

Simply Slavic to be Simply Superb

Newest Downtown Festival to Celebrate Region's Slavic Traditions

YOUNGSTOWN –The Mahoning Valley has a proud ethnic heritage. This diverse history has been highlighted at a variety of festivals and events, but now a group is bringing it all together. **Simply Slavic**, the first-ever



downtown festival created specifically to celebrate Greater Youngstown's colorful Slavic community will take place on **Saturday, June 18th from Noon-11 PM on Federal Plaza East**. The event was created to educate both the region's large number of Slavic descendants and the community-at-large about Slavic heritage.

“We plan to showcase the rich traditions of Slavic culture by celebrating the food, music, dance and

customs of the various Slavic ethnicities which are represented in our metropolitan area,” says Ken Shirilla, event coordinator, adding that it has been said that, when all combined, those of Slavic heritage might even outnumber Italian descendants. “Individually, these group's numbers may seem small, but together, we represent a powerful presence in the Mahoning Valley.”

The event will do this by featuring live music, folk dance performances, homemade food, children's learning areas, educational exhibits and workshops and ethnic vendors. Unique to this event are the following:

- An **Ecumenical Prayer Blessing and Parade of Flags** with representatives from a variety of faiths and parishes;
- A **Slavic Beer Garden** featuring a tasting “flight” of more than a half dozen imports;
- A **Baking Contest** where amateurs and professionals alike can compete to be the Kolachi Queen/King, and;
- A **Euro Disco** with DJ Richard Elmsworth showcasing the modern Eastern European dance music for the young and the “young-at-heart” will end the night.





“By enhancing the community’s knowledge of these lively peoples through a joyful, family friendly experience,” Shirilla adds, “we hope to honor the shared past of our beloved ancestors by educating and enriching the lives of a future generation.”

The modern-day European nations representing the origins of Slavic ancestry are Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

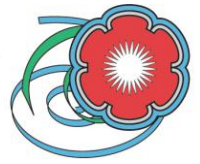


Numerous local parishes and organizations already enthusiastically have signed on to support and participate in this effort. These include: the City of Youngstown, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church, Polish Youngstown, the American Slovak Cultural Association of Mahoning Valley, the Carpatho-Rusyn Heritage Society, and many others.

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For further information refer to the event’s website www.simplyslavic.org or contact Ken Shirilla at 330-503-9874 or info@simplyslavic.org. Direct press related calls to Aundrea Cika Heschmeyer 330-646-4082 or aundrea@polishyoungstown.org





Who is a Slav?



The **Slavic peoples** are an ethnic and linguistic branch of **Indo-European peoples**, living mainly in **Central and Eastern Europe**. The early Slavs came from various parts of Asia into Eastern Europe about 2,000 BC. Under the pressure of nomadic hordes the Slavic tribes crossed the Carpathian Mountains and pushed their way down to the Balkans. Others moved westward toward the upper Danube, and still others eastward toward the River Dniپر and Black Sea. This migration continued from the fourth through the eighth century, giving birth to the Slavic nations that we know today. More than half of **Europe's** territory is inhabited by Slavic-speaking communities.

The worldwide population of people of Slavic descent is more than 350 million. Modern nations and ethnic groups described as *Slavs* are considerably diverse both in appearance and culturally, and relations between them – even within the individual ethnic groups themselves – are varied, ranging from a sense of connection to feelings of mutual hostility.

For many centuries the Slavic tribes used the same common language. Starting with the migration into Eastern Europe some dialectical differences began to develop among the various tribes. Generally, Slavic peoples are classified into three main groups:

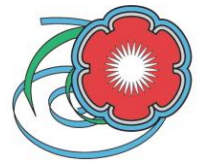
- **East Slavic** including **Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians**. This group subdivides into three separate branches: Russians (or Muscovites), White (or Bielo-Russians) and **Rusyns** (or **Carpatho-Rusyns**);
- **West Slavic** including **Poles, Czechs and Slovaks**, and;
- **South Slavic** including **Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats, Macedonians, Slovenes, Bosniaks and Montenegrins**.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s political and economic tension triggered a wave of emigration from the Slavic nations to America. These hard working people came to form settlements in cities and neighborhoods where jobs and the American Dream welcomed their arrival.

Today, millions of Americans and at 75,000 Valley residents, can trace their family heritage to the Slavic nations (ref. **US Census**). Celebrations, like the Simply Slavic, remind us of those roots and the sacrifices made by those who came before us seeking a better life.

Could you be a Slav? Many people were identified as “Hungarian” due to their origin of travel from the territory called Austria-Hungary. However, living in the territory ruled by Austro-Hungary were large numbers of Poles, Slovaks, Czechs, Slovenes, Croatians, Ukrainians and Serbians who they were ethnically and linguistically Slavic. So if your ancestors arrived before 1918, in actuality, you could be a Slav!

Often Mistaken for Slavic Not all people from Eastern and Central Europe are Slavs. Hungarians and Romanians are neither linguistically nor ethnically Slavic people. The language of Hungary is identified by linguists as a member of the Finno-Ugric group of languages. Romanian is a Romance language related to French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. So, although generally a friendly neighbor to all, these ethnics are not Slavic.



Event Schedule

Subject to change

- 12:00 Opening Ceremonies
Ecumenical Prayer Service
Parade of Flags
- 12:30 Food tents opens
Kolo Dance/lessons
Mikey Dee Orchestra
- 1:30 Happy Hearts Tamburitzans
- 1:45 Mikey Dee Orchestra
- 2:45 Ukrainian Folk Ensemble
- 3:00 Mikey Dee Orchestra
- 4:00 Polka Demo/lessons
- 4:15 **Slavic Baking Contest**
- 4:30 Slavic Baking Auction
- 4:45 **Krakowiaki Polish Folk Circle**
- 5:00 **Del Sinchak Band**
- 6:00 **Living Traditions Folk Ensemble**
- 6:45 Del Sinchak Band
- 7:45 Basket Auction Winners announced
50/50 Drawing
- 8:00 Del Sinchak Band
- 8:45 Slavic Disco Begins

