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“REJOICE LITTLE INSECTS,
FOR CHRIST IS BORN!”
PAGE 19



PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT BOSTON, NEW YORK
AND ADDITIONAL ENTRY OFFICES

WESOŁYCH ŚWIĄT ✨ MERRY CHRISTMAS

NEWSMARK

Border crisis de-escalates, but far from over

Poland's eastern border has withstood an unprecedented assault by the regime of Belarusian strongman Aleksandr Lukashenko. Since August, his minions have orchestrated daily provocations by bringing in planeloads of Third World “tourists,” busing them to the Polish border and urging them to illegally cross into Poland. *Story on page 2.*

To cooperate with Oman in space program

SatRevolution, a satellite manufacturer and space service company based in Wrocław, southwestern Poland, and Warsaw-based Tuatara have signed an agreement on strategic cooperation in the implementation of the Earth observation project with Omani ETCO (International Emerging Technology Company).

The key element of the collaboration between the three companies involves launching Oman's first national satellite, called CubeSat, into the Earth's lower orbit in 2022.

Under the agreement, signed in October at the International Astronautical Congress in Dubai, Polish companies will provide state-of-the-art technology and solutions in the field of satellite image analysis that will support Oman's digital transformation strategy. SatRevolution will place CubeSat in orbit, operate it for ETCO, create a ground station and will provide training to Oman's businessmen and engineers. Tuatara, which has been operating in Oman since 2015, will analyze images and data acquired from the satellite using computer vision, machine learning and artificial intelligence, to recognize hidden patterns and trends enabling the prediction of the impact of climate change and natural disasters, among other phenomena.

Source: First News

Inquiry to probe death threats sent to leading politicians

WARSAW — Poland's Justice Minister Zbigniew Ziobro said he will investigate death threats sent to several Polish politicians. A number of politicians, including Donald Tusk, the leader of Poland's main opposition party, received threatening letters, with the one to Tusk saying that he would be stabbed in the stomach.

Tusk, who leads Civic Platform, said this was not the first threatening letter he had received, and revealed that “there has been a lot more of this type of correspondence in recent weeks and months.”

In his opinion, the threatening mail is part of “a wave of hatred, contempt, and ... violence is rising in Poland,” for which he blamed Law and Justice Party Leader Jarosław Kaczyński.

“Jarosław Kaczynski, you are directly responsible for this — as the head of the ruling camp and as the deputy prime minister for security matters,” Tusk said.

Source: TheFirstNews

Vaccines for 5- to 11-year-olds to arrive this month

WARSAW — The first supply of Covid-19 vaccine for children 5 through 11 years of age will arrive in Poland in this month, according to Health Ministry spokesperson Wojciech Andrusiewicz. He said that the delivery would contain about 1 million vaccine doses.

Andrusiewicz also mentioned that the vaccines, which are different from those given to older children and adults, were still awaiting their authorization by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). He added that the EMA decision was expected to take at least a month.

South Korea interested in Polish nuclear project

SEOUL — South Korea's state-owned energy company KHNP said it is set to make an offer to the Polish government to build six APR1400 nuclear reactors in Poland.

