

# UMD Voice



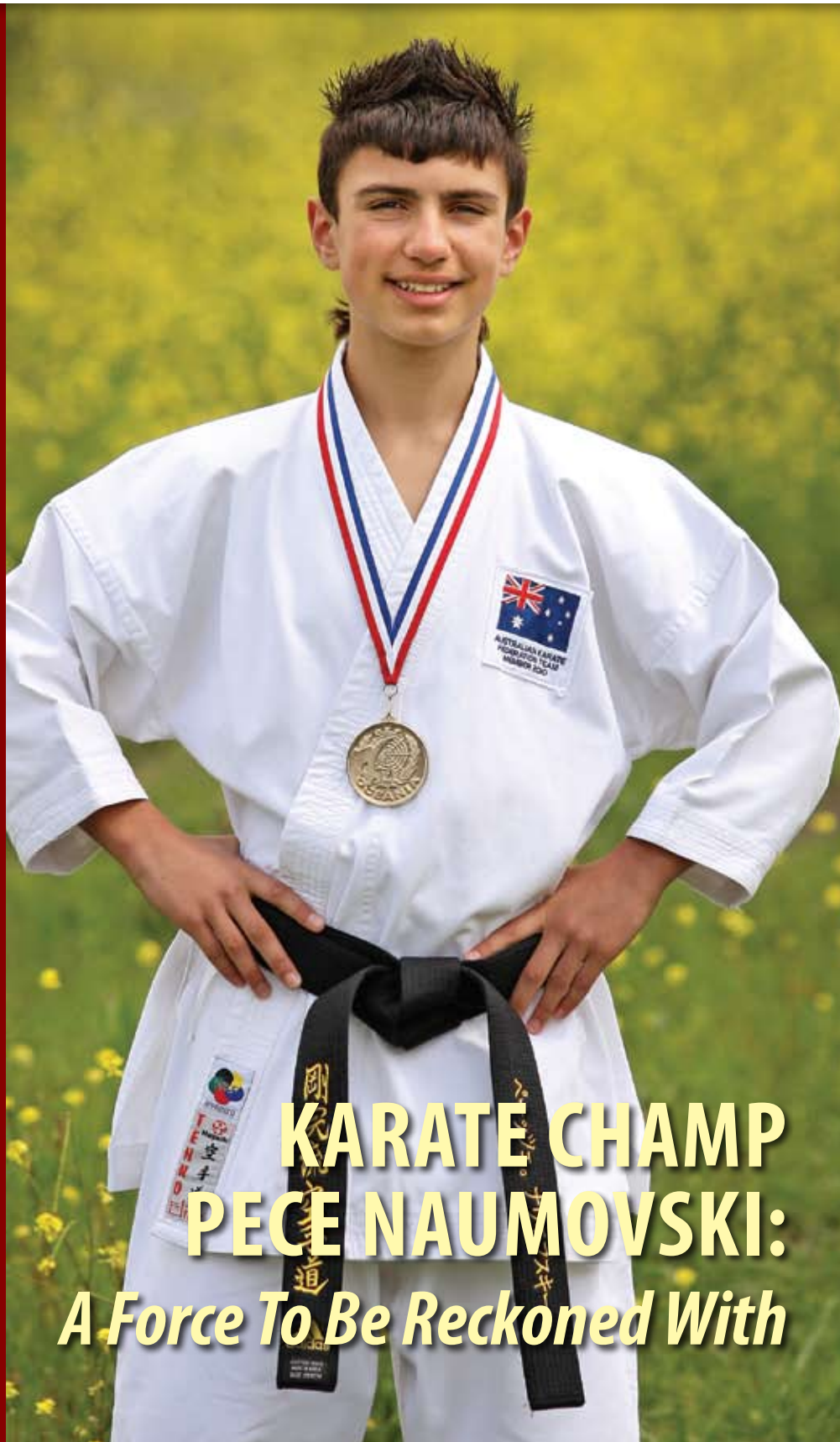
**DIRECT ADVOCACY ON  
PARLIAMENT HILL, OTTAWA**



**BRINGING A NAME IS A NAME  
TO CHICAGO, FORT WAYNE**



**DESTINATION: STRUMICA**



**KARATE CHAMP  
PECE NAUMOVSKI:  
*A Force To Be Reckoned With***

# 3RD ANNUAL UNITED MACEDONIAN DIASPORA GLOBAL CONFERENCE

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<b>UMD Non-Member</b>	\$275	\$325	\$375
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**UNITED  
MACEDONIAN  
DIASPORA**  
ОБЕДИНЕТА МАКЕДОНСКА ДИЈАСПОРА

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**UNITED  
MACEDONIAN  
DIASPORA**  
ОБЕДИНЕТА МАКЕДОНСКА ДИЈАСПОРА

Founded in 2004, the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) is a leading international non-governmental organization addressing the interests and needs of Macedonians and Macedonian communities throughout the world.

UMD's purpose is to give Macedonians a strong, consolidated voice aimed at: informing the public and government officials worldwide regarding issues affecting Macedonia and Macedonians; furthering the educational advancement of Macedonians; advancing the social and economic development of Macedonians; promoting Macedonian culture, history and language; and fostering charitable activities in Macedonia and in the Macedonian Diaspora.

UMD is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization in the United States, and a registered Canadian charity.

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Reader,



2010 is over in less than three weeks – where has the year gone? During the holiday season, we have much to be thankful for – family, friends, health, happiness, love, and prosperity. We, at UMD, have a lot to be thankful for as well – our members, our donors, our readers, and our friends – fellow Macedonians and friends of Macedonia. Without your donations, UMD's work could not have been possible throughout this past year.

Let me look back at 2010 and highlight for you some proud moments for our organization.

- UMD organized the Washington, D.C., Chicago, New York, New Jersey, and Fort Wayne premieres of the documentary A Name is A Name;
- In February, UMD conducted extensive advocacy work in Canberra, Australia educating Australian policymakers about Macedonian issues including meeting with the Speaker of Australia's Parliament;
- In April, UMD launched Los Angeles operations and bestowed upon world-renowned pianist Simon Trpceski UMD's Outstanding Achievement Award in the Arts;
- In June, we held our 2nd Annual UMD Global Conference in downtown Toronto, bringing together over 1,000 guests from 20 countries;
- In August, we led a delegation of 18 senior Congressional staff members sponsored by the Turkish Coalition of America to Macedonia – the largest staff delegation ever to Macedonia;
- In September, UMD questioned UN minority rights expert Gay McDougall during a hearing in the U.S. Congress; and
- In November, UMD met with Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper bestowing upon him UMD's highest honor – the Goce Delchev Award; UMD also launched its Western Australian operations.

This is only a selection of UMD's important work in 2010. More is included in this issue of UMD Voice magazine and you can always visit our website <http://www.umdiaspora.org> for the most up-to-date information.

I only want to touch on UMD's Macedonia in NATO 2010 Campaign. Macedonia was again denied entry into NATO, due to its southern neighbor's ridiculous requests for Macedonia to change its name. However, UMD ensured further tangible support for Macedonia, and again called upon the Macedonian government to cease "negotiations" with Greece. For the first time in 20 years, 19 members of Congress and 4 Senators stood up for Macedonia's inherent sovereign right and urged the U.S. President to support Macedonia. When UMD was founded in 2004, there were only 2-3 members of Congress and 2 Senators, which strongly supported Macedonia. In addition, UMD also garnered the support of Canadian members of Parliament, French members of Parliament, and the Croatian-American, Hungarian-American, and Turkish-American communities for Macedonia's NATO Membership. UMD spent most of September and October working on all these projects. Some may not realize this, but all this support for Macedonia is truly monumental for our community – it's a first!

UMD Voice magazine has become the voice of the worldwide Macedonian Diaspora community. Mark Branov, our editor, and his team have done a superb job once again – thank you! The professionalism and content are amazing – I am especially excited about the cover story about karate champion Pece Naumovski! Pece – you are a true Ambassador for Macedonia!

Last but not least, we have many projects planned for the New Year, including helping elementary school children in Macedonia, increasing our scholarship and educational programs, charitable activities and our signature event of the year the 3rd Annual UMD Global Conference in June at the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C. – Celebrating Macedonia's Independence – Shaping the Future. Please consider making an end of the year tax-deductible donation to UMD; and those who are members, don't forget to renew your membership by December 31st.

Season's Greetings; Happy Hanukah; Merry Christmas, and Have a Wonderful and Joyful Happy New Year!

Yours Truly,

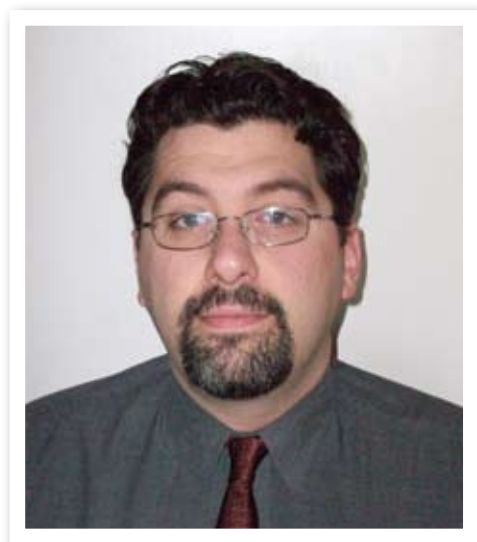


Metodija A. Koloski  
President

## EDITORIAL

### Mancevski's Blurred Lines between Fiction and Reality

By Mark Branov



**O**n September 12, 2010, I had the opportunity to see Milco Mancevski's latest work - "Mothers" - at a special screening of the Toronto International Film Festival. The main hall of the brand-new Bell Lightbox Theatre was sold-out, buzzing with Toronto's legions of multicultural

theater lovers. Also, I could recognize many familiar faces in the crowd, including Macedonian activists, politicians and clergymen.

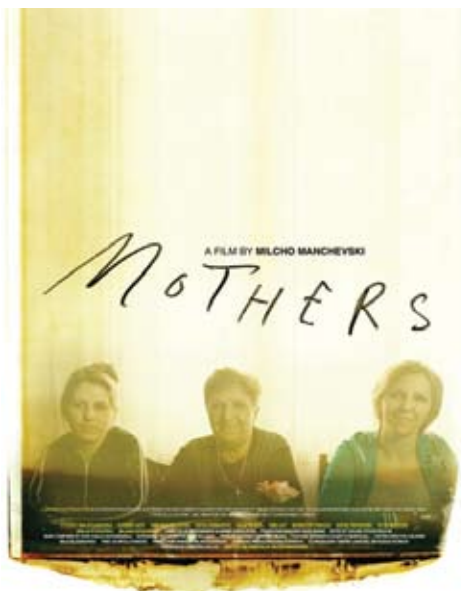
As in other works by the world-famous director, Mancevski pulls no punches with *Mothers*, boldly taking aim at disturbing themes other directors might prefer to avoid.

Reminiscent in structure to his highly acclaimed film *Before the Rain*, *Mothers* is three stories in one. The first is located in the capital Skopje, the second in the tiny ghost towns of the southern Mariovo region, and the third in working-class Kicevo. The first two are fiction, the third a hard-hitting documentary, but together, they form a delicate tapestry of the human condition in contemporary Macedonia. Each story stands on its own, and at the same time, feeds off of the other stories for context and texture. "All three stories deal with the truth as seen in a broken mirror," Mancevski says, "We learn something, and then we learn what we know is not the real truth."

First, we get a glimpse into the lives of nine-year old Macedonian girls, growing up in the shadows of Skopje's socialist era residential towers. Two of the girls take it upon themselves to report a flasher to the local police station. The only problem is that there was no flasher – or was there? In any case, the two girls certainly never saw him, but the local police fall for their elaborate tale, to the detriment of an innocent man.

