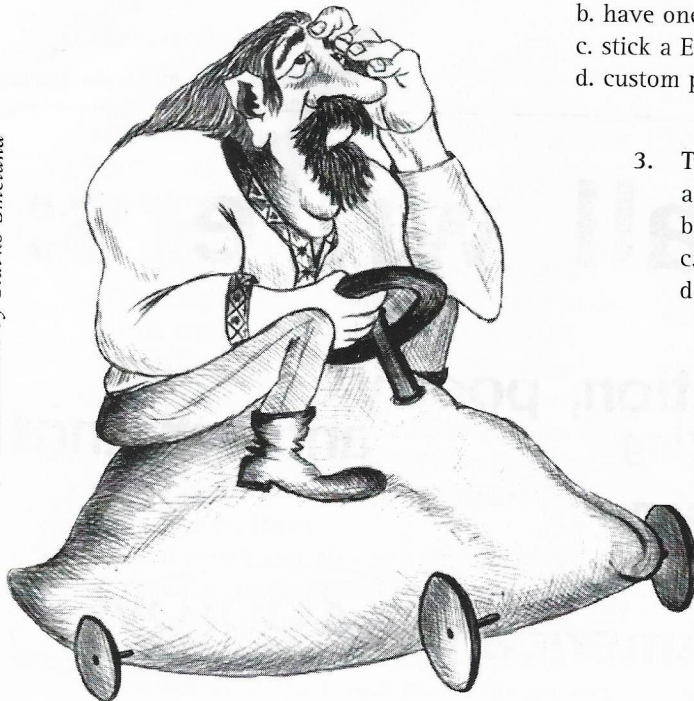
Some people are obsessed with making one's home look its best. This is the wrong attitude. Few see you in your house. They see you in your vehicle. A vehicle is as important to your personal style as are the clothes you wear. Maybe even more so. Any miserable *schlep* can get a half-decent wardrobe. But that same *schlep* won't have the vehicle that matters.

As Ukrainians, we personalize our cars in an oh-so-Ukrainian way. Just check out the parking lot where a Ukrainian function is taking place. Go back when there is a different function happening. *Qu'elle difference.*

We ask the question that begs asking: how Ukrainian is your car?

1. The pussy willow from Palm Sunday in your car is:
  - a. disposed of come Easter Monday,
  - b. rattling about somewhere under the passenger seat,
  - c. replaced yearly,
  - d. with the pile of petrified *baz'ky* under the rear seat.
2. To show everybody that a Ukrainian drives this car you:
  - a. tie a gentle blue and yellow ribbon around the antenna,
  - b. have one of them truly hilarious license plate holders,
  - c. stick a European Ukraine decal (UA) on the bumper,
  - d. custom paint *tryzub*s on the doors and roof.
3. To pay for the car you:
  - a. signed on to one of those handy leases,
  - b. borrowed money from the bank/credit union,
  - c. borrowed money from your parents,
  - d. paid the dealer the \$250 he wanted in cash.
4. Your car of choice is a:
  - a. nifty European two-seater,
  - b. practical mid-size import,
  - c. late-model North American sedan/minivan,
  - d. Delta 88 or full sized pick-up.
5. Your car is equipped with:
  - a. all the modern options,
  - b. the standard-plus option package,
  - c. the basic stuff,
  - d. all the options but none of them work.
6. For a subtle personal touch, your rear-view mirror is adorned with:
  - a. nothing,
  - b. the parking pass to the underground garage,
  - c. a gentle blue and yellow ribbon,
  - d. a *tryzub* so large it obscures your view when you make right hand turns.

Illustration by Slavko Smetana





7. As reading material for those infernal traffic jams you have:
- the financial pages of the day's *Wall Street Journal*,
  - a Latin study book—that language is making a comeback...soon,
  - what else—the *Kobzar*,
  - candy wrappers and empty beer bottles.
8. The music that is most often heard in your car is:
- the all-business radio station,
  - all-time favourite Ukrainian wedding polkas,
  - the squeak of the broken fan,
  - the *Vapniaky*.

## What it all means:

Score 1 point for each a., 2 points for each b., 3 points for each c. and 4 points for each d.

0-6

You pedestrian. You did not answer all the questions. That leads us to believe that you are presently bereft of vehicle. Is this because you don't have the requisite \$250 to buy yourself a clunker, or are you somehow politically (and therefore morally) opposed to owning one of these gas-sucking, smog-creating beasts? Get yourself a jalopy and go for a ride. It ain't evil.