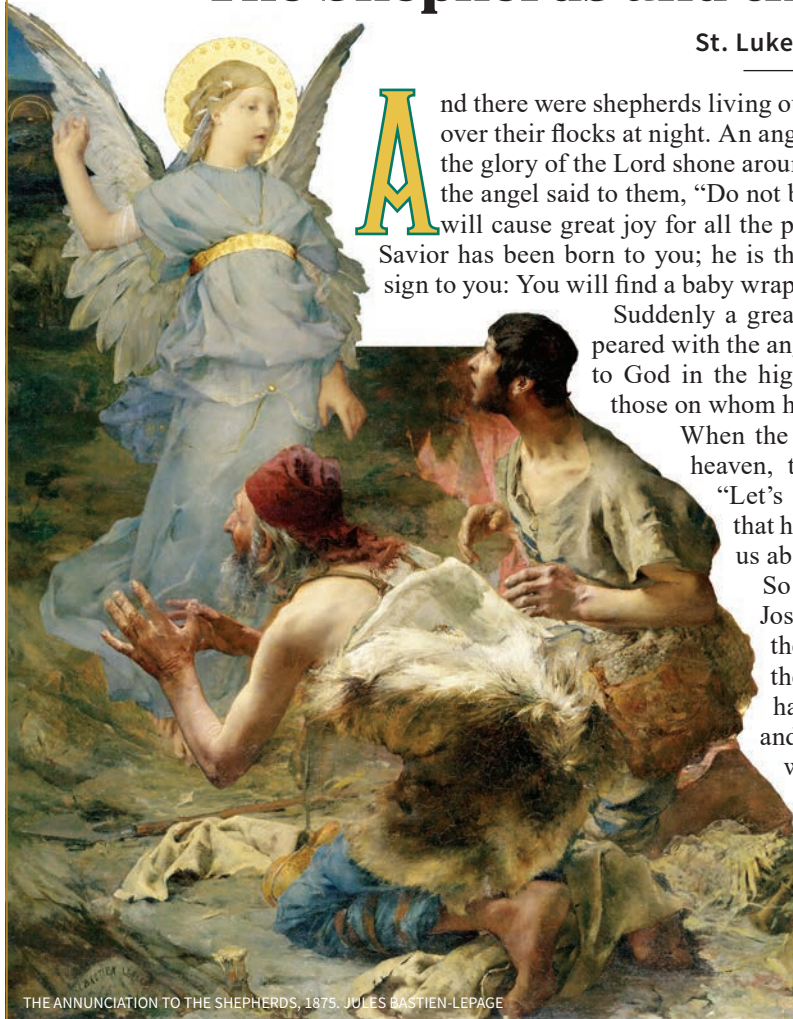
KHNP believes it will be able to meet the deadlines defined in Poland's energy strategy to 2040 (PEP) and the Polish nuclear program (PPEJ), the firm said. Under the Polish government's energy strategy, Poland plans to construct six nuclear power units. The first reactor should start working in 2033, generating some 1-1.6 GW of power. Subsequent reactors would be constructed every two to three years.

According to KHNP, the APR1400 reactors meet the basic requirements set out in the Polish program.

Poland has already signed an inter-governmental agreement with the United States, under which American companies are to submit their offers next year.

The Shepherds and the Angels

St. Luke 2:8-20



THE ANNUNCIATION TO THE SHEPHERDS, 1875. JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

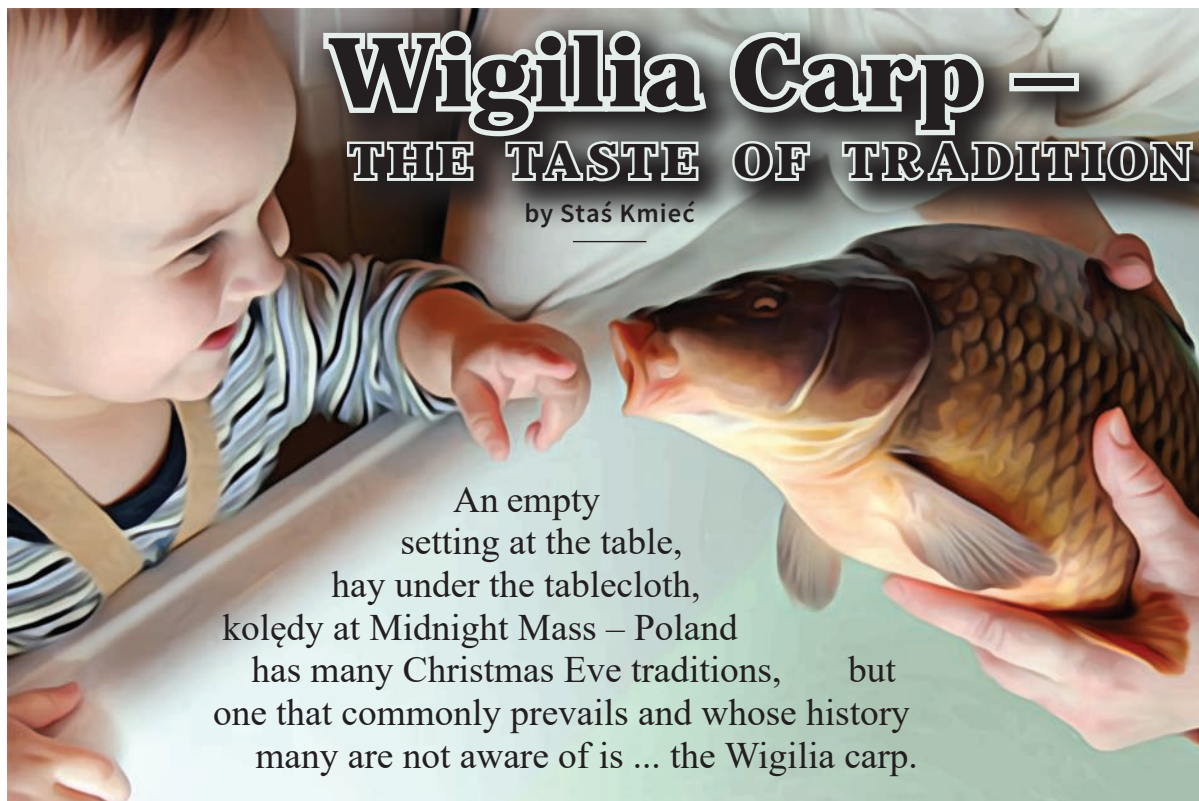
Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Wigilia Carp — THE TASTE OF TRADITION