Then, we hitch a ride with three young filmmakers on a pilgrimage to Mariovo, a hauntingly beautiful region near Bitola. Derelict villages dot the mountainside, and stepping into one is like stepping into a time machine. The filmmakers meet *both* of one town's inhabitants – a Baba and a Dedo. Though actually brother and sister, they haven't spoken to each other in decades. The sincerity of Ana Stojanovska's performance is captivating, and her character's feminine connection with the elderly Baba is portrayed beautifully, with Ratka Radmanovic, herself a living legend of the Macedonian theatre. ➤





The final part switches to documentary; a gritty, in-depth investigation into the Butcher of Kicevo, a real life monster that mercilessly killed and humiliated three innocent women from 2005 to 2008, and terrorized an entire community in the process. Mancevski displays admirable objectivity in tackling the immense profanity of these crimes, allowing the story to tell itself through the words of the people whose lives were forever altered.

My experience of this film was powerfully enhanced by the fact that I got the chance to witness it next to a cross-section of our Macedonian community in Canada.

In Skopje, the humor and naivete of the pony-tailed young girls is juxtaposed against the heavy-handed police work of

overenthusiastic officers, and Dimitar Gjorigiveski's Simon is obviously guilty until proven innocent, and I could see the look of recognition on the faces around me.

In Mariovo, Ana marvels at Baba's ancient wedding crown, and laments that there is no one to teach her how to bake traditional bread, poignantly portraying the cultural dislocation between Macedonia's generations, and between urbanites and rural folk. When Baba sees Ana's film on a brand-new MacBook Pro, the time machine is put in reverse, and Baba has no reference point for the technological wonder in her hands. But some things never change, like the breath-taking "inaet" of Dedo, something which is all too familiar.

In the Kicevo documentary, the film

shifts gears abruptly, and the nature of the subject matter had a visceral impact on this audience. The immense sense of loss expressed by the family of the victims was our loss, the tragedy for these Kicevcani was our tragedy.

For me, memorable moments included the agonized testimony of a ruddy-faced Muslim man, who actually discovered the first victim's body, only to find out later that he knew the woman well. In fact, she used to feed him when he was a child, equally alongside the Christian boys, who grew up together in streets of Kicevo. Another moment was the unabashed cheek of Taneski's defence lawyer, who argued without blinking about how the suspect's hair DNA could have possibly fallen on the body "from the wind." The disgust that greeted his preposterous comment audibly rankled the room.

Manchevski is quick to point out that: "Mothers is a film *from* Macedonia, not a film *about* Macedonia." But, the cultural communion that takes place between a Macedonian audience and a brilliant Macedonian film such as Mothers is tangible and important. Subtle nuances of Macedonian culture are skillfully hidden in each scene – some heartwarming, some humorous and others deeply tragic. Indeed, the nuances are hidden in plain sight, just like the banal antagonist of Kicevo hid himself in plain sight. Mancevski angrily rejects tired conventions and contrived imagery. He also relentlessly challenges us to examine and re-examine our own perceptions, which is the hallmark of a true artist.





# A Name is A Name Brought to Chicago and Fort Wayne: UMD Appoints Indiana Representative

By Stojan Nikolov and Boris Patarov

**T**he feature documentary A Name is a Name is a classic 'road film', following the motorcycle-riding narrator on both the proverbial and literal roads of the Republic of Macedonia. Over a period of seven months, he interviews many people – politicians, artists, farmers, clergy, historians, fishermen, young people - from all corners of the country, about what it means to be a Macedonian. And, ironically, a film of this importance was actually created by non-Macedonians, such as the director, Icelander Sigurjon Einarsson, and the producer, American Jason Miko.

Thousands have packed theaters to see the film all over the world, including places like Sydney, Toronto, Washington, D.C., Skopje, and New York City, and UMD wanted to continue bringing it to as many people as possible, with showings in Chicago and in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The November 12th premiere at the prestigious Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies was a huge success for the Macedonian-American community in Chicago. There were close to 400 people in attendance, from all walks of life and professions, and different nationalities. In discussions with several of the attendees, it was mentioned repeatedly to UMD that such Macedonian events in downtown Chicago are rarely organized. For many people, it was one of the best manifestations with Macedonian character ever to take place in Chicago,

and the turnout was more than anyone had anticipated.

In addition to remarks by the producer Jason Miko and UMD President Metodija A. Koloski, Macedonia's Consul General Jovica Palashevski greeted the guests. Other guests included the Consul Generals of Ecuador, Nepal, Columbia, Australia, Bosnia, Barbados, Guatemala, Ireland, Spain, Turkey, Grenada, South Africa, and the Dominican Republic – a little United Nations in Chicago. Representatives of the Offices of Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Chicago Mayor Richard M. Delay attended, as well.

You could tell by the expression on the audience's faces that everyone could easily relate with the people in the film; from the high school kids in the yard, all the way to the outspoken grandma, the unofficial hero of the film - ready to spank anyone who changes our name! People reacted with a rollercoaster of emotions. It was the fastest 50 minutes ever, followed by a spirited question and answer session.

The Chicago premiere could not have been possible without the generous support of the following sponsors: Boris Nitchoff, MAK Trucking, Inc., Drs. Anastas and Nada Mukoski and family, Alamo Truck Repair, Trajko Papuckoski – in memory of his Baba Slavka Presilska, VIP International, Inc., Access Transport, Inc., and Jerry and LuAnn Naumoff and family.



UMD is grateful for their support of the premiere.

On December 4th, close to 100 people attended the Fort Wayne premiere of the documentary at the Indiana University/Purdue University campus. Fort Wayne is home to one of the United States' oldest Macedonian-American communities, and in the recent decade, much of the community's vibrancy has been lost. It was UMD's goal to bring the movie to Fort Wayne, in part to generate more engagement in Macedonian cultural activities.

During the same evening, UMD President Koloski bestowed upon long-time UMD member and supporter Argie N. Bellio a Certificate of Appointment as the Representative of the UMD Indiana region. Bellio and our members in Fort Wayne will work hard to carry on the 100 year old tradition of the Macedonian-American community activism in Indiana, and they have already begun preparing the next event ... stay tuned!

# OBITUARY: MR. VAN PETROFF, (1923-2010)

by Nick Kuburovski

**V**an Petroff was 7 years old when he arrived in Canada from Bitola in 1930 and settled in St. Thomas, Ontario. Although Canada was suffering through the Great Depression, it seemed like heaven compared to the dire conditions in the country he left behind, where a piece of bread with onions or a tomato was considered a good lunch.

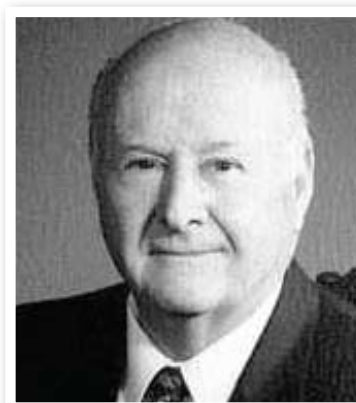
When he started school, he had trouble communicating, as he only spoke Macedonian, and his schoolmates only spoke English, but he worked hard and learned quickly. Van left St. Thomas for the "Big City" of Toronto, where he graduated from high school at Parkdale Collegiate, then studied Hotel, Restaurant and Bakery Trade at what is now Ryerson University, and graduated with honours in 1947.

Van's father opened their first restaurant in Toronto in 1942. A few years later, Van volunteered for the Canadian Armed Forces and was stationed at Camp Borden as a weapons instructor, attaining the rank of lance corporal.

From 1946 to 1951, Van experienced the most difficult period in his life. For five difficult years, he worked from morning to night, to earn enough money to support his family and save the life of his father, who had to spend a great deal of time in the hospital, as there was no government assisted health care at that time. Van's work paid off, his father recovered and enjoyed a long life.

From 1951 to 1980, Van expanded his industrial catering company to a total of 35 in-plant cafeterias and employed 400 food service staff who were responsible for preparing meals for 40,000 factory and office workers across the greater Toronto area. He also expanded the business to include social catering, which involved the preparation and service of food for weddings, banquets, funerals and other private and organized affairs.

In 1980, Van sold the industrial catering side of his business and sold the social catering portion of the business seven years later. He retired and took the opportunity to spend more time with friends and



relatives. But, after four years, he found himself back in business when he acquired the Fiesta Inn Banquet Halls.

In 1954, Van inaugurated The Macedonian Open Golf Tournament. It is now one of the longest running golf tournaments in Ontario. For many years, it was a struggle for the tournament to break even, so Van subsidized it in order to keep it running and to maintain the high standards that the participants had come to expect. In 1993, he handed the tournament administration over to Canadian Macedonian Place, under the condition that a portion of the net profits would go towards the costs of the Macedonian language course at the University of Toronto. Van was one of the primary supporters of the Macedonian language course since its inception.

For 26 years, Van had been an active member of the Board at C.M.P. and was at the work site on a daily basis. He was President of C.M.P. during construction and the official opening on June 17, 1979.

Van also made a significant contribution to the building of St. Clement of Ohrid Church in Toronto. He was one of five people listed on the charter by the province of Ontario in 1962. Van was the chairperson of executive board of the first church committee for three years.

During his school days, Van played on football and basketball teams with great distinction. He also played on Macedonian teams (St. George's and St. Cyril & Methody) and Canadian Army basketball and baseball teams. In 1944, a new page was turned in

Van's sports career, when he began to play golf. Since that time, he participated in golf tournaments around the world, in countries including Spain, Portugal, Brazil and Greece, and at Pebble Beach in the United States. He received many trophies for his achievements, though his most memorable victories came from the tournament he organized for more than half a century - The Macedonian Open. He enjoyed golfing well into his 80s.

Van has always been supportive of those in financial need, beginning with "In Memoriam donations" and continuing with significant donations to churches, and the Macedonian Language Program at the University of Toronto.

He has great empathy for those with health problems, especially young children. In 1963, after a catastrophic earthquake hit Skopje, Van worked tirelessly to raise funds to rebuild the city, sending financial assistance, medicine and clothing. The humanitarian efforts of Van have been recognized by his fatherland, and in 1967, the University of Skopje awarded him a diploma in honours for his contributions to the medical faculty.

The Macedonian community of Toronto honours Van Petroff for his role as a great humanitarian and community leader. His dedication to the community and to his fellow man serves as an inspiration to all of us.

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## UMD Days of Advocacy on Parliament Hill in Ottawa

By Rafaël Primeau-Ferraro

**O**n November 2-4, 2010, the United Macedonian Diaspora made an official visit to the Parliament of Canada in Ottawa to meet with members of the different political parties represented at the House of Commons. UMD's business delegation and community leaders led by President Metodija Koloski and Board Member Goran Saveski, met with the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, as well as 17 Members of Parliament. The purpose of the meetings were to advance Canada-Macedonia bilateral relations and to discuss Macedonia's aspirations to join NATO.

UMD also took the opportunity to deliver to Prime Minister Harper its highest honour, the Goce Delchev Award, for his honourable leadership in international affairs, and his recognition of Macedonia by her constitutional name, solidifying the excellent relationship between Canada and Macedonia.

The Goce Delchev Award is UMD's highest honour and the recipient of this award is selected based on the impact they have had on Macedonians around the world, their record of public service, their contribution to the advancement of justice, peace, democracy, personal freedom and economic opportunity.

"The Macedonian community worldwide could not have asked for a better

friend and advocate than Prime Minister Harper. We were extremely honoured to have the opportunity to meet with him and discuss Canadian-Macedonian relations. Goce Delchev and our forefathers, who were true visionaries of their time, fought for an independent and free Macedonia. They would be pleased to see such distinguished international leaders as friends of Macedonia and the Macedonian people," stated UMD President Metodija A. Koloski.

"The whole experience was humbling and a meeting of a lifetime," said UMD delegate Elizabeth Naumovski, "(During the UMD visit in Ottawa), I also met some really genuine, down to earth people whom I know I will keep in touch with."

UMD also had the chance to meet with the Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence. The talks were about advancing Canada-Macedonia bilateral relations and Macedonia's aspirations to join NATO. UMD expressed its appreciation of Minister MacKay's support of Macedonia and reiterated its hope that NATO would offer Macedonia a formal invitation to join the Alliance at the upcoming Lisbon Summit on November 19-21, 2010.

During the conversation with Minister MacKay, UMD President, Metodija Koloski, and new UMD Board Member Goran Saveski pointed out the fact that

Macedonia is the fourth largest contributor per capita to the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan, and is contributing more than many current NATO members (the fourth largest per capita contributor to ISAF).

