



# HORA Newsletter

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Gala 2014, Prestwick Golf Club, Woodbury

## Letter from the President

Dear HORA members and friends,  
 What a better way to bridge the change of the years and set new resolutions than remembering one of Nelson Mandela’s quotes: “It always seems impossible until it’s done”.

Thanks to many generous contributions, leadership, creativity, and sheer number of volunteering hours put in by many members, HORA had an incredible 2013 marked by many accomplishments and recognized as the “Romanian Renaissance in Minnesota” by the Star Tribune.

This year, HORA launched a series of Romanian classes, attracting over 100 students. We awarded 3 youth scholarships using the funds raised at the 2012 Gala and hosted several fun-filled, well-attended events to showcase Romanian customs and traditions. And all thanks to the Minnesota Historical

Society for their grants totaling more than \$32,000, HORA can continue documenting and sharing stories of Romanians immigrating to the Twin Cities.

Truth is our job is never done because deep in our hearts, we know that there is no limit to what WE can do!

Help us finish the sentence: “When we, Romanian Americans of Minnesota, come together, we can preserve, promote and share our cultural heritage by.....”

Indeed, your answers might be the seeds of amazing future HORA projects.

Best wishes of peace, health and prosperity to the entire HORA community.

*Monica Nedelcu Erickson, HORA President*

## HORA Dream Awards GALA

Saturday, June 21, 2014

HORA Board is proud to announce the second Dream Awards and Fundraising Gala, a festive event for celebrating our community’s achievements and sharing ways we can do more in the future.



Promising to be yet another memorable gathering, the event will feature renowned Romanian artists, a DJ for plenty music and culinary savories. The funds raised will be used to support programs and activities designed to help preserve the Romanian legacy, involve our American spouses, friends with it, strengthen our community.

## HO! HO! HO! HORA

On December 13, HORA held its annual Christmas celebration gathering. Guests enjoyed traditional dishes, homemade wine, and awesome sweets. A group of experienced carolers joined by several enthusiastic newcomers entertained the guests with beautiful Romanian and American carols. Through personal stories shared by the guests the night filled with lots of emotions and memories of orange scent that, even decades after, many Romanian-born still associate with Christmas.

Here are a poem and a Christmas story told at this special gathering.



### Crăciunul - bogatul și sărmanul

*Gina Nicolae Johnson*

Se-apropie Crăciunul pentru omul  
cu desaga plină,  
Braduți mirositori din munți înalți  
sau din grădină  
Sclipesc de luminițe colorate, într-  
un living primitiv,  
Cadouri multe-n ordine-așternute,  
pe moalele covor.

Miroase-a cozonaci burtoși, cu  
aromă-mbietoare,  
La streășină-împlețiți, frumos,  
cârnați atârână-n zare,  
Fripturi scăldate-n vinul roșu te  
cheamă spre cuptor,  
S-așterni o masă, cu de toate, într-  
un altfel de zor.

Și focul din cămin dansând voios în  
aer, cu mister,  
Pisicii leneși, tolăniți pe jos, sunt  
ocrotiți de ger.  
Colindele se-aud în depărtări  
precum o boare,  
Musafirii intră-n casa înbelșugată  
cu ardoare.

La margine de sat, printre zăpezi,  
privesc spre poartă  
Doi bătrânei, sărmani, uitați de  
lume și de soartă,  
Așteptă să apară, din depărtări,  
copiii lor plecați prin lume,  
De-atâta amar de vreme nu i-au  
putut striga pe nume.

Batrâna-și strânge lacrimi în batic,  
afară-ntruna ninge,  
Iar moșul sprijinit de un toiag cu  
noduri, șoptit, abia plânge.  
Spre seară s-au întors în odaia rece,  
cu geamuri înghețate,  
Aruncând pe foc surcele cu greu din  
pădure-adunate.

E prea târziu să afli întregă lor  
poveste și cât de mult au suferit,  
Ce au avut pe masa de Crăciun, ori  
ce bucate, Doamne, bieții și-ar fi  
dorit.  
De ești creștin și crezi în Dumnezeu  
cel Mare,  
Deschide ușa pentr-un sărman,  
bătrân, copil înfometat, în  
așteptare.



### Christmas Wish

*By Paul Giulan*

I'm proud to be the son of Romanian immigrants. They are the reason my legacy began as first generation in the United States. Growing up, many of my holiday celebrations like Christmas were small gatherings, because my parents are the only family I have in the Western Hemisphere. I had a great upbringing. I even experienced different traditions after my parents divorced. New traditions which brought new ideas to the Romanian traditions I was used to, like the idea of having a fake tree is just as good as a real one. But Christmas was often just the few of us, while many of my friends would get together with their cousins, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces and grandparents. I wanted more people to celebrate with. The more, the merrier.