by Staś Kmieć



An empty setting at the table,
hay under the tablecloth,
kolędy at Midnight Mass – Poland
has many Christmas Eve traditions, but
one that commonly prevails and whose history
many are not aware of is ... the Wigilia carp.

The traditional dish is not turkey or duck; instead taking center stage on most Polish tables is this freshwater fish.

For many, it is hard to imagine a Christmas without carp. Although the number of its fans and opponents is similar, this species still reigns supreme on the menu. Some love it, others hate it, and still others eat it only on Christmas Eve, because tradition dictates it.

The Wigilia meal is the biggest culinary event in the Polish calendar. After sharing the *opłatek* wafer, all are seated for the dinner, which consists of dishes defined by regional and family traditions. Some recognize that 12 dishes should be served, because that is the number of months in a year and represent the dis-

ciples of Jesus – the Apostles. In other homes, an odd number of dishes of 5, 7, 9 or 11 are prepared. It should be remembered that due to fasting, meat dishes are not allowed. Some 80 years ago, not only every region, but almost every village had its own local dishes.

The question of the menu depends on the region, as well as each separate house, as each family has its own customs, traditions, and favorite recipes. An important element of the menu is fish – mainly freshwater varieties. Fish dishes made their appearance much later than those from grains, vegetables, mushrooms, and fruits. At first, fish was served only at courts and in

See “Wigilia Carp,” page 9

All Eyes on Border Crisis at Polish-Belarusan Border

Migrants serve Lukashenko as hybrid “cannon fodder”

by Robert Strybel

WARSAW — Poland’s eastern border has withstood an unprecedented assault by the regime of Belarusian strongman Aleksandr Lukashenko. Starting in August, his minion orchestrated daily provocations by bringing in plane-loads of Middle East migrants, busing them to the Polish border, and urging them to illegally cross into Poland. The migrants, who had paid good money to human traffickers and Belarusian agencies, were told that Poland was the only obstacle separating them from affluent Germany.

On average, Polish border forces have thwarted from 200 to 600 daily attempts to breach a razor-wire border fence, detaining most of those who made it through as well as human traffickers waiting to pick them up. But in early November Lukashenko’s “hybrid war” intensified to unprecedented heights. The first word that something strange was afoot came from independent Belarusian journalist Tadeusz Giczán, who noted that the groups of swarthy Middle Easterners milling about the capital Minsk had suddenly vanished.

Giczán soon posted on social media a video showing armed Belarusian guards escorting thousands of migrants down a highway leading to Poland’s border crossing at Kuźnica Białostocka. At a point near the crossing, the migrants — some armed with axes, shovels, and wire-cutters — attempted to break through the border fence and force their way into Poland. Repeated attacks were repelled



Migrants hoping to cross from Belarus to Germany via Poland near Kuznica Bialostocka, Poland. For months, the government of Belarusian leader Aleksandr Lukashenko accelerated the number of visas it grants migrants seeking refuge from war and poverty in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and beyond. Countries within the EU, which initially welcomed the migrants, are facing backlash from their citizens, as their resources become strained. Poland fears the migrants will be turned away at the German border, and further stress its reserves.

by a 12,000-strong force of Polish soldiers, backed up by police, and border guards. Whenever the border fence was breached, a cordon of uniformed Polish servicemen appeared to bar any illegals from entering.

When the invaders saw the futility of their attack and tried to retreat, Belarusian guards fired shots into the air to scare them back to the border. The weaponization of migrants also included elements of psychological warfare. Footage broadcast by Polish Television showed a Belarusian blowing cigarette smoke into the eyes of a 10-year-old Iraqi boy to make his tears flow. A photo of him was immediately snapped to trigger outrage at the ordeal im-

posed by the “nasty Poles.” Belarusian handlers have instructed the migrants to look dirty, disheveled, and downtrodden and to highlight the plight of women and children to evoke public sympathy.