"UMD is grateful for Minister MacKay's friendship and support of Macedonia's NATO membership. By Minister MacKay finding time to meet with our delegation, it shows the strong interest in Macedonia's and the region's security and stability," stated UMD Board Member Goran Saveski. "Canadian and Macedonian troops are fighting side-by-side in Afghanistan, and we hope that Canadian support for Macedonia's NATO membership will be instrumental in making that happen."

Canada demonstrated a strong interest in Macedonia's stability since the early days of Macedonia's independence by sending peacekeeping troops. Canadian troops were stationed at the NATO logistical support center in Macedonia during the Kosovo war in 1999, and Canadian and Macedonian troops have cooperated closely in both training and field operations.

In addition to Prime Minister Harper and Minister MacKay, UMD's delegation met with many members of the opposition parties, which include the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois. Among them were Hon. Rob Oliphant and Hon. Bryon Wilfert, two Liberal MPs that have a significant number of Canadian citizens of Macedonian descent in their Toronto ridings. Receptive to UMD's positions, Mr. Oliphant, as Multiculturalism critic for the Official Opposition, was particularly well informed about Macedonian communities in Canada and around the world. Mr. Wilfert expressed much interest in the issues concerning Macedonia at the upcoming Lisbon Summit and hoped that the disagreement with Greece would stop blocking Macedonia's aspirations of joining more international organizations. After the meeting with UMD, he published a press release about it on his own website. UMD also met with Gilles Ducespe, leader of the Bloc Québécois's 50 members, the second opposition party in Canada's Parliament.

UMD also had discussions with members of the opposition parties on the possible creation of an inter-parliamentary group on Canada-Macedonia relations. An ➤

open letter was also discussed, in hopes that it may serve as consensus support from Canada's major parties in support of Macedonia, including signatures from Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Lawrence Cannon, of the Conservative Party, Foreign Affairs Critic, Hon. Bob Rae of the Liberal Party, Hon. Jean Dorion for the Bloc Québécois, and Hon. Paul Dewar for the New Democratic Party. The delegation also met with

Mr. Dorion and Mr. Dewar, and found both of them to be well-acquainted with major issues concerning Macedonia. "It was gratifying to hear positive feedback from Members of Parliament of every Canadian party, expressing their support to Macedonia and the Macedonian people", said UMD President Metodija Koloski.

Canada is home to close to a quarter of a million Canadians of Macedonian descent,

with early immigration to Canada starting well over a century ago. Enriching Canada's cultural mosaic with their hard work and cultural heritage, Canadian-Macedonians have excelled in fields of arts, business, community affairs, entertainment, television, fashion, film, political life, and sports. As ambassadors for their homeland, they continue to build the bridge between Macedonia and Canada.

## Board Member Profile – Stojan Nikolov

**S**tojan Nikolov was born and raised in Strumica, Macedonia; he moved to the United States during high school as an exchange student. Nikolov holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance, a Masters in Business Administration from Louisiana Tech University, and is a Certified Employee Benefits Specialist (CEBS). He currently works as a Project Manager/Consultant for an organization overseeing the electrical demands for New England, and has a background in business and financial analysis, and project management and marketing.

Nikolov has been a member of the UMD Board for the last two years serving as Development Director of UMD Voice magazine. In addition, he oversees the devel-

opment of new technologies to promote UMD, such as Youtube and Facebook, and he helps maintain the UMD website.

On July 27, 2010, the UMD Board of Directors elected Stojan Nikolov as Chairman. Nikolov takes over the role of Chairman from current UMD Vice President Aleksandar Mitreski who served as Chairman since July 2009. The Chairmanship is a one-year position.

"It is an honor to be part of UMD and its varied and far reaching efforts to promote and protect Macedonian traditions and culture," stated Stojan Nikolov. "My main goal as a Chairman is to strengthen UMD through a focus on long term fundraising and membership development,



and to insure that it remains a vital part of the Macedonian diaspora for many years to come."

To contact Stojan Nikolov, please e-mail him at [snikolov@umdiaspora.org](mailto:snikolov@umdiaspora.org)

## DANA KLEIN:

### Linking Struga with Coral Gables



▲ Lena Gogovska, Board member of St. Dimitrija Macedonian Orthodox Church, Xavier Beqiri -Vice Mayor in Struga, Mayor of Coral Gables- Mayor Don Slesnick, Bashkim Kaba - local parliament, waste management, Dragan Pacinovski – Active member of local St. Dimitrija Macedonian Orthodox Church



▲ Coral Gables International Committee Members: Steve Edelstein, Lourdes Cuzan, Art DeNunzio, Carolina Rendeiro, interpreter Bojan Momiroski, Honorary Consul General Dana Klein, Vice-Mayor of Coral Gables William H. Kerdyk, Xavier Beqiri -Vice Mayor in Struga, Polum Qura - member of the local parliament in Struga, Gordana Si-

monovska Momirovska - marketing manager, Zoran Strezoski - director of State Agency of Support and promotion of Tourism of the Republic of Macedonia- National Agency, Liljana Zaturaska - member of the State Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia - National parliament, Bashkim Kaba - Struga parliament, waste management





## PECE NAUMOVSKI: Karate Champion Takes On The World

By Mark Branov

**R**arely does someone so young achieve such amazing success and worldwide notoriety as Pece Naumovski, Australia's karate champion of Macedonian heritage. At a mere 13-years-old, the talented 8th grader at Thomastown Secondary College in Melbourne has lit up the karate world.

Taking his first tournament at 10-years-old in Birmingham, U.K, Pece is already a repeat Australian National Champion. He has also been given the honor of representing his country abroad. At the 14th Oceania Championship Tournament in Tahiti, he took the top prize in the 50kg boys "kumite", which means he is the best of the best in his region of the world. He then defended his title at the next Oceania tournament in Fiji on December 3rd and 4th, 2010, winning his division kumite and the team kumite, adding two more gold medals to the collection.

An excellent student who enjoys reading, math and chemistry, this young Macedonian-Australian's true passion is for the art of karate. He has already achieved the grade of "Black Belt, 1st Dan", and has experience training his colleagues, as

well. One day, he dreams to pass on his knowledge to others and open his own karate club in Melbourne.

In a recent interview for the Herald Sun, trainer Jason Knight of the Go-Kan-Ryu Victoria stated: "We've got Pece training and demonstrating his skills to about 38 slightly younger kids in the art of karate."

He continued: "Pece's raw ability as a sportsman, compounded with his ability to grasp the spiritual side of the sport, and to tap into the discipline needed to be the best, makes him a natural role model and teacher."

Indeed, it would seem that Pece's fierce discipline is the key to his success, lifting him above those who rely on talent alone. He trains four hours a day, seven days a week, and says: "When sent to represent your country, it means... you have achieved good results. (In preparation for Tahiti), I really prepared a lot, everyday with my trainer, until all my muscles hurt. There were even blisters on my feet, but I needed to be 100% prepared, because I set a goal for myself to be ten times better than my competitors... When I finished in first place I was felt so happy and fortu-

nate that God helped me to win... my last fight was one of the hardest and the best, because I had an excellent opponent."

Pece also has his eyes set on the 2012 Summer Olympics in London: "I think soon Australia will be able to elevate karate into an Olympic sport and by then I will be 17 and able to compete," Pece said. Should that come to pass, we know that Pece will represent his country proudly, and that Macedonians around the world will be supporting him as well.





# Greece Exploiting St. Cyril and Methodius for Political Aims

By Trajan Passois



*St. Cyril honored on Gothic cathedral in Prague, Czech Republic*

**S**ts. Cyril and Methodius's legacy continues to echo through the ages. Born in Solun (Salonika) in the 9th Century, the work of these Byzantine monks has affected the history of all the peoples of South East Europe, and others beyond. For instance, there has been a recent revival of May 24 as a day of commemoration of the Saints in Russia, in honor of their vital contribution to Slavic literature and culture. In 1980, Pope John Paul II proclaimed the brothers as "co-patrons of Europe", along with Saint Benedict.

However, in Greece, this heritage has been exploited in a political manner as well. In the town of Sorovits, Aegean Macedonia, a conference was held earlier this year to discuss these Saints in the context of their role in "promoting the unity between different peoples in South East Europe." However the title proved to be ironic, as the organizers of the conference

included the Municipality of Amyntaio (Sorovits), the Greek-government-sponsored Western Macedonia University and Association of Environmental Protection and Cultural Heritage.

It is true that the Saints have been commemorated in Greece on May 11 on the Gregorian calendar. However, until the year 1991, and the resurgence of the Macedonian Question that accompanied the newly independent Macedonian Republic, Greece did not attribute any kind of special honors to the two famous missionaries, even though they were born in Solun.

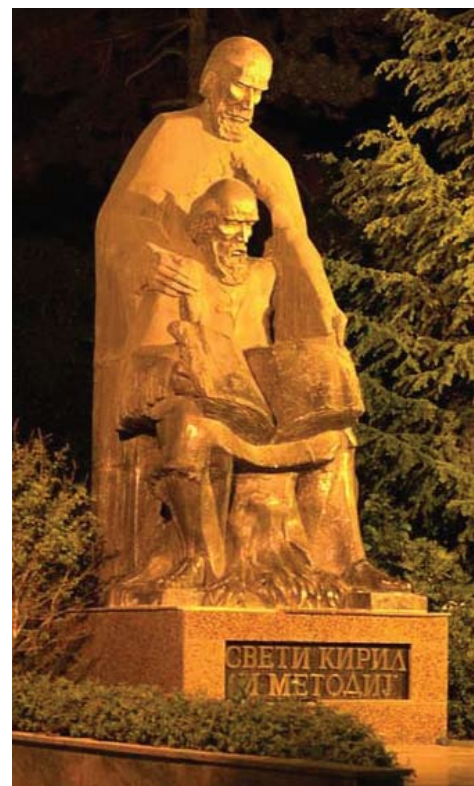
In fact, the Cyrillic script, created by St. Cyril, has been officially suppressed in Greece, as it is used in the Macedonian language; the language into which St. Cyril made the first translations of religious books. After the initial historical annexation of Macedonian territories by Greece in 1913, icons with Cyrillic text found in churches among the ethnic Macedonian villages of Aegean Macedonia were systematically removed or destroyed by Greek authorities, while the corresponding murals were either covered or destroyed. These acts of revisionist history were essential for the Greek state to impose the doctrine that the language of Macedonia is merely "a spoken dialect for household use, that has no written form."

However, in 1991, Greek authorities responded to Macedonian independence by suddenly remembering the missionaries, and they began to celebrate them and show their work like never before. For instance, in May 1993, the Ministry of Education produced a widely distributed letter with instructions on honoring May 11 as a feast day, "with church attendance of all Greek students" and "lectures about the life and work of Saints Cyril and Methodius". In Solun, a church was built in record time to honor the saints as exclusively Greek heritage.

Instead of honoring the Saints as they should be honored, by fostering their cultural heritage in the place where they

originated, Greek authorities continue to "coat" this part of Macedonian history, as they did in past decades to the Cyrillic paintings, using fraudulent colors. Whatever has some brightness from the past, must be claimed as "Greek and Greek alone", and no other people have the right to honor it.

The aforementioned conference was organized within the context of this historical misrepresentation and political exploitation of the past. Sorovits (Amyntaio) is located in an area where the cultural heritage of Cyril and Methodius is still alive. And yet, no natural heir of Cyrillic heritage was invited: not one scholar from the Republic of Macedonia, nor any representatives of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, and no one from the literary school in Ohrid which was founded by the disciples of Cyril and Methodius, Saints Kliment and Naum.



*Ohrid, Macedonia*

Besides the predictable Greek-speakers invited, there also were some foreigners. Five of them were professors from Bulgaria: Kenanov Dimitahr, Todorov Todor, Sapundzieva Vanja, Miltenova Anisava, Popov Georgi, and two were professors from Serbia: Subotin - Golubovic Tatjana, Pirivatrić Srdan, and one was from Slovakia.