7-13

You mild-mannered little weasel you. Heaven forbid anyone sees that you have a personality. Well don't worry, they won't. You don't have one. With all your efforts to fit in and not be noticed, you stick out like a sore *putzok*. Shame on you. This is no way to go through life. You should try and get one.

14-20

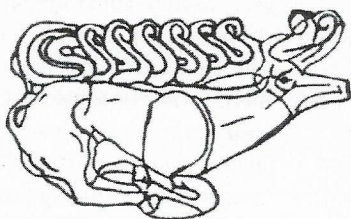
Fence-sitter alert! Don't overexert yourself. You and your middle-of-the-road ways. Better watch out—a car might squash you, sitting there on the median, oh so smug in your blandness. Do something extreme once in a while.

21-27

You little show-boater you. You just wanna get out and show off. You have to show all your Ukrainian friends that you are Uke Fan Number One. You pronounce to the whole world that you're a Uke and you're damn proud. Well here's the thing—no one really cares.

28-32

Holy *holubtsi*, Batman! What a car. What a concept. Your vehicle is second to none. Do you drive it up and down the main drag of your town on the weekends? If so, do you take passengers? We at *Zdorov!* would love to sit in on one of those weekend excursions. Heck—send us a write-up and a photo of your vehicle so that we can show the whole world.



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## Notes on *Eyetalian's* Demise

by John Montesano

Assume this magazine is your own!

With those words, founding editor Pino Esposito welcomed me into the group in the summer of 1993. We met at Bar Italia in downtown Toronto to talk about a new publishing venture he, Nicholas Bianchi and Teresa Tiano were set to launch. Their goal was to establish an English-language magazine about Italian culture in Canada called *Eyetalian*.

*Eyetalian* magazine, I thought to myself, what a terrible name. Like others, I admit that I didn't take an immediate liking to the name. But it grew on me. Award-winning author Nino Ricci would be on its first cover. That was special enough.

After that initial meeting with Pino, I went by the office to pay the group a visit. A converted apartment near Dufferin and Eglinton was the home of the magazine during its early days. I met the rest of the team that night. It was a production night. Because of my years in the student press I had been through my share of production thrills and could sense their anticipation. I was excited for them.

*Eyetalian* was a grand idea. Its aim was to network people with an interest in Italian culture and identity in Canada that had otherwise not come together: artists, business people, young and old. Through a series of cultural events, a high-end magazine and an emphasis on journalism rather than commercialism, *Eyetalian* would act as a new forum for a community in need of internal dialogue.

Publisher Nicholas Bianchi once said: "*Eyetalian* is about the impossibility of identity." That is to say, instead of working to define Italian identity, the magazine took on the responsibility of presenting the myriad of ways that people of Italian descent engage Italian culture.

That vision struck a chord with second- and third-generation Italian Canadians and, not surprisingly, with non-Italians who understood that issues of identity are at the core of the Canadian psyche.

That vision and its resonance with our growing audience carried the magazine for many years. After its first two years, the magazine successfully applied for a business development grant from the Ontario government. The grant re-energized the project after

two years of struggle and allowed us to grow from 2,000 to 10,000 copies over the next two years.

When I became the editor in 1995, I had set my sights on working to bring to the pages of the magazine writers who had something to say. The premise was simple: don't write for us because you are Italian, write for us because you have something to say about being Italian.

Nino Ricci, Elizabeth Renzetti, Vincenzo Pietropaolo, Peter Oliva, Rina Piccolo, and Gianna Patriarca. It was a pleasure to work with such talent. There were others that were united not only by their wide-ranging ties to Italian heritage, but also by the excitement of being linked to a project that attracted and welcomed other talent.

Knowing full well we would have to leave many worthy writers, photographers, and visual artists out of the loop (as is so often the case with smaller magazines and their limited resources), we settled in with a pool of contributors that would build a relationship with our audience.

The magazine tried to serve many communities. It struck a delicate balance between the needs of its audience, its advertisers and its contributors. In many ways, *Eyetalian* was a Canadian publishing success story.

So what happened? Why did the magazine fail? I have as many answers to that question as I do to the question of why did the magazine thrive for so long?

Money constraints, internal differences, burnout. Regardless of the factors, six years after my first introduction to *Eyetalian* I still feel a connection to a piece of work that I felt I could call my own. Not just because of my working relationship with it, but because of its aim. This was a project that spoke to issues that concerned me, inspired me and educated me. I stumbled into *Eyetalian* and like many other second-generation Italians, I was proud to make it my own.

