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TODD ANDERSON/THE JOURNAL-GAZETTE

Kiril Rousseff plays the trumpet, left, and Bill Skimos plays the clarinet. The two will perform Saturday at the St. Nicholas Orthodox Church spring dance at the church, 3535 Crescent Ave.

# 80-year-old trumpeter will make music again

**T**WO MONTHS AGO, at the urging of Bill Skimos, Kiril Rousseff opened a time-worn case and from it pulled a trumpet that had been purchased from Wolf & Dessauer Department Store in the 1930s.

The 80-year-old retired owner of Superior Industrial Sanitary Supplies had never really quit playing trumpet, but now there was a reason to play in earnest. To practice. Because when Skimos strikes up his band Saturday for the St. Nicholas Eastern Orthodox Church annual spring dance, Rousseff will be among the music makers playing Macedonian and American songs for dancing from 7:30 to 11 p.m.

Skimos, owner of Bill's Palace Restaurant and Lounge, 1202 S. Harrison St., and a clarinet player for 40 of his 54 years, is on the St. Nicholas Church board of directors.

"Kiril has so many friends among the old timers — they said to ask him to play a few songs (at the dance). Now they're all coming to the dance," Skimos said, smiling

across a Palace dining room table at Rousseff.

Is the elder instrumentalist excited about the Saturday date at St. Nicholas?

Rousseff nodded, expressionless. "Once you learn it," he said, brimming with confidence, "you never forget it."

He started learning it in the late 1920s. But the trumpet was not his idea. "Dad wanted me to play trumpet, I wanted to play violin. I just sorta liked the violin. The tone. And I'd seen people play it and what they could do with it." But Dad had the final word. He bought the trumpet.

Young Rousseff's musical mentor was next-door neighbor Elo Calcoff.

Calcoff, who played clarinet, "was fantastic ... great," Rousseff enthused in earnest praise of his teacher who "came from the old country (Macedonia)." The student practiced on his trumpet "two, three hours every night. Every night!" And not long after his father bought the trumpet, Rousseff found himself playing in Calcoff's band.

It's his recollection he played in the band until 1960, two years before Calcoff died.

Rousseff played Macedonian music in Calcoff's band, American music in the Central High School band. "First trumpet," he said proudly, "for Gus Bailey." His days in the Central band came to an abrupt halt a year before graduation. It had to do with sweaters for band members. Athletes wore sweaters and Rousseff thought it only fair the band have them, too. Money was approved; money "ran out." Rousseff grinned, recalling the sweater incident. "Macedonians are sometimes ... pretty hot. I said, 'The hell with you!' and walked — went to work for my Dad in the trucking business."

But he kept right on playing trumpet in Elo Calcoff's band.

Skimos also had Calcoff as an instrumental teacher.

"I picked up a clarinet when I was 14. A brand new one," Skimos said, adding that "from then on, every time there was a dance, even though I didn't play well, I played in

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# Dance

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Elo's band." He plays well now. Very well.

Rousseff has been practicing for the Saturday dance ever since Skimos came to him with the old timers' suggestion. Not every day. "Oh, no," he said, laughing. "Two, three times a week, couple, three hours." He chuckled. "I said, 'If I can't make it, I'll fake it.'"

He'll have no written notes to fake. At least not on the Macedonian songs.

"None of us use music," Skimos said. "We all play by ear — and memory."

And both Skimos and Rousseff have the key to playing their respective instruments.

"A lot of wind," said Skimos of the clarinet. "If you run out of

wind, you're in trouble."

"Good lip. Real good lip," said trumpeter Rousseff.



Proceeds from the spring dance will be used for reduction of the St. Nicholas Church mortgage. Tickets, at \$25, are available by calling 422-9927 or 672-2898.

The event will begin with cocktails at 6 p.m. Saturday, followed by dinner at 6:30 and dancing at 7:30. Bill Skimos is preparing the menu which will feature New York strip steaks and baked potatoes.

Members of the Bill Skimos Band, playing for dancing until 11 p.m., are Skimos, clarinet; his son, Jim, keyboard; nephew Joe Skimos, drums; Steve Jugloff, accordion; Tom Bliznoff, trumpet and bouzouki.