In this conference, there was a memorial report, with photographs and archival material on "How the Greeks enlightened the Slavs: Cyril and Methodius, their missionary work and its timeless continuity." It is essential that Cyril and Methodius are portrayed as ethnic Greeks. Of course, this is a dubious claim and propaganda made for domestic consumption. No serious historian argues that anyone in 9th Century Salonika identified themselves as ethnic Greeks. In that time, the term was only used in religious context, and it meant believers of ancient religions, which were characterized by the Christian population of Byzantium as pagan. When the Byzantines named somebody a "Greek", they meant it as a pagan, and it had a derogatory meaning.

Today, Bulgarians present them as Bulgarians, because they consider as their co-nationals all Slavic-speaking populations from the Danube to the Aegean Sea. At that time, Bulgarians lived in the area between the Danube and the Stara Planina mountain range, which is the current northern half of Bulgaria. This does not exclude the possibility that some Bulgarians have been installed in Solun. But the chroniclers of the time were talking about Slavs. The term Slav, of course, was a linguistic concept, not a national identity. Like the word Latin, it referred to a language, and not a national identity.

In a recent Akritas blog post, a biography of Methodius was willfully misquoted in this regard. The phrase "Ye are therefore Salonikans and Salonikans speak often Slavic", replacing the word чисто (cisto), which means clear or clean, with често, which means often, to diminish the numbers of the Slav speakers.

If Salonikans of that time did not speak a Slavonic language, who named the north wind which hits the city as the "Vardar"? Is it possible that the Slavs settled all over Macedonia and the Balkans, but did not settle in modern day Thessaloniki?

For argument's sake, let us accept the



*It is an undisputed fact that the educated, the clergy, administrators, merchants, spoke also the official Byzantine Greek, aside from their mother tongue.*

popular theory that, in the 6th century, Slavic peoples settled as farmers and ranchers in rural areas of Macedonia. Four centuries later, when Cyril and Methodius lived, isn't it possible that many of them got educated, entered the state apparatus of the multinational Eastern Roman Empire, dealt as prosperous traders, and as such, couldn't they have settled in Macedonia's capital city? Don't you think the translation of church books must had been near impossible for someone who did not know the local Macedonian language perfectly? The only people, then, who knew the language best, were those to whom it was their mother tongue. It is an undisputed fact that the educated, the clergy, administrators, merchants, spoke also the official Byzantine Greek, aside from their mother tongue. So, were not those Slavophones, while also being Greek-speaking, not naturally the best suited persons to create an alphabet for their native language? And finally, since there is no evidence that they were Greeks or Bulgarians, why are they claimed both by Greece and Bulgaria?

If the organizers of the conference of Amyndeo intended to highlight the cultural heritage of Cyril and Methodius, the first thing they should have done, would have been to invite their cultural and eth-

nic descendants, that is, the Macedonians of the region. If they do not promote the cultural heritage of the place where the Saints were born, not only do they not honor the legacy of Cyril and Methodius, but they also underestimate it, and attempt to exploit it for political aims.

#### About the author:

Trajan Passois is a Macedonian who was born and raised in Pozar, Pella Prefecture. Since 1983, he has been struggling for the right of re-patriation of Macedonian political refugees of the Greek Civil War 1946-1949, among whom there are also many relatives of his.

In 1991, he pioneered the creation of the "Macedonian Movement of Balkan Welfare", and soon after the "Ouranio Toxo" (Vinozhito) Party, of which he was a member of the Political Secretariat.

He was the editor of the bilingual Macedonian newspaper "Zora". In 2007, he edited a book called History of the Macedonian Movement of Balkan Welfare, (MA. KLB.E-OURANIO TOXO), by which he makes an attempt to record another hidden aspect of Macedonian history in Egej.

His book has been translated into Macedonian (Историја на Македонското Движење, 2007: Matica Editions)



# Ancient Traditions in the Modern Culture of Macedonia

By Aleksandar Donski

There are a great many rituals, customs and beliefs in Macedonian folklore of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries that have been preserved since the ancient period. By comparative analysis of ancient Macedonian rituals, customs, and beliefs found in the records of ancient historians and respected contemporary researchers of ancient Macedonia worldwide using the records of folklorists from the 19th and 20th centuries, we have discovered remarkable similarities in many rituals, customs, and beliefs, many of which I have described in my book "Descendants of Alexander the Great." These traditions certainly suggest that the modern Macedonians are indeed descended from the ancient Macedonians of Alexander's time.

Here we will not go into their genesis in any depth, i.e. whether these were independently ancient Macedonian customs or perhaps customs inherited by the ancient Macedonians from some other cultures, since this can not be practically proven with any great degree of certainty, despite the fact that ancient sources were quite clear that some rituals and beliefs were of genuine Macedonian origin. More important for the topic of our discussion is how these ancient Macedonian customs, rituals, and beliefs reached the Macedonian people of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

In the interest of space we will examine only one of the many such traditions, and in future editions, we will present others.

The custom of men and women sitting separately during celebrations in the past is well known. It is still preserved and practiced today in some Macedonian villages. Many in Macedonia incorrectly consider this custom to be inherited from the Turks, i.e. from the period of their five-century long rule over Macedonia. This belief is based on conceptions of Ottoman attitudes towards women in that era. However, such an interpretation of the origin of this custom does not correspond to the facts. Separate seating of men and women during celebrations or ceremonies is clearly found

among the ancient Macedonians as early as the 6th century BC.

The renowned ancient historian Herodotus supplied a description of this ancient Macedonian custom. Describing the visit of Persian emissaries to the Macedonian Court in the period of King Amyntas, in the very last years of the 6th century BC, Herodotus cited the words of this Macedonian king directly, who clearly mentioned this custom:

*"So the Persians, sent upon this errand, when they reached the court, and were brought into the presence of Amyntas, required him to give earth and water to King Darius. And Amyntas not only gave them what they asked, but also invited them to come and feast with him; after which he made ready the table with great magnificence, and entertained the Persians in right friendly fashion. Now when the meal was over, and they were all set to the drinking, the Persians said: 'Dear Macedonian, we Persians have the custom that, when we make a great feast, we bring with us to the table our wives and concubines, and have them sit beside us. Now then, as thou hast received us so kindly, and feasted us so handsomely, and given more-over earth and water to King Darius, do also after our custom in this matter...' "*

Then, Amyntas answered:

*"O, Persians! We have no such custom as this; but with us men and women are kept apart. Nevertheless, since you, who are our lords, wish it, this also shall be granted to you.' When Amyntas had thus spoken, he bade some go and fetch the women. And the women came at his call and took their seats in a row over against the Persians. Then, when the Persians saw that the women were fair and comely, they spoke again to Amyntas and said, that what had been done was not wise; for it would have been better for the women not to have come at all, than to come in this way, and not sit by their sides, but to remain opposite them, the torment of their eyes."*

The outcome of this interesting story is that Amyntas allowed the Macedonian

women to sit by the Persians, and when the Persians got drunk and began teasing and offending the women, they paid for this with their heads. We will return to this episode later.

The words of the Macedonian King Amyntas "We have no such custom as this; but with us men and women are kept apart", and later "And the women came at his call and took their seats in a row over against the Persians" are telling. A number of collectors and compilers of Macedonian folklore in the 19th century supplied completely identical descriptions of this custom. The Miladinov brothers, for example, in the 19th century recorded the wedding ceremonies in Kukush (a town in the southern part of Macedonia) and wrote a description published in their "Anthology of Folk Songs, Wedding Customs in Kukush":

*"Following their arrival at the bride's home, the men sit on one side, and the women stand up on the other."*

The renowned 19th century collector of Macedonian folklore Stefan Verkovich wrote the following concerning wedding customs in the vicinity of the Macedonian towns of Seres and Nevrokop, in his serial "Macedonian Folklore 5":

*"When they enter the home of the bride, the father of the bridegroom and the men go into one room, and the women in another room where the bride and the girls are also."*

The compiler of Macedonian folklore Kuzman Shapkarev also mentioned this custom in his descriptions of the 19th century wedding customs from Ohrid, Struga and Kukush. But, weddings were not the only time when this ancient Macedonian custom was practiced by the Macedonians of the 19th century. It also applied to other formal group meals, especially those occasions attended by a large number of members of both sexes.

Concerning Macedonian customs dur-



ing formal meals from southwestern Macedonia, Verkovich wrote:

*"At the upper end of the table, the grandfather, the oldest in the family, sits in the first position, surrounded on both sides by members of the male gender; the grandmother sits at the other end of the table, surrounded by members of the female gender."*

We see here a totally identical situation as that described by Herodotus. Called by their king, the ancient Macedonian women entered the room and in accordance with their upbringing, i.e. the only course of action they knew for such situations. They sat opposite to the Persians, i.e. opposite the men. So, in ancient Macedonian celebrations, women were usually seated in separate rooms from the men. When in the same room, they sat across from the men, so that even then they were distanced from them.

Descriptions by Verkovich of the wedding customs in the Macedonian towns of Seres and Nevrokop reveal the same: the men entered one room, and women entered another. During their stay in the same room women were seated across

from the men. Meanwhile, the Miladinov brothers described this identical custom, practiced during weddings in the Macedonian town of Kukush.

In the account by Verkovich of a formal dinner in southwestern Macedonia, men and women were to dine in the same room, and they sat separately and across from each other, just as ancient Macedonian men and women sat, according to Herodotus. The total correspondence of this Macedonian custom from ancient times until recently is obvious, and is still practiced in some villages in Macedonia today, according to personal testimonies by participants in such weddings and celebrations.

Another intriguing piece of evidence that this custom, practiced by Macedonians from the 19th century, is a link to the ancient Macedonians, is an interesting testimonial by the recorder of the custom himself, Stefan Verkovich. He asserted that the majority of the Macedonians from southwestern Macedonia belonged to the Pulivakov clan. According to Verkovich, this extended family included a considerable part of the population of several Macedonian towns in southwestern Mace-

donia, where he recorded these customs. Below is Verkovich's description of the national consciousness of the Pulivakovs, from approximately 1870:

*"According to a narrative passed down through generations in the Pulivakov clan, they are pure Macedonians, descendants of Alexander the Great. Those known as "lower plainsmen", especially those living near Pazar, are proud of the old capital, i.e. the city of Pella, whose remnants consist of one tower and a huge rock, five arshins tall."*

It is no coincidence that this ancient Macedonian custom was preserved for over 25 centuries in Macedonia, particularly in those parts of Macedonia where the population maintained their Macedonian consciousness, despite constant foreign pressures. This custom is present among other ancient peoples as well, such as the ancient Persians. It can be assumed that neighboring peoples adopted this custom from the ancient Macedonians, as the earliest reference to this custom found in narrative sources determined it to be an ancient Macedonian custom.



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# Foreign Investments Declining, Reforms Needed, and Europe's Support for Greece in the Name Dispute Remains Solid

By Aleksandar Metodijev



**W**hile the Macedonian government has spent hundreds of thousands of euros on promotional campaigns such as “Invest in Macedonia” and “Macedonia Timeless”, an EU Progress Report in November pointed out an annual drop in foreign investment of nearly 20%. A few weeks later, the president of International Council of Investors in Macedonia, Colin Jaffray, said that he is not expecting any concrete investments in next three years.

The European Commission Report harshly criticized weaknesses in the rule of law, slow procedures, insufficient resources, unreliable contract enforcement and perceived corruption. Also, the report claimed that millions of euros spent on export promotions lead to “little tangible results.” Meanwhile, the unemployment rate remains high.

One recent example of corruption was reported by Alfa TV in Skopje: Mite and Vane Bojchevi, brothers who live and work in USA, wanted to start a business in Macedonia and to invest the money they had earned in the States. The brothers ended up buying stocks, but the property the brothers had in Macedonia was stolen, using false documentation and letters of attorney. In his statement for Alfa TV, one of the brothers said: “We came like patriots with goodwill, to invest in our own country, but we were robbed by well-known

criminal structures. Officers from those three firms that we had invested in got together with lawyers, brokerage houses and other institutions, and produced falsified letters of attorney, saying that we allegedly have given them the right to sell our stocks and to keep the money for themselves.”

The case of those brothers is in front of the Macedonian courts. But, trust in this institution appears to be very low. In fact, the judicial system is one of the least trusted institutions in the country, according to a Balkan Monitor survey that was published in Brussels in November. Only 31% of Macedonians and 20% of Macedonian Albanians had faith in the justice system.