Although Polish services defending the border were bracing for a series of nocturnal forays, surprisingly none occurred. When dusk approached, the migrants retreated into the nearby forest, where they set up makeshift camps. Drone videos showed groups of migrants huddling round campfires, preparing food, and bedding down in tents and sleeping bags.

In the defense of its border, which is also the easternmost boundary of NATO and the European Union,

Poland is backed by most of the international community.

Lukashenko has previously been accused of manufacturing a migrant crisis on the border by the Prime Ministers of neighbors Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania, leading Poland to adopt a bill in October for the construction of a wall along its border with Belarus. European officials have also accused Belarus of encouraging people to cross illegally into Poland, and its other European Union neighbors, as part of efforts to put pressure on the bloc over sweeping sanctions it imposed on Minsk in June. The sanctions by the EU, the United States, and Britain were a coordinated response to the Lukashenko government’s forced landing of a Ryanair flight and arrest of an opposition journalist on board, as well as “continuing repression” in the former Soviet state.

In mid-November, the migrant camp on the Belarus-Poland border that became a temporary home to some 2,000 people was emptied. The migrants who had been camping there were moved to a nearby warehouse.

On Nov. 18, more than 400 Iraqis were repatriated from Belarus on a flight to Irbil arranged by the Iraqi government.

“To be honest, I am really sad right now,” Mohsen Addi told the Reuters news agency once he had arrived in Iraq’s northern Kurdistan region.

“We are all sad right now. People came back because they had no other choice.”

Many migrants said they were still determined to try and get into the EU.

PM May Close Border

Polish Prime Minister Morawiecki said Poland is ready to close its border with Belarus in response to continued provocations. Such action would be taken if Belarus continues its attempts at destabilizing the Polish border by encouraging and aiding migrants trying to cross into Poland illegally. Poland has already closed its border crossing at Kuźnica Białostocka. The closure of the remaining crossings, including a rail link between the two countries, would seriously impede Belarus’ export-import ac-

tivities and exert further economic pressure on the Lukashenko regime.

Merkel’s Mistake

Outgoing German Chancellor Angela Merkel has been widely criticized for breaking the civilized world’s isolation of Lukashenko. Sanctions were imposed on him and his close associates over the rigged 2020 presidential election and his violent crackdown on Belarusians protesting the electoral swindle. Since Merkel was the first major Western official to negotiate with Lukashenko, he claimed that meant he had finally been acknowledged as Belarus’ legitimate head of state.

The chancellor’s other two blunders were opening the continent to nearly two million Muslim migrants storming Europe’s borders since 2015 and promoting Russia’s controversial two Nord Stream pipelines. Poland had warned that would jeopardize Europe’s energy security and — true to form — Putin cut back deliveries, sending gas bills across Europe soaring.

Poland: “Nothing about us without us!”

Chancellor Merkel’s talks with Lukashenko and Putin struck a sour note in Poland which has had good historical reasons to be wary of any Russo-German collusion. Lukashenko had reportedly told Merkel he would send back 5,000 migrants to their native lands if a humanitarian corridor to Germany could be created for 2,000 others.

“We reject anything affecting our country agreed over our heads and behind our backs” was the reaction of President Andrzej Duda, Prime Minister Morawiecki and other top Polish officials. The Belarusian strongman had suggested that the migrants could be sent by planes to Munich, Germany.

“Nothing about us without us” is the vernacular translation of Poland’s 1506 Nihil Novi Act which said the king could not issue any new laws without the consent of parliament.

Other Developments

- Russia condemned Poland’s use of force, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov telling media in Moscow: “The behavior of the Polish side is absolutely unacceptable.” According to Russian media, Lukashenko has discussed the humanitarian situation with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, whom Poland’s Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki accused as the “mastermind” behind the migrant crisis.
- Belarus threatened to cut off a key gas pipeline to Europe November 10 if Poland keeps its border shut.
- Russia and Belarus flexed their military might for a third time by holding joint paratrooper drills near the Poland-Belarus border. The Belarusian defense ministry said the exercises were “in connection with the buildup of military activity near the state border of the Republic of Belarus.”
- Poland will spend over 1.6 billion zlotys (\$404 million) on building a wall on the border with Belarus. Poland began building a barbed wire fence along the border in August to curb the illegal border crossings. The new wall, which would include a system of motion sensors and cameras, would further bolster border security.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

FROM THE

Polish Cultural Club of Greater Hartford, Inc.

*Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia
i szczęśliwego Nowego Roku*



Living crèches stress true meaning of Christmas

by Robert Strybel

WARSAW — If you visited a shopping mall in Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań, Gdańsk, Białystok Katowice, or other Polish cities this time of year, you'd feel right at home. Multicolored lights and shimmering decorations surround holiday specials, discounts, and sales promotions at every step of the way.

Over the loudspeakers you'd hear "Jingle Bells," "White Christmas," "Let it Snow," and every other holiday hit. There are stars, elves, snowmen, reindeer, and kids queuing to tell Santa what they want. Green-clad elves and Santa's girl helper *Śnieżynka* (Miss Snowflake) are on hand to pass out sweets to the kiddies.

But despite all the hoopla, one can still find a touch of peaceful, low-key authenticity as personified



The Magi visit the Infant at a Live nativity at Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Żydowce section of Szczecin, Poland.

by the living Christmas crib.

Live Nativity scenes featuring parish volunteers and real barnyard animals have been growing in popularity across Poland in recent

decades. Usually set up on parish grounds, they combine the miraculous story of Jesus' birth with the attraction of a petting zoo.

Such living tableaux are eagerly

visited by families with children during the holiday season. They first open after Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and run until Candlemas (February 2), the official end of Poland's Christmas season. Families come to the *Pasterka* (Shepherds Mass), which still begins at Midnight after their celebration of *Wigilia*, said to be the most Polish day of the year. Kids have already received their presents after the meal, so they are no longer distracted by what they will get.

Beyond the donkey, sheep and cattle recorded in the New Testament, the living Christmas cribs sometimes include a llama, Shetland pony, guinea pigs, and poultry,

The most impressive presentation is found at the Marian Shrine of the Black Madonna in the southern city of Częstochowa. At times a young married couple with their babe in arms portray the Holy Family, but often only a bundled-up doll symbolizes Baby Jesus. Recordings of Poland's age-old *koledy* (carols) can be heard in the background, although at times the parish choir appears to do the honors.

Depending on a given parish's resources and decorative skills, the nativity tableaux may be homespun and folksy or artistically professional. However they are done up, they serve to remind us of the true celebration of Christmas.

Światło zabłyśnie, bo Pan się narodził

*A light will shine this day,
the Lord is here for us!*

FR. WALTER RAKOCZY

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*"Anioł pasterzom mówił: Chrystus się wam narodził!
W Betlejem nie bardzo podłym mieście
Narodził się w ubóstwie, Pan wszego stworzenia."*

Shepherds heard the angels say: Christ the Lord is born today!
Bethlehem, not too lowly, on this morn,
There so humbly He is born! Great Lord of earth and sky.

*Christ is born! Glorify Him! Blessings of the Holy Child!
Merry Christmas! Prosperous and Healthy New Year 2022!*

REVERE ND FATHER JAMES JOSEPH SUCHOLET

Saint Joseph Church, Norwich, Connecticut
Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Norwichtown, Connecticut

ALMANAC

December Grudzień

"Everything must go its own way. One has to plow in order to sow, one has to sow in order to harvest, and what is disturbing has to be weeded out, like a bad weed."

— *Novelist and 1924 laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Władysław Stanisław Reymont.*