I wished that on Christmas day, everyone I know would be in the same place at the same time. I'm optimistic about celebrating

## Winter 2013

holidays with people I may and may not know because from different people, you learn new ways to think and have a good time. Those are the experiences to remember. I met Connor this semester in school. We have the same major and we don't live far from our family. He asked me if I wanted to celebrate Thanksgiving with him and his family this year. I'm glad I said yes.

If Connor and his family hadn't been so open to having someone outside the family spend Thanksgiving with them, I would have missed out on meeting people and a different way to celebrate. I was happy that day, as I hope of all of you are today, even if you're not Romanian.

Thanks to my parents, I have an American legacy. Because of friends like Connor and their families, I want to give back, by opening up my celebrations and traditions to people with different legacies. This is the way American culture should thrive.



### Where Christmas still is as it was

*By Alvin Alexsi Currier*

(full story: [www.hora-mn.org](http://www.hora-mn.org))

When I first visited this village some ten years ago I drove past pecking chickens and playing children. I drove around horse drawn wagons, loaded with logs, hay, or persons. I wove between individuals and groups of people walking.

After about two miles the houses clustered along the way thicken to surround the center of the village with its enormous new cement

Church, the village hall, the school, a bar, and a single store. When I reached where I was going, I had driven maybe four miles and arrived one hundred and fifty years ago.

On the one hand village life exists to this day at a

level of endless hard labor. Exhausting hours of daily chores return with every dawn: milk the cow, feed the stock, clean the stalls, chop the wood, cook the meals. It is a life rooted in an eternal struggle with nature. In one of his novels Joseph Roth describes conditions in a poor village with these words: "Living became dearer from year to year. The crops were always poorer and poorer. The carrots diminished, the eggs were hollow, the potatoes froze, the soup was watery, the carp thin, the pike short, the ducks lean, the geese tough, and the chickens amounted to nothing."

And yet in another sense the villagers are rich. For the most part they have everything they need for the only way of life they know. They raise their own food, build their own houses, and make their own clothes. Their life is rich with festivals and celebrations. It is rich with families, caring, and faith. It is rich with traditional costumes, customs, music and dance.

(photos provide by AA Currier)



## HORA Members Share their Stories Another Big HORA Win!

This section is created to give our members a place to share their stories with the larger community. Enjoy the readings and share your stories with us on Facebook or email!

*Andrei Anicescu*, 14, and his parents, Anca and Jeff Basinger, have recently made St. Paul their residence, a move away from Mississippi and Ohio where they lived prior. They are the newest HORA members!

"I like being in Minnesota, and I'm happy to be in a place where it snows in the winter. I like the school that I go to and the classes I take. I like learning and getting good grades.

Recently, I participated in the First Lego League competition where my team won 2<sup>nd</sup> place. In this competition, each team brings a robot built and programmed to perform various missions in alignment with the annual theme.



This year, under the Nature Furry Challenge, teams competed by presenting projects built around actions that can be taken to deal with intense natural events. A worldwide event, the competition brings together over 200,000 children ages 9 to 16 from over 70 countries." *Andrei Anicescu*.

"When HORA received the first grant to document the history of the early Romanian immigration to the Twin Cities, there was huge relief. Our community is fortunate to have several members who can still remember and tell the stories of their parents or grandparents who settled in South St Paul in early 1900s. With a second grant received this fall these memories, already captured on footage, will be turned into a documentary that many more generations will use to tell their kids the "old" stories.

This month, we have just learnt of another funded grant, the third one. While the final details are still to come, HORA has been selected to receive \$15,000 to document the recent Romanian immigration to Minnesota, hold community seminars and engage with local historical centers to raise awareness and educate the American public.

We each have family members or friends who have incredible stories demonstrating extreme personal courage to fight and ultimately escape the communist regime. Today, we are very fortunate to live in state that recognizes the importance of capturing this history. I am looking forward to seeing the Romanian community come together, collaborate and write a page in our history book". *Arria Giulan*, Vice President and grant co-author.

## Mircea Cartarescu's New Year Wish to his friends in Minneapolis

"This fall, I went on a tour to United States and it just happened that the first city on my trip was Minneapolis. Here, I had the pleasure to meet several members of the Romanian community in Minnesota.

I confess that I was impressed by their kindness and intellectuality, the fact that they were very informed and up to date with the Romanian realities and how, even though across countries and seas they sincerely and naturally embrace the belonging to our nation.

As another year ends, as usual, we hope for a better year. **I wish my new friends from Minneapolis who I met and also the ones who I unfortunately have not met, a Happy New year, happiness and peace."**