Other bad news from the survey included: More than two-thirds (70%-74%) saw high-level corruption as pervasive in both government and the business world, the people in Macedonia are the least satisfied people with their lives in general in the Western Balkan region, and 72% of respondents stating that they could only manage on their household's income “with difficulty” or “with great difficulty.” That is why 19% of the people surveyed would like to emigrate to Germany, 16% to USA, 8% to Italy and an equal 7% to Austria or Canada.

According to the Minister for Labor and Social Policy, Dzelal Bajrami, the commonly shown statistic of 330,000 unemployed people in Macedonia, or 32.1% of the population, is unrealistic, because the vast majority of those people work in the grey economy. But despite high employment, a judiciary that is viewed with suspicion, and perceived corruption throughout the country, another key issue is the lack of Euro-Atlantic integration. EU integration has been stalled for five years, and NATO membership has been stalled for two years, by Greece.

Foreign investors want to invest their capital in a stable country, with institutions that will not jeopardize their businesses, and the Greek veto does nothing to help this situation.

In a recent interview, an analyst from the European Policy Center, Rosa Balfour, pointed out that when neighbors block neighbors due to bilateral problems, it poses a big challenge for the EU: “...(that behavior) can undermine EU credibility, because of the EU's inability to do anything about those problems so far. But, also, it can undermine domestic stability and inter-ethnic relations, as in the case of Macedonia.”

Meanwhile, Invest Macedonia, the primary governmental institution supporting foreign investment in Macedonia, promotes features like a well-educated workforce, that the country is at the crossroads of South Eastern Europe, that Macedonia is a tax haven in Europe, or that there is an opportunity to register a businesses within 4 hours. Meanwhile, governmental officials are pointing out that the lack of investments is partially due to the worldwide economic crisis.



# Toronto's Fifth Annual Macedonian Film Festival Does Not Disappoint

By Maya Trendov



## Films reviewed:

- Voda (Water), 2007, Drama/Short, Directed by Gabriela Ilijeska
- Kaleidoscope, 2009, Documentary/Ethnographic film, Directed by Sandra Ristovska

**A**s a diehard supporter of the MFF, I showed up once again to get my shot of contemporary Macedonian artistic expression through film. Though I haven't seen all the films that have been featured, I have noticed a pattern emerge over the years that would describe much of the work coming our way from the old country: everything from bleak, dark, dismal, grim, heart-wrenching and haunting to downright traumatic, though never without redeeming qualities for the film goer.



**Voda** is a 10-minute short that is beautifully crafted, haunting and poetic in its depiction of the life of an elderly Macedonian widow, left behind in a dilapidated Macedonian village, whose family has emigrated to somewhere in the Diaspora in search of a better life.

The opening shot of the film portrays a church literally sinking into the middle of a lake; the rain and the flooding of the village a metaphor for the incredible grief of the grandmother, and her isolated existence. She prays for the health of her family individually, by lighting and candle for each of them in the church, and she cleans her husband's grave with water, and leaves offerings of food and drink for his soul. Then we see her at home on the telephone with one of her children inquiring about the wellbeing of her grandchildren and racked with the pain and sadness of that separation. She wonders if she will get to see them before she dies.

Created in memory of their grandmother, the family that produced, wrote and directed the film have not only given us a moving tribute to the life of their own grandmother, but they have also given us a glimpse into the lives of the elders of the families who get left behind when younger generations emigrate away from their homeland. **Voda** is a gem of a film that packs in the maximum amount of emotion and angst possible within its brief time on screen, and it was a privilege to view it.

**Kaleidoscope** instantly caught my attention because I have a soft spot in my heart for artisans and craftspeople who are trying to survive and preserve ancient art forms. They universally face incredible obstacles trying to do that vital task in today's globalized market of economic homogenization and mass production, and its resultant eradication of cultural diversity.

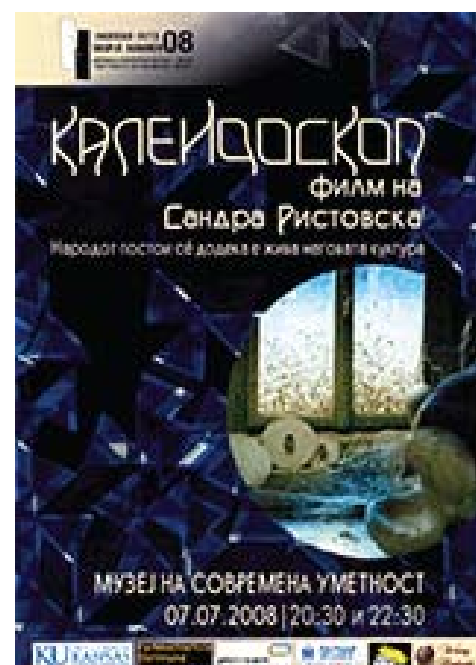
Informative and political, the film takes us on a journey through the back roads of Macedonia as well as the urban centers, to uncover the artisans and craftspeople: weavers, potters, sculptors and textile artists, who are rapidly dwindling in numbers, as they try to preserve ancient Macedonian craft traditions and eke out a living for themselves at the same time.

Similar to **Voda**, the opening shot of the film is a bucket overflowing with rainwa-

ter which gives us a prelude to the dark, grey, bleak, dismal and grim journey that lies before us. The obstacles that these artists and artisans face are substantial: they are charged absurd amounts of money for electricity; they are unfairly taxed; they are at times isolated in remote areas and their work is not properly brought to market in the urban and tourist centres of Skopje and Ohrid, where foreigners would get a chance to buy it, since the cost of producing it is higher than most Macedonian citizens can afford. In addition to a total lack of support from the government, they face the larger struggle of competing in a global market, where goods like pottery can be mass produced in China for a very low cost.

In addition to the global market factors, the artists interviewed also talked about the drop of support for art education in Macedonia and a lack of appreciation and support of the arts in general contributing to the present state of affairs.

Many of the textile factories in Macedonia have been closed and only a handful of weavers remain, those who choose to stay true to their craft against the odds, fu- ➤





elled by their passion for their work.

The potter interviewed talked about how the craft of pottery had been passed down to him through his father and forefathers going back 160 years. He expressed envy towards the Italian ceramicists who get state support to have electric kilns and high quality glazes, that allow them to export their work and be competitive in the world marketplace. An electric kiln in Macedonia costs the same as a car, and a consumerist society makes us dependant on expensive things for us to keep up with current technologies and world markets. On the other hand, what the rest of the world is rapidly losing is the technological skill and ability to fire in a wood burning kiln, which is a gift that this potter has

been given by his forefathers.

Often times a culture doesn't recognize the value of their own artists and traditions until those traditions are recognized by foreigners. Case in point, a textile designer was inspired by an American buyer to create kilim (tapestry-woven carpet) designs, that draw upon common Macedonian folkloric patterns and motifs. These patterns are found not only in traditional kilim design, but also found in embroidery and other textile design. And ironically, it was the University of Kansas that funded its production.

The main message of the film is that to build a future, we must not forsake the past. One way to preserve a culture is to preserve our art forms, which are an ex-

pression of our individual cultural identity. Without artistic expression, a culture will disappear without a trace into the vacuum of global economic monoculture.

The director of this film, Sandra Ristovska, is clearly a bright young star on the horizon of Macedonian filmmaking. She knows how use her abilities to make a political impact. Despite the bleakness of the situation for struggling Macedonian artists and artisans today, Kaleidoscope is a journey worth taking as a film goer, and as a Macedonian that is concerned with the preservation of our cultural heritage.

## Philip V of Macedonia: 1st and 2nd Roman-Macedonian Wars 214 – 179BCE

By C. Benjamin Tracy, B.A., English and Latin, M.S. Ed.



*"I, however," said Philip, "would first tell you [Romans] to remember [our] treaties, and keep peace with me. If, on the contrary, you attack me in war, it is likewise for me to make you realize and feel the spirit and the royal power and name of the Macedonians who are by no means less noble than that of a Roman."* (Livy, Ab Urbe Condita 31.18)

These were the words of King Philip V of Macedonia in 200 BCE to the young Roman legate, M. Aemilius Lepidus. It was referring to Macedonia's defense to the provocation of Rome on

the last day of the siege of Abydus. The siege of Abydus of 200 BCE had been one of the final battles of a series of conquests made by King Philip V around the Aegean. Philip had spurred a war with Rome when he attempted to displace Roman influence along the eastern shore of the Adriatic, forming alliances and lending patronage to certain island and coastal provinces. Fourteen years earlier, Rome had accused Philip of subversive activity, and both the Senate and the People of Rome voted *indictio belli*, declaring war upon Macedonia and its allies Illyria, Epirus and others.

The Roman historian Livy chronicles in fourteen books (Livy, Ab Urbe Condita 31 – 45) the period of sixty-six years of martial activities between Rome and the last Macedonian kings of the Antigonid Dynasty. He illustrates in vivid details the battles, assemblies, and orations. A young ambitious Rome, having suffered losses in its preliminary battles against Hamilcar and Hannibal of Carthage, yearned to expand, unyielding in its desire to control the Mediterranean. Rome was strengthen-

ing and began gazing eastward, across the Adriatic towards Macedonia, and the Hellenic peninsula, as well. It offered duplicitous alliances to the Aetolian League, several Hellenic city-states, Rhodes and King Attalus of Pergamum, so as to distract and counteract King Philip, who was becoming the main impediment to their eastward expansion.

According to the Hellenistic historian Polybius, it was on June 22nd of 217 BCE, during the Nemean Festival, when a twenty-one year old Macedonian king, Philip V, received news from a courier about a devastating Roman defeat by the Carthaginian general, Hannibal, at Lake Trasimene (Histories 5.101). Young Philip had already discerned the impending threat of Rome when he had ascended the throne four years earlier. But now, he was encouraged by this news, and as he held the letter, the Macedonian ancestral spirits within him stirred with Promethean courage and compulsion, to sustain his nation's long withstanding sovereignty and glory.

Philip showed the letter to his royal

advisor, the Illyrian Demetrius of Pharos, who enjoined him presently to say nothing. Demetrius was a "Client King" to Rome who had recently sought asylum in Philip's court after Rome expelled him after the Second Illyrian War 217 BCE. Demetrius inspired Philip to launch a martial enterprise to protect Macedonia and her allies against Rome, a never-before-seen force. Polybius writes of Demetrius' words to Philip: "For Hellas is already entirely obedient to you, and will remain so: the Achaeans, from genuine affection; the Aetolians, from the terror which their disasters in the present war have inspired. Italy, and your crossing into it, is the first step in the acquisition of universal empire, to which no one has a better claim than yourself. And now is the moment to act when the Romans have suffered a reverse." Thus began the first act in the theater of war between Macedonia and Rome.

Initially, Philip attempted to hail an alliance with Hannibal, however, Roman spies had intercepted the letter, and communication was disconnected. This did not intimidate the young Macedonian king. In his *Parallel Lives: Aemilius Paulus* 8.4, Plutarch states that: "... (Philip) flourished in the qualities which most distinguish kings, and led men to believe that he would restore Macedonia to her ancient dignity, and that he, and he alone, would check the power of Rome, which already extended over all the world." It was an ancient game of chess, played between the new, innovative army of Latins approaching from the West, and the ancient Macedonian kingdom of Philip II and Alexander the Great in the northeast. Philip V harnessed his wisdom and prowess to keep in check the Roman military machine for the next thirty-five years.

Well aware of Hannibal's destructive impact upon both the Roman army in Italy and Rome's naval resources, Philip seized the opportunity and campaigned in Illyria. He predicted the Roman praetor M. Valerius Laevinus and his fleet of 50 ships to be unable to secure Rome's coastal interests beyond defensive naval maneuvers. Consequently, Philip marched north and captured cities. Laevinus was immobilized and could only exercise preventive measures against Carthaginian reinforcements to Philip. Rome executed a swift but temporary buffer between themselves and



*The arrangement fortified relations between Rome and Hellas, increasing Roman influence within the peninsula, and so deepening the resentment between Rome and Macedonia.*

Philip: an alliance with the old enemies of Philip, the Aetolian League of Hellas, joined by Attalus of Pergamum on the Asia Minor coast. Indeed it was temporary, for Philip maintained his pace, and invaded the Aetolians, the latter suing for peace. Philip gained control of Hellas.