- 1 1945. Premier of **Stanisław Moniuszko** opera "Verbum Nobile," in Warsaw.
- 3 1857. Birth of **Joseph Conrad** (d.1924), novelist, in Berdychiv, Poland, as Teodor Józef Konrad Korzeniowski.
1899. Founding of the **Polish Beneficial Association**, Philadelphia.
- 4 **ST. BARBARA**
- 5 1925. Death of Nobel laureate **Władysław S. Reymont.**
- 6 **ST. NICHOLAS (SW. MIKOŁAJ)**
Today is traditionally reserved for gift-giving in Poland.
- 7 1279. Death of **Bolesław V the Chaste.**
- 8 1990. Solidarity Trade Union leader **Lech Walesa** elected president of Poland.
- 9 1922. **Gabriel Narutowicz** elected first president of the Second Polish Republic. He was assassinated seven days later.
- 11 1949. **Johnny Lujack** of the Chicago Bears passed for 468 yards and six touchdowns in a 52-21 rout of the Chicago Cardinals.
- 12 1586. Death of **King Stefan Batory.**
- 13 1570. Signing of the **Treaty of Stettin** concludes the Northern Seven Years' War.
- 14 1970. Government price hikes in Poland spark bloody labor protests on the Coast, Gdańsk, Gdynia and Szczecin. To this day no one is certain how many people were killed.
- 15 1575. Election of **Stefan Batory** (1533-1586). Batory was Voivode of Transylvania (1571-76), Prince of Transylvania (1576-86), from 1576 Queen Anna Jagiellon's husband and *jure uxoris* King of Poland. Many historians consider him to be one of the greatest of the elected Kings of Poland.
- 18 1929. Birth of **Cardinal Józef Glemp.**
- 19 1852. Birth of Polish Jewish scientist **A.A. Michelson**, 1907 Nobel Prize winner in Physics.
- 20 1982. Death of **Chopin** advocate and pianist Arthur Rubinstein.
- 21 **ST. THOMAS**
1898. In Paris, **Marie**, 31, and **Pierre Curie**, Polish and French chemists, discover radium.
- 22 1982. **Richard Trumka** sworn in as president of United Mine Workers.
- 23 **ST. JOHN KANTY (CANTIUS)** 1473.
1937. Birth of first Polish American astronaut, **Karol Bobko**.
1925. Founding of the **Kościuszko Foundation** in New York City.
- 24 **DZIEŃ WIGILIJNY**
Na szczęście, na zdrowie ze świętą Wiliją
Health and good fortune this Vigil!
1854. About 100 families from Upper Silesia arrive in **Panna Maria**, Texas to establish the first permanent Polish settlement in the United States.
- 25 **BOŻE NARODZENIA**
According to Polish tradition, the 12 days of Christmas predict the weather for next 12 months.
- 26 **ST. STEPHEN**
Na Święty Szczepan, każdy sobie pan.
On St. Stephen's Day, everyone is master.
- 27 1587. Coronation of **Zygmunt III**.
- 29 1966. Celebration of the **Polish Millennium of Christianity.**
- 30 1994. Consecration of **Bishop John W. Yanta, D.D.**, at Panna Maria. He is the first Polish American Texan given this honor.
- 31 **ST. SYLVESTER**
Please do not drink and drive.

This paper mailed on or before **December 3.**
The January 2022 edition will be mailed on or before **December 31.**

VIEWPOINTS

This is Jesus' Time

by Mark Kohan

Rev. Charles Jan Di Mascola, in a collection of sermons submitted to the PAJ years ago, wrote about the birth of Christ, and its meaning for mankind.

He tells about a happy little town in the Carpathian Mountains, not far from Zakopane. In the center of the town was a great big clock tower. It kept perfect time. Everyone in the town led a very ordered existence. People knew when to go to work, when to come home for lunch; children knew when to go to school, what time Mass would start, what time to go to bed, and what time to wake up. Everything was ordered and peaceful.

One day the devil came to town, and was very upset to see such a harmonious way of life. He decided to give out clocks to everyone in the town, and told them to hang them on the front of their homes and shops. Who, after all, wouldn't want a free clock?

The problem was that every clock was set a few minutes or hours apart. Soon, the town was in chaos. Some people were following one clock, others were following another. Children were not showing up for school on time. Dinners were late at home. Fights ensued over everything from delivery times to working hours. Everyone went their

own way. Unity was lost. Everyone did their own thing. The devil, by giving everyone their own time, had disrupted the community, family, and individuals. There was no longer peace.

By his device, the devil, said Fr. DiMascola, spread the idea that there are many ways of doing things, and while it may seem right to the individual, it was wrong for the many.

Your piety may be looked at as foolishness by those who have abandoned the church. Love your neighbor regardless. That is the message given to us over 2000 years ago.

We see the same eccentricity and selfishness destroying the common good today. Individuals, states, and nations have their own opinions on vaccines, voting rights, global warming, health care, and immigration. The damage caused by pedophiles in the Catholic Church has given the borderline faithful an excuse, not just to skip Mass, but to surrender their beliefs altogether. Online, we see rudeness, endless bragging, and an obsession with status. Bullying and attacks of those who are different brings on social problems and other ills — even suicides. We have witnessed the politicizing of common sense, which has given us everything from useless over-legislation to the polarization of ideas, resulting in senseless divisions between family and friends.

What on Earth could possible correct this?

The answer, said Fr. DiMascola, is Christ's birth in Bethlehem.

"There is only one way and that is the way of Jesus Christ and the Church that He gave us," he wrote.