I suspect many of you might say the same thing about *Zdorov!* Enjoy the ride and support its continuance. **Z!**

---

*John Montesano is a programmer at TLN Television, Canada's Italian and Spanish language specialty channel and a columnist for The Toronto Star.*

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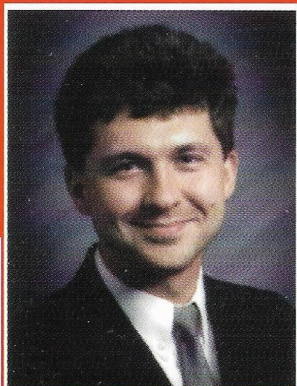
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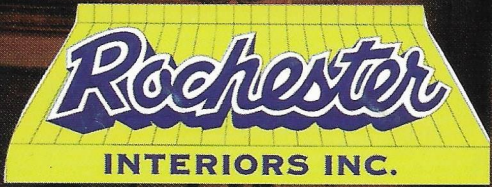
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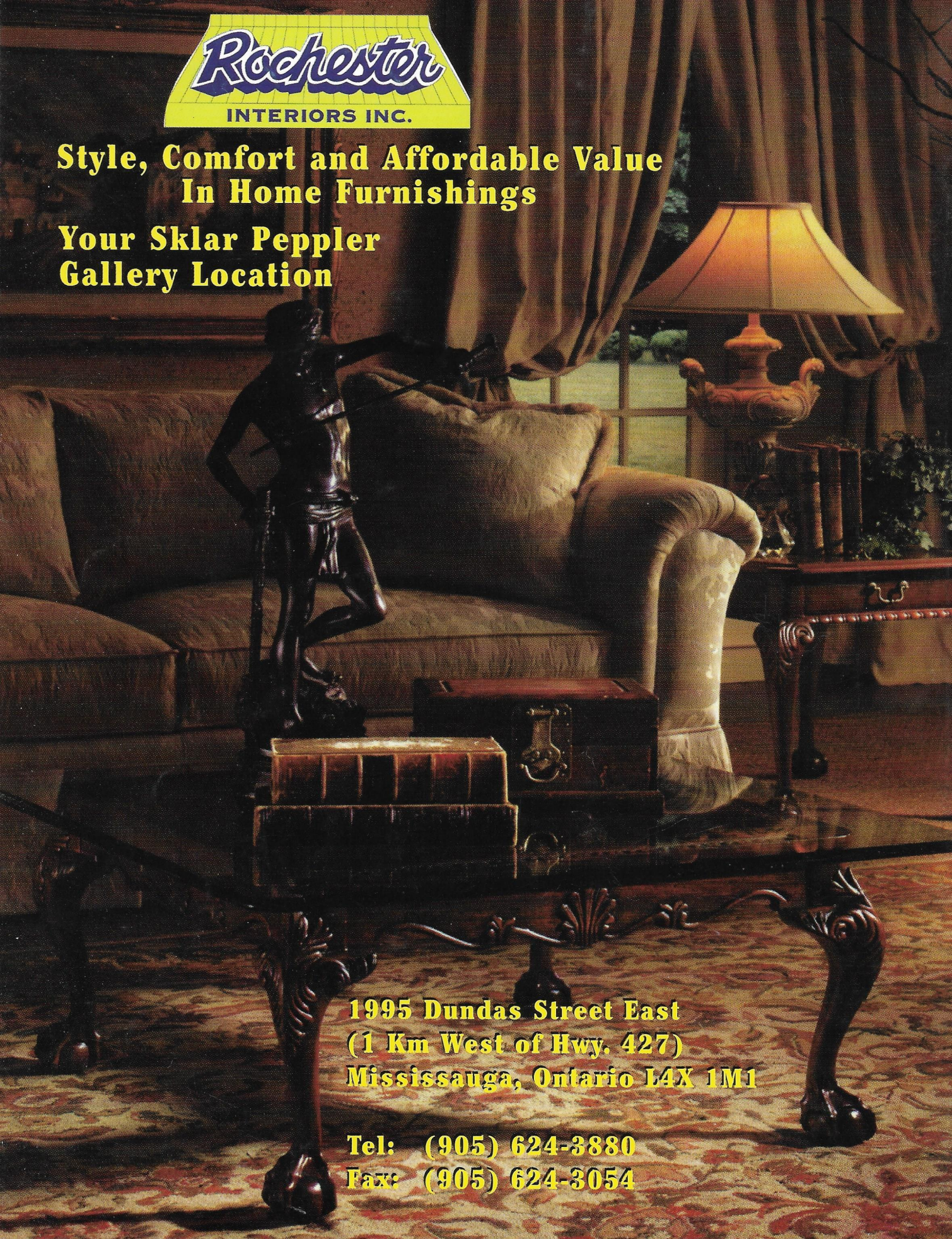
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