Meanwhile, Rome was exhausted. An invasion by the Carthaginian Publius Cornelius Scipio (Second Punic War 205BCE) led the Romans seek diplomatic relations with Philip. Macedonia and Rome negotiated peace, the terms allowing Philip to maintain his sovereignty over his own territories and also Illyria, with open access to the Adriatic, whereas the Hellenic peninsula and islands were to remain as Roman protectorates. Nevertheless, the arrangement fortified relations between Rome and Hellas, increasing Roman influence within the peninsula, and so deepening the resentment between Rome and Macedonia.

While Rome continued its war with Carthage (Battle of Zama, 202 BCE), Philip pressed hard against the Roman protectorates and regained territories in Hellas,

reaching as far north as Thrace and east towards Rhodes and Pergamum. By 201 BCE, Philip had disturbed Rome's confidence and incited Hellenic hatred. The Assembly of Athens declared Philip an anathema, that the people and priests should "heap execrations on Philip, his family and his realm, his forces on land and sea, and the whole race and name of the Macedonians ... whereas if anyone counter his disgrace, the killing of such a person would be lawful homicide ... all decrees formerly passed against the Pisistratidae should be observed in regard to Philip." (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 31.44).

A diplomatic mission from Pergamum, Rhodes and Athens arrived in Rome, appealing for their intervention to secure their protectorate status and to liberate them from Macedonian dominance. Roman ambassadors sent to Philip argued that they were intervening to protect the liberty of the Hellenes. Philip dismissed their argument, exposing their true motive: imperialism. So began the second act in the theater of war between Macedonia and Rome.



# Early State-Building Efforts in Modern Macedonia: The Beginning

By Goran Stojanov

The Referendum of September 1991 and the Constitution that was adopted few months later, arguably, were the first state building institutions of the fully independent Macedonian state, though an already existing Macedonian Government, that itself dated back to the end of WWII, carried out these developments. However, the actual beginnings of our statehood date back to a much earlier period.

The modern Macedonian state can be dated back to the ASNOM National Assembly of August 2, 1944, and its inspiration can be dated back to the short-lived Ilinden Krushevo Republic of 1903. Nonetheless, the first Macedonian Assembly actually occurred in 1880, twenty-three years prior to the Ilinden Uprising. This event must be seen as the initial step and historical beginning of the modern Macedonian State.

The first National Assembly of Macedonia took place on May 21, 1880, at Gremen Teke, Ostrovo, an area halfway between Lerin and Voden<sup>1</sup>. Thirty-two representatives from all over Macedonia were present including, in addition, representatives from some other ethnic groups: Albanians, Vlachs, Greeks and Turks.

The sessions of the assembly went-on for eleven days focusing on the failure to im-



*Congress of Berlin, 1878*

plement Article 23 of the Congress of Berlin (1878) agreement, the major provision of which was the establishment of Macedonia as an autonomous province within the Ottoman state. At the end of the session, on June 2, the National Assembly of Macedonia unanimously decided to demand from the Ottoman state and Great Powers prompt implementation of the Article 23<sup>a</sup>. The delegates also elected a Provisional Government named "Unity" as an executive and operational body. It would undertake all necessary steps in order to achieve the "national cause: creation of a Macedonian state." It was decided that they would first use legal means to demand the right to establish an autonomous state within the Ottoman Empire, and for that state to be recognized by the Great powers as already sanctioned by the Berlin Agreement. If the Ottoman government would deny the fulfillment of the Agreement, or if the Great powers did not force that fulfillment, "the Provisional Government will call the Macedonian nation to arms, under the banner: Macedonia for Macedonians, to restore the ancient Macedonia."<sup>3</sup>

The Provisional Government at the same time swiftly established relations with the Headquarters of the Macedonian armed insurgents, already active for 18 months in

eastern and south-eastern Macedonia and assuming the role of a Macedonian Army. Thus, on June 29th, the Pirin mountain headquarters of the Macedonian Army issued the following proclamation, a Manifesto<sup>4</sup>, starting with the words: "Macedonian Brothers, for five hundred years, dark and black clouds have covered the whole Macedonian people and their country. We, the wretched slaves of the Ottomans, can no longer endure all the gruesome terrible screaming of our raped mothers and sisters, of children torn away from the bosoms of their mothers. The knife has reached the bone! No one listens to our screams any more. Christian Europe handed over our suffering people to the arbitrariness of Turkish religious fanaticism. The last hope, centered on the article 23 of the Berlin agreement, collapsed. There is nothing else left except to take up the arms: 'Freedom or Death for Macedonia.'"

The Manifesto continues to warn: "Courageous Macedonian sons, our neighbors long to grab Macedonia for themselves, to tear it apart. Let us come together under our flag and remain only Macedonians, for only united as brothers can we free ourselves from despair under Turkish rule and remain



*Ostrovo Lake, Aegean Macedonia*



ourselves on our land. Close your ranks and await the call for our general Macedonian uprising. With gun on shoulder and sword in hand, join our Macedonian army in the fight against the savage merciless pagans. Chase away all those who have joined with foreign interests and preach 'the sword does not cut the humble head.' Respond: gun on gun, knife on knife!"

These words, written 32 years prior to the partition of Macedonia by Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria in the Treaty of Bucharest of 1913, clearly demonstrate that our ancestors had a clear perspective of the external political and internal military situation in Macedonia, and of what steps needed to be taken to achieve autonomy. These momentous statements also speak to a quite clear awareness of the propaganda war that was waged then, much like it is today, against the Macedonian people in ill-disguised efforts to discourage them away from their own native drive to autonomy and the basic human right to form their own nation state.

The Provisional Government, in addition, took steps to establish relations with the diplomatic missions of the Great Powers in Solun and Bitola. They submitted several proposals for reforms, and finally, in Kjustendil, on March 23, 1881, they proclaimed their own Manifesto,<sup>5</sup> with the words: "Macedonians, Our dear fatherland Macedonia was once one of the most glorious countries. A Macedonian nation established the foundations of the art of war; with their victorious phalanx and Aristotle's enlightenment, they civilized the hu-

manity and Asia. And now our fatherland, so glorious in the past, is on the verge of destruction, thanks to our mistakes and carelessness. Foreign and suspicious nations want to conquer our homeland and destroy our nation, which, shining with such a light, will never be destroyed. Our mother Macedonia became now as a widow, lonely and deserted by her sons. She does not fly the banner of the victorious Macedonian army," and goes on to conclude: "Macedonians, when you succeed victoriously, drive away the killers from this land, who fly the banner of discord and sow perilous ideas, dividing you, my children, into countless nations. And so, united under the banner of Macedonia, as one nation, rise high that glorious banner and prepare to write single-mindedly on it: "Long live the Macedonian nation! Long live Macedonia!"

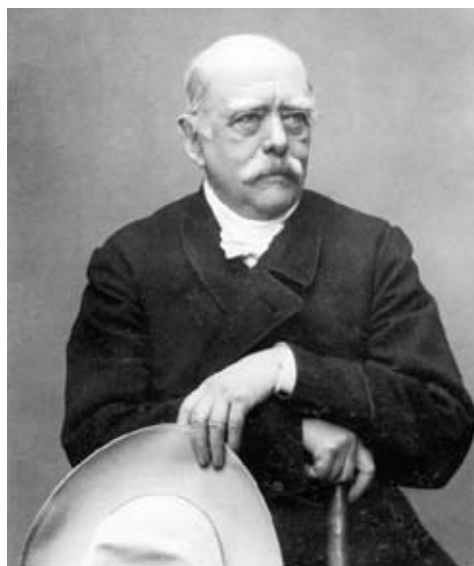
The Macedonian National Assembly Manifesto was submitted to all diplomatic representatives in Solun, Bitola and Istanbul<sup>6</sup>. During the next year, in 1882, a group of diplomats, in fact, did start negotiations with the Sultan, to convince him to give Macedonia autonomy. However, the Bulgarian annexation of Eastern Rumelia in 1885, in violation of the Berlin Agreement, was exactly what the Sultan needed as an excuse to avoid the full implementation of the agreement, postponing the Macedonian autonomy.

In retrospect, this part of Macedonian history has been poorly understood as the source documents were unavailable until the early 1980's. Only after a hundred-year period of secrecy was over and documents from the Russian diplomatic archives became generally available for study, it became obvious that the Macedonians toward the end of the 19th century were fully prepared to establish an independent Macedonian state. This critical development in the formation of the Macedonian national state in the late 19th century, and the early expression of Macedonian National Identity, needs to be conveyed to the gate keepers of the European Union, as well as to the NATO leadership, to serve as a counter to the arguments of the Hellenic Republic and its spokesmen, that the Macedonians are descendants of Slavic hordes and that Tito created the otherwise "non-existent" Macedonian consciousness and ethnic identity.



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# Profile: UMD Perth

By Dame Krcoski

**W**hen the USA and Canada finally recognized the Republic of Macedonia by its one and only name, it gave hope to Australians of Macedonian descent, as well. In all three large settler nations, there is a significant Macedonian community, and in all three, Greek organizations have been generally perceived to be both larger and more influential than the Macedonian ones. However, while Washington and Ottawa have shown their Macedonian communities their well-deserved respect, Canberra continues to bend to Greek pressure, and unjustly cling to the "FYROM" reference, in a cynical effort to appease the ultra-nationalism and xenophobia of some Greek-Australian voters.

On November 12th 2010, The United Macedonian Diaspora officially established its presence in Perth by appointing Dame Krcoski as its Regional Representative. Along with a team of enthusiastic volunteers, UMD Perth wants to educate our fellow Australians on important issues affecting the Macedonians in this country. Since there has been a deficit of Macedonian youth involvement across Australia, building a more sustainable movement is one of UMD Australia's main priorities. Also, closer ties with policy makers and think tanks are sorely needed. The Macedonian community in Australia has been pre-occupied with inter-community issues at the expense of closer relations with mainstream Australia, and the time has come for that to change.

UMD Perth, as an integral part of UMD Australia, aspires to play a major role in the official recognition of Macedonia by the Australian government, in part by raising awareness about our cause to general Australian society.

We would like to introduce our team at UMD Perth:

## **Dame Krcoski**

Born in Struga, Macedonia, in 1981, Dame



left his native country at the age of six, and his family settled in Melbourne, before moving back to Macedonia for a two year period. He and his family returned to Australia in 1996, and have been living in Perth since. Dame graduated from Edith Cowan University in 2006, with a Bachelor of Arts, a double major degree in Politics/Government and History, with a minor in Geography. Dame is also co-owner of 103.3 Mac FM, a 24/7 Macedonian radio station which covers the area of metropolitan Perth. Dame has been a UMD member for two years, and the need to replicate UMD's success on Australian soil has been the driving factor which led him to help establish UMD's presence in Perth.

## **Slavko Stojanoski**

Born April 1988 and raised in Perth, Slavko graduated with honours from Curtin University of Technology with a degree in civil and construction engineering. Slavko is currently working as a civil engineer on jobs requiring a wide range of skills. Slavko's heritage is from the Mijak region, around the river Radika, in Western Macedonia. Slavko is a passionate advocate for the Macedonian cause.

*(Left to Right) Simona Domazetoska, Slavko Stojanoski, Dame Krcoski, Oliver Krcoski*

## **Goce Krcoski**

Goce holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Finance and Information Systems double Major) from Curtin University. He works for Chevron Australia, and as project accountant for the Gorgon LNG project. He is responsible for the cost allocation of activities on Barrow Island. Previous to that, he worked in Chevron's treasury department for 2 years as a cash management accountant. As of February 2010, he is also the treasurer for Chevron's social club, which has close to 1000 members.

## **Naum Trajceski**

Co-owner of the 103.3 Mac FM radio station, Naum is very well known amongst Perth's Macedonian community, as he has been organising concerts for some of Macedonia's most popular folk and pop artists in Perth for the past 4 years. Naum is also a property developer both in Perth and Ohrid. He recently opened the 'Philip II Apartments' in Ohrid, as well as a trendy beach located on the banks of Lake Ohrid named 'Metropolis beach'.