When Jesus Christ came to us in Bethlehem, He came to establish one way and one direction. He came to show us how to live here and now so that we could someday live with

him happily forever in Heaven. He taught us to put the needs of others over our own wants and desires, to act responsibly

and to protect the most vulnerable. In short, His message for us on Earth is to do things on God's time, not the devil's.

WILL YOUR FAITH IN JESUS convince your neighbor to get vaccinated? Probably not. Will it end global warming? Most likely the answer is "no." Your piety may be looked at as foolishness by those who have abandoned the church. Love your neighbor regardless. That is the message given to us over 2000 years ago.

"As long as we work with Him, with Jesus," said Fr. DiMascola, "we know that we will achieve the wonderful destiny, the wonderful goal that He has in mind for us and that goal is peace and happiness here on Earth, and someday complete joy forever in Heaven."

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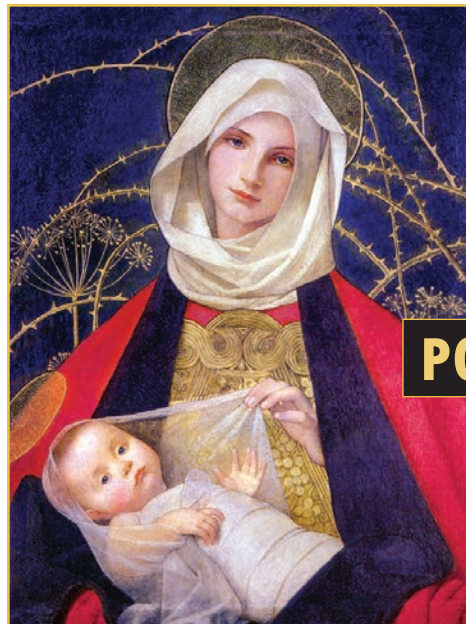
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Polish Christmas lore

by Robert Strybel

Polish Christmas lore includes various local customs, beliefs and practices which differed slightly from region to region and even from family to family. But for centuries, Wigilia (Christmas eve) has been the focus of the celebration, and the opłatek or Christmas wafer its central, symbolic artifact.

According to one folk belief, if the **first visitor** entering a home on Wigilia was a male, that was said to bring good luck, but a female visitor foretold misfortune. In the olden days, it was customary for family members to wash in a bucket of cold water brought from the nearby stream. A **silver coin** added to the bucket was said to ensure robust health all year long.

The “the all-year-long” theme ran through many other practices. Children were told to be **especially good on Wigilia**, for that is how they would be all year. And if a child should have to be spanked on Christmas Eve for misbehaving, that was what was in store for him or her throughout the year. Grown-ups too were on their best behavior, refrained from arguments and settled whatever debts they owed someone in the hope of being debt-free in the year to come.

Christmas Eve supper or “wieczera wigilijna” was no ordinary supper. It was not even a typical festive meal of the kind served at weddings, on namedays or even Easter. Everything about it was special, unique and highly symbolic. It

could begin only after the **first star** of the evening had appeared in the sky. Traditionally **meatless**, it featured the gifts of farm, field, forest and river: pasta, grains, dairy products, fish, vegetables, fruits, nuts, honey and poppy seeds. Courses were ordinarily brought in one by one and tables were set with the family’s best crockery.

Well into the 20th century, many poor peasants ate the food from common serving bowls with **wooden spoons**. For quite some time this tradition was also observed in many better-to-do homes, where there was no shortage of china and cutlery, to emphasize a sense of community. Until the meal was over, nobody was allowed to set their spoon on the table – it had to be held the whole time. Except for the housewife serving the food, no-one was allowed to leave the table until the meal was over. Everybody was expected to taste at least a small **sample of everything** on the table and not to leave anything uneaten on their plate. To do so was said to foretell missing out on various good things in the year ahead.

Various incantations and practices during the meal were meant – as always – to attract good fortune and keep harm away. When pasta or grain dishes were served, someone might exhort: “Mnóż się zboże!” (“Multiply, o grain!”). “Składaj się kapusto!” (“Fold into heads, cabbage!”) was uttered when sauerkraut and cabbage dishes made their appearance, and the words “Rodźcie się ziemniaki!” (“Grow,

potatoes, grow!”) was heard when boiled potatoes were brought to table.

In some areas, the head of the household would **fling a spoonful of cooked yellow peas** at the ceiling. The more that stuck, the better a harvest could be expected the following year. In Eastern Poland, the same was done with *kucja* or *kutia*, a thick pudding made of cooked grain and honey. In the mountain areas of the south a handful of **straw** from the sheaves standing in the corners was thrown at the ceiling to ensure a good harvest. Since only rarely did a strand or two of straw get caught on a sliver or rough spot, that practice seemed to have been a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: a bountiful harvest was a rarity in the poor soil of the hard-scrabble mountain areas.