ABOVE, RIGHT *UMD Director of Australian Operations Mr Ordan Andreevski with UMD Regional Rep for Perth Mr Dame Krcoski.*

BELOW, RIGHT *(Left to Right) Dame Krcoski, Naum Trajceski and Rob Pasquale at the UMD-Perth Launch Function.*

### **Simona Domazetoska**

Born in Bitola, Macedonia, Simona migrated to Australia at the age of 7. She is an Honours Graduate from the University of Western Australia, with majors in English, German and Italian. She is also a part-time Academic Staff member at Curtin University, teaching at the English Centre. Her aims in joining the UMD is to protect the rights of the Macedonian minorities around the world, to make a difference and to promote, in a general sense, the ideals of peace, freedom and equality. Simona studied in Vienna, Austria for one year as part of a Student Exchange Program, and hopes to spread, on an international level, these human rights ideals.

### **Rob Pasquale**

Rob has a background in business and finance, and worked in banking for seven years before he decided to change industries. He has recently been trained as a pizza chef, thus making the move into operating his own business (Slice of Italy) which is located at Edith Cowan University, Joondalup campus. Rob is a passionate supporter of Macedonia and the Macedonian cause. With a Macedonian mother from Prilep region, he also considers himself a very proud Macedonian.

### **Rob Salevski**

Currently the Managing Director of MaCon, specializing in project management, construction, building services and maintenance. Robert has qualifications in various fields some of which include IT and CCTV security. He has a vast experience in business, project management, import/export, and has operated a number of successful businesses over the past 10 years.

### **Eliana Salevski**

Born in Italy, Eliana moved to Australia as a child. She has been self-employed and has operated successful businesses in the



beauty industry in Western Australia for over 10 years. She has also acquired various qualifications and experience, including travel and tourism qualifications.

### **Jovan Domazetoski**

Born in Bitola, Macedonia, Jovan migrated to Australia at the age of 8. He is a civil and structural engineering graduate

at Curtin University. Jovan is currently travelling around Macedonia. Through his interest in Macedonian pop culture, music, as well as business, engineering and technology, he aims to help educate and strengthen the relations between the youth of Macedonia and youth of the Macedonian diaspora in Australia. Jovan is proud to be a part of UMD Perth. ➤



*Back Row (Left to Right) Goce Krcoski, Rob Pasquale, Jason Spaseski, Ordan Andreevski, Filip Trpevski, Oliver Krcoski, Naum Trajceski*  
*Front Row (Left to right) Dame Krcoski, Simona Domazetoska, Maja Koleva, Slavko Stojanoski, Rob Salevski, Eliana Salevski, Yane Krcoski.*  
*(UMD Perth Launch Function – UMD Team amongst other members)*

### Filip Trpevski

Born in 1986, in Skopje, Macedonia, Filip migrated to Australia at an early age. He is currently studying extractive metallurgy at Murdoch University, as well as Building Design/Architecture. Filip is excited about UMD's worldwide recognition and positive standing within the Macedonian community, and hopes to help drive up UMD membership numbers in Australia in the future.

### Maja Koleva

Born April 1987 and raised in Kratovo, Macedonia, Maja moved to Perth in 1995. She has graduated from Edith Cowan University with a Bachelor of Communications. Maja is currently employed as a communications brand marketer, promoting and marketing to international brands in Australia. Maja is dedicated and committed to promoting the Macedonian cause.

## Little Caesars' Tradition Continues in Westfield, Indiana

By Aleks Mitreski

The tradition of "pizza pizza" continues, this time in Westfield, Indiana. 50 years ago, Macedonian-Americans Michael and Marian Ilitch founded what would today become one of the world's largest pizza chains, Little Caesars. In 1959, the Ilitches opened a small pizza restaurant in suburban Detroit, pouring into it their life savings, and large amounts of time and patience. With an appealing and simple menu that families with young children could afford, and a hands-on management style, their restaurant flourished, and Little Caesars Pizza was born. Today, Little Caesars is the number one carry-out pizza chain in the world, with restaurants on five continents.

Little Caesars is a franchise, and the Westfield store was opened by Macedonian-Americans Lou and Valentina Nestorovski of Michigan, and Dejan and Olivia Minoski of Indiana, continuing the great history of Macedonian-American entrepreneurship. The grand opening ribbon-



cutting ceremony held on December 6, 2010 was attended by Westfield Town Officials, Chamber of Commerce Officials, and UMD President Metodija A. Koloski.

"I was honored to be part of this special

moment for the Nestorovski and Minoski families, continuing the Little Caesars tradition," stated Koloski. "I hope to see this tradition continue in Macedonia as well one day."



# Five Destinations in the Strumica Region that Can't Be Missed

By Slavica Taseva, Translated by Yana Branova



**T**he town of Strumica is a sanctuary for spiritual pursuits, and a treasure chest for lovers of history. Civilizations have continuously inhabited the location since prehistoric times. The settlement grew in the Byzantine era, then again in the Middle Ages. History has left special traits to the town, which even today testify about the cultures that have at one time claimed these lands. In Strumica, every rock seems to have its own history, linking us to the spirits of our ancestors.

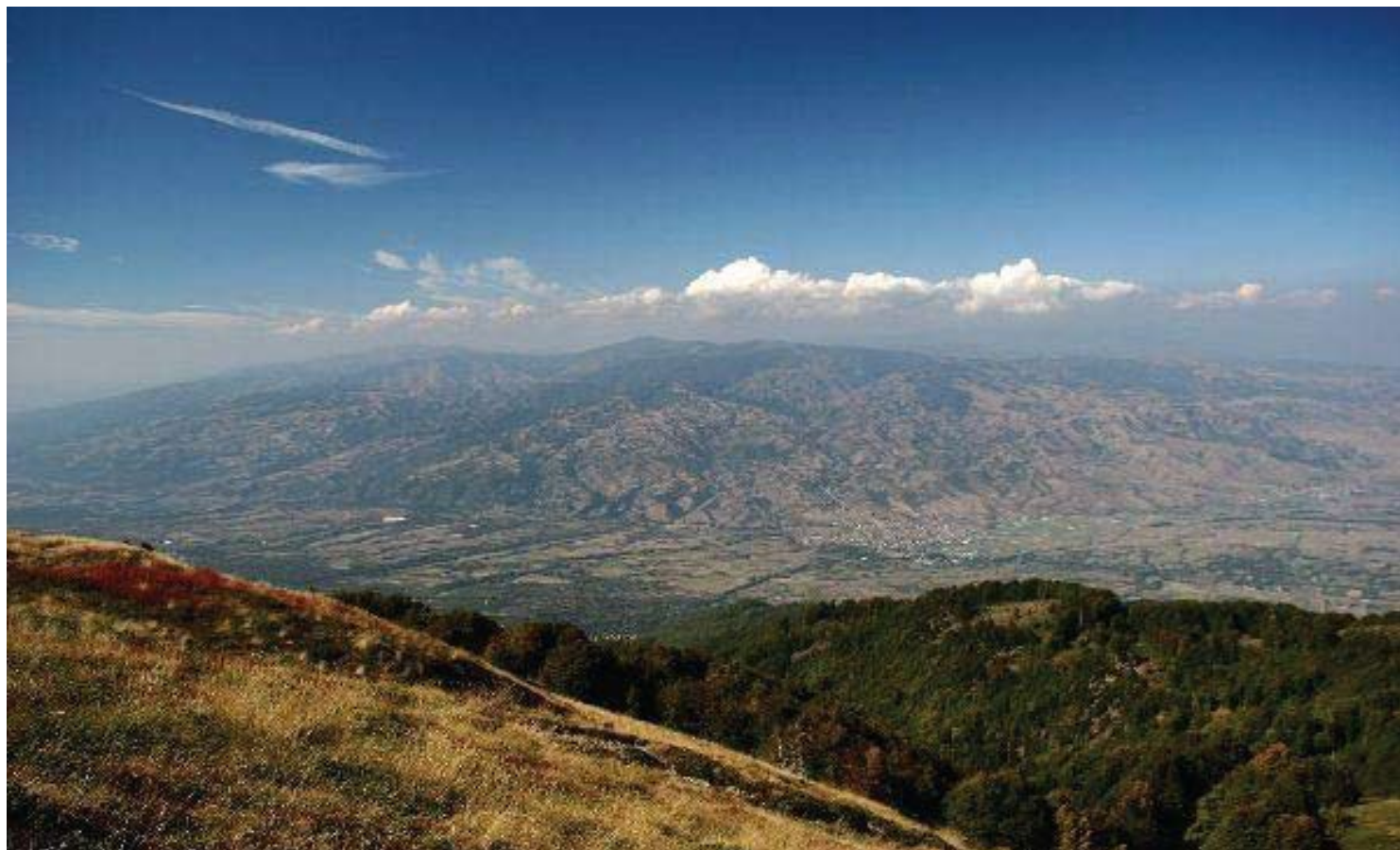
## Roman Thermal Baths in Bansko

About 14km from Strumica, you can find the village of Bansko. In 1979, archeologists discovered beautiful Roman baths, which date from the 3rd century A.D. Some areas are totally preserved, starting from the roof all the way to the floor, which is why we can proudly say that this is the best-preserved ancient bath of its kind in the Balkans.

Underneath Mt. Belasica, skilled Roman builders created a beautiful structure that can be called - without any hesitations - a spa centre of its era. The structure is made up of closed-in pool areas with both warm and cold water, saunas, massage and resting areas, locker rooms, and other areas that visitors could use for relaxation of their bodies and spirits. Amazingly, the water still makes its way up to the same pools today, and it gets released by the Roman-built water canals, providing steam for the sauna. Up until a few years back, the pool was filled with thermal waters, but the archeological teams regulated the flow of that water, in order not to damage the ancient walls. By taking particular conservation measures, and doing some minor reconstruction, Bansko could easily be developed into a major attraction - a 1,700-year-old spa-center with active baths.

The thermal waters emerge from the depths close to the bath with a velocity of about 42 litres per second, and the ➤





temperature of the water is a scalding 72 degrees Celsius. It means that, in only two minutes, eggs boil in the water. This phenomenon has led to a local specialty called "Bansko-style Eggs". Based on the archaeological evidence, we can easily imagine the ancient Romans enjoying eggs prepared in exactly the same way, along with the wine, grapes, and plums still produced in the local area.

### The Fifteen Holy Sufferers of Tiberiopol

In the old part of Strumica, there is church dedicated to the Fifteen Tiberiopol Suffer-

ers, who were protectors of the town, according to the Orthodox tradition. They were religious missionaries hiding during the oppression of Christians at the time of Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate, circa 365 A.D. They traveled from Nikea to Solun, and then from Solun to Tiberiopol, which is today's Strumica.

When they were eventually captured, they were tortured until death, and buried in an ancient necropolis outside the town, a typical burial at the time for Christians. A complex of religious structures has been discovered there, including the great tomb. On the western wall is a beautiful fresco representing the fifteen martyrs.

This fresco is one of the oldest of its kind in Macedonia. The church and the tomb itself date from the 9th century A.D. In the writings of a Byzantine governor circa 850 A.D., it is said that the Sufferers preached Christianity in the area, were known as miracle workers, and christened thousands. We also learn about the Solun brothers Kiril and Metodi, who created the Cyrillic Alphabet, and their disciple Kliment Ohridski, who wrote the first prayer with that alphabet.

December 11th is the holy day of the Fifteen Missionaries, and each year, the people of Strumica kneel to pay their respects outside the ancient tomb.

### Conquering the fortress - Tsar's Towers

The symbol of Strumica and the most famous landmark of the town is the fortress known as the "Tsar's Towers." It proudly rises above the town itself, from where not only the entire town can be seen, but also its 72 surrounding villages. Mt. Belasica and Mt. Ograzden are close by, as well as the Pirin Mountains of Pirinska Makedonija, in present-day Bulgaria.

During the reign of Tsar Samuil, circa 1000 A.D., the Strumica region was governed by his brother Aron, whose settlement was at the Strumica fortress. The Battle of Belasica took place on July 29, 1014, and Samuil's army was routed by the Byzantines under Vasilus II. The wounded leader was taken to his son, Gavrilko Radomir, in present-day Prilep. After the great victory, Vasilus II rested in Strumica, and sent a Duke from Solun after the wounded Tsar. However, that Duke was captured and murdered personally by Gavrilko Radomir.





In a legendary gesture of revenge, Vasilus II ordered 14,000 of Samuil's captured soldiers to be blinded, while leaving every 100th soldier with one eye only, to lead the rest back to their Tsar. Legend has it that the horror of this event was too hard for Tsar Samuil to endure, and he died of heartbreak. Although Vasilus II won the battle, he couldn't conquer the Towers, despite a long siege.

Today, these unconquerable towers are a well-known spot for picnics by the townspeople of Strumica. In 2005, new archeological digs began, and now the walls and central tower, the two main entrance towers, the cisterns, the residential quarters inside, and other significant objects can easily be seen. Restoration of the walls, towers and houses is underway. When they are fully restored, it will bring great pride to the people of Strumica, the town of the Tsar's Towers.



### The Monastery of St. Leonti, in the Village of Vodoca

According to Macedonian and foreign historians, the blinding of Samuil's men is likely to have occurred in the valley of the River Vodochica, near the village of Vodocha, very close to Strumica. The original name of Vodoca was Milno, but the name was changed to reflect the massacre that took place there. (Vadi = to remove, Oci = eyes)

There are three churches there, representing three different eras of fresco painting. There are ruins from a monastery complex built in the Middle Ages, two baths, and a many-layered Christian necropolis. There is also a monastery which still stands today, and the oldest of its three churches is a basilica, built upon preserved foundations which date back to at least the 6th century. Later on, a three-cupola structure was built on top, within a church. There is also a smaller structure dating from the 12th Century, and dedicated to St. Leonti.

Circa 1180 A.D., the church was completely reconstructed, and obtained its current form. A part of this reconstruction included cloisters for nuns, and that is where Strumica's Bishop Naum lives today.

### The Unique "Byzantine Pearl" of Macedonia

About 7km from Strumica is the village Veljusa, there is another Byzantine church called St. Mary Milostiva. This 1,000-year-old church is still functioning, and is pre-



served in its original architectural form, displaying the highest achievements of sacred Byzantine architecture in all of Macedonia. Built in a crucifix shape, in 1080 A.D. by a Father Manuil, St. Mary Milostiva is a true masterpiece, both inside and outside. That's why it's called the Byzantine Pearl of Macedonia.

Not only is the architecture of the rarest quality, but so are the frescos, the mosaics and the wood carving of the iconostis in

shallow-relief. The techniques of the mortar and masonry of the facade are also unique, and the original frescoes are extremely rare, with magnificent colours. The creator of the complex wanted to create the most impressive artistic collection in the entire region. There are newly-built cloisters for the present-day nuns to live in.

The entire space fills visitors with a magical sense of contentment, peace, and appreciation for the beauty of God's creation.

# Петте Неизбежни Дестинации Во Струмица и Струмичко

Од Славица Тасева



**Г**радот Струмица е еден од неколкуте градови во Македонија кои претставуваат цивилизирани и духовни светилишта. Почетоците на неговата богата историја се во праисторијата, во антиката и византиско - словенската епоха, доцниот среден век и се до денес. Таа историја оставила неизбришиви траги кои до ден денешен сведочат за постоењето на културите на ова тло. Во Струмица секој камен има своја историја и своја приказна, поврзана со силата на духовите на нашите претци.

## Римски Лековити Бањи во село Банско

“Ајде сите на капење, па да се послужиме потоа со јајца на Бањски начин во Римската Бања!”

Во непосредна близина на Струмица, на околу 14 км. се наоѓа селото Банско. Во него археолозите во 1979 г. ја открија прекрасната Римска Бања, која потекнува од 3 в.н.е. Некои простории се целосно сочувани - од кровот па до подот, затоа со гордост кажуваме дека таа е најсочуваната бања од таков тип на Балканот па и пошироко.

Вештите Римски градители под падините на планината Беласица изградиле преубав објект кој може слободно да се нарече “спа” центар на тогашното време. Објектот поседува затворени базени со топла, млака и ладна вода, сауна, простории за одмор, соблекувални и други простории за одмор и релаксација на телото и духот на посетителите. Покрај многуте импресивни факти за оваа бања, најзачудувачки е податокот дека водата се уште доаѓа до базените, истекува низ одводните канали, па излегува пареа од каналите во сауната. До пред некоја година базенот се полнеше со топла вода, па тимот археолози намерно го регулираа истекот на вода, за да не се оштетуваат сидовите на бањата. Со превземање на одредени конзерваторско - реставраторски зафати и со делумна реконструкција би добиле светско чудо и атракција - 17 века стар спа центар со активна бања.





Изворот на топлата вода која доаѓа од длабочините на земјата е во непосредна близина на бањата и е со капацитет од 42 л/сек. Температурата на водата е 72 0 С. За две минути се приготвуваат меко варени јајца, специјалитет познат како - јајца на Бањски начин.

Степенот на сочуваност на објектот ни го доловува со голема прецизност уживањето на древните Римјани во топлите базени, масажите со мирисливи масла, или опуштањата во сауната, пијќи вино и јадејќи грозје и смокви, кои виреат во овој крај и конечно - можеби и јајца сварени во топлата вода .....

### Св. Петанесет Тивериополски Маченици

Да влеземе во гробницата на светителите и да ја видиме најстарата фреска во неа.

Во стариот дел на градот се наоѓа црквата посветена на Св. Петнаесет Тивериополски Маченици, заштитници на градот Струмица, според православната традиција. Но тоа е и познат археолошки локалитет. Петнаесетте маченици биле верници кои бегајќи од прогоните на христијаните за време на владеењето на царот Јустинијан Апостата (361 - 365 г.н.е) стигнале од Никеа до Солун, а оттаму до Тивериопол, денешна Струмица.

Откако биле фатени во Тивериопол биле мачени до смрт, па таму биле и погребани во доцноантичка некропола, надвор од градот, каде во тоа време биле закопувани христијаните. На овој простор е откриен комплекс од црковни грабди во чиј централен

дел се наоѓа големата гробница, на чиј западен ѕид е насликана фреска која ги прикажува Петнаесетте Тивериополски Маченици.

Оваа фреска спаѓа во редот на најстарите фрески откриени на подрачјето на Македонија. Црквата, како и гробот датираат од 9-10 век н.е. Во 50-тите години на 9 век за управител на струмичката област бил еден назначен Византиски царски намесник. Во неговото житие се вели дека заедно со неговиот брат Константин (Кирил) го проповедале христијанството и покрстиле илјадници Словени. Веќе погодувате, станува збор за познатите Солунски Браќа ширум светот. И друг познат деец дејствувал во овие краеве - Климент Охридски и тука е создадена словенската азбука.

На 11 декември е празникот на петнаесетте светители, па секоја година Струмичани се поклонуваат на нивните мошти, познати како големи чудотворци, па и затоа култот кон нив е задржан до денес.

### За освојување на тврдината “Цареви Кули”

Симболот на Струмица и најпознатиот белег на градот е тврдината Цареви Кули, која високо се издига над него и од чија доминантна местоположба со поглед се опфаќа не само целата струмичка котлина со 72-те села, туку и планините Беласица и Огражден, па се до врвовите на Пирин планина во Бугарија.

Во времето на владеењето на цар Самуил пред околу 1000 години, струмичкиот регион



бил управуван од Арон, неговиот брат, кој имал седиште во струмичката тврдина. Византискиот император Василиј II, во почетокот на 11 век превзел голема офанзива против царот Самуил. Во битката на Беласица, на 29.07.1014 година Самоиловата војска доживеала голем пораз, а ранетиот Самуил бил пренесен од неговиот син Гаврило Радомир во Прилеп. По големата победа Василиј II се упатил кон градот Струмица да се одмори. Но за да се заштити, пред себе го испратил солунскиот Дук Теофилакт Вотанијат кој бил дочекан и убиен лично од Гаврило Радомир. Како одмазда за изгубениот војсководец, Василиј II наредил да се ослепи заробената Самуилова војска која броела 14.000 души. На секој стоти војник му оставил по едно око за да ги води другите назад до нивниот цар Самуил.

Страотниот поглед на ослепената војска, измешаните крв, солзи и очи бил премногу тежок за царот Самуил, па неговото срце





препукнало од преголемата болка за неговите војници и тој починал.

Иако Василиј II ја добил битката над Самуил, сепак Тврдината во Струмица не можел да ја освои и долго време ја држел под опсада.

Во денешни ден неосвоивата тврдина Цареви Кули е познато излетничко место за Струмичани. Но во 2005 година отпочнаа археолошки истражувања и до денес се дефинирани бедемскиот ѕид, централната кула, двете влезни кули, цистерните, куќите во внатрешноста на тврдината и други објекти. Отпочната е реставрација на бедемите, кулите и куќите. Доколку успееме да го вратиме поранешниот изглед на тврдината ќе се гордееме со право со називот на нашиот град “Струмица -градо под Царевите кули”

## Манастирот Св. Леонтиј во с. Водоча

Голем број македонски и странски историчари сметаат дека ослепувањето на Самуиловите војници е извршено во клисурата на реката Водочница кај селото Водоча близу Струмица. Од синтагмата „вади очи,“ го изведуваат денешното име на селото Водоча, за кое се знае дека порано се викало Милно.

Комплексот цркви Св. Леонтиј се наоѓа во с. Водоча, на 4 км. од Струмица. Овој локалитет го прават интересни повеќето



објекти со извонредно значење - три цркви со три различни фази на живопис. Понатаму има остатоци од придружни објекти и од средновековниот манастирски комплекс, две бањи и повеќеслојна христијанска некропола.

Денес на таа локација постои манастир. Најстарата од трите цркви кои го сочинуваат манастирот е базилика сочувана само во темелните партии која опстојувала во 5 и 6 век. Подоцна била изградена трикорабна купола и епископска црква, па мала крстовидна куполна црква и во 12 век средната куполна црква која е посветена на Св. Леонтиј.

Во 80-тите години на 20 век извршена е целосна реконструкција на црквата која била во рушевини и го добила денешниот облик. Дел од овој манастирски комплекс се и конаците во кои престојуваат калуѓерките, а овде е и седиштето на Струмичкиот владика Наум.

## Единствениот Византински бисер во Македонија

На оддалеченост од 7 км од Струмица во селото Вељуса се наоѓа средновековната црква од Византискиот период Св. Богородица Милостива (Елеуса).

Во оваа илјадугодишна црква се уште се одржуваат служби. Сочувана е во оригиналното архитектонско обликување, а ги презентира високите дострели на на



Византиската сакрална архитектура на македонска територија. Изградена како крстовидна црква во 1080 година од Епископот Мануил претставува ремек дело по својата композиција и внатрешниот и надворешниот изглед. Затоа се нарекува Византиски бисер на Македонија.

Не е само архитектурата врвен дострел на византиската уметност, туку и фреските, мозаикот, вајарството во плиток рељеф на иконостасот, како и техниката на фасадирањето на црквата. Оригиналните фреско претстави се нашироко познати како реткости во раскошен бои. Основачот на комплексот имал за цел да бидат надминати сите дотогашни уметнички остварувања во околните цркви. Во овој манастирски комплекс има новоизградени конаци во кои служат калуѓерки. Целиот простор во манастирот пленува со својот речиси магичен спокој и смиреност и ги полни очите на посетителите со Божја убавина.



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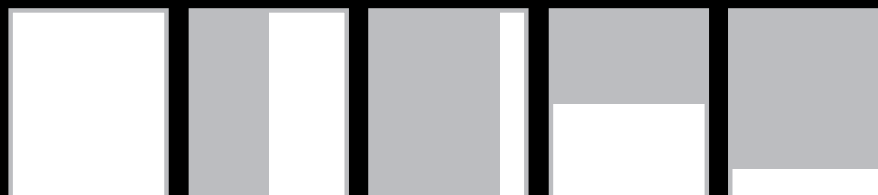
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