Various forms of **fortune-telling** usually centered on the martial prospects of the eligible girls of the family. For instance, maidens would draw strands of hay from under the table-cloth of the Vigil Supper table. A green strand meant marriage before the end of Zapusty (Mardi Gras), while a yellow one signified that the girl was still in for a wait before someone popped the question. But a dark, withered strand condemned the girl who had pulled it out to a life of spinsterhood. Sometimes the girl who chose the longest strand was said to be the first to go to the altar.

Another practice was to go into the front yard and listen for the barking of a dog. Wherever the

first bark was heard, that is the direction from which a suitor would come courting.

Girls would also count the pickets in the fence *s a y i n g* “kawaler, wdowiec, kawaler, wdowiec...” (“bachelor, widower, bachelor, widower...”), the last picket determining whom they would marry.

It was said that at the stroke of midnight the **water** in wells would **turn to wine**, but there was one, main catch: only those who had never sinned could taste it. That certainly excluded the rough-and-tumble farm hands, village drunks and other unsavory types who would have loved to sample the miraculous tippie. According to another folk belief **farm animals could speak** in human voices at midnight, but anyone who heard them would not live to tell the tale.

One peasant was said to have buried himself in a manger full of hay to see if his cattle could really speak. But the cows were not fooled and one of them spoke up: “Leż gospodarzu w żłobie, a wkrótce będzie po tobie” (“Lie in the manger, farmer dear, now your end is drawing near.”).

But our Polish ancestors were not really as superstitious as it may seem at first glance. These beliefs

and practices were treated only half-seriously. Mainly they added a bit of diversion to the otherwise drab rural, winter existence of that bygone era.

After the Christmas Eve supper was over, it was common to

gather up the table scraps together with any bits of leftover opłatek, the grain scattered on the table and the hay from beneath the table-cloth and take it to feed the livestock. The straw strewn about the cottage floor was tied into roping and used to wrap the fruit trees to ensure a good crop. A farmer that kept bees would also tap the hives and inform their drowsy denizens: “Cieszcie się i wy robaczki, Pan Jezus się narodził!” (“Rejoice little insects, for Christ is born!”)

After the above rituals had been re-enacted families would return home and sing carols until it was time to leave for Pasterka. In poor families the singing went unaccompanied and the kolędy were sung from memory. In better-to-do homes a *kantyczka* (hymnal) containing a wide array of carols and other hymns was brought out, and the singing was often accompanied by someone playing a musical instrument. But gift-giving was not practiced on Christmas Eve in the Polish countryside until well into the 20th century.



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RELIGION

Bio-ethicist/Roman Catholic Priest Speaks in Buffalo

by Benjamin Fiore, S.J.

On Wednesday, November 3, Catholic priest-bioethicist **Fr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk** spoke at Canisius College in Buffalo on the impact of St. John Paul II on Catholic Bioethical teaching today. Fr. Pacholczyk, with degrees from the U. of Arizona, Rome's Gregorian and Lateran Universities, and Yale, is part of the National Catholic Bioethical Center in Philadelphia. He has written columns which appear in newspapers throughout the country and is in demand as a lecturer. His talk at Canisius College was sponsored by the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture, an endowment that sponsors programs of importance to the Polish American community. His talk ranged widely from contraception, to abortion, to the coronavirus, to list just a few of the topics.

Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (the Gospel of Life) provided the theological basis of his remarks.

Church Vandal Found

Deacon Chet Ubowski at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Littleton, Colorado, confirmed that fallen-away Catholic Madeline Anne Cramer was the vandal who defaced the RC cathedral in Denver with spray-painted slogans denouncing

"White Supremacists," "Child Rapists," and also praised Satan with "Satan Lives Here."

Deacon Ubowski explained that Cramer approached the altar at his church during Mass shortly after she defaced the cathedral and, during her interaction with the celebrant of the Mass, admitted the vandalism and claimed to be a Satanist. She charged the Church with hating women, and wanting to control and silence women as demonstrated by the Church's opposition to abortion.

Biden and Pope Francis

After his visit with Pope Francis President Biden declared that he was encouraged by the pope to continue receiving communion. He praised the pope for being a man of empathy who knows how to reach out and forgive, "everything I learned about Catholicism." The next day he attended Mass at St. Patrick's church in Rome and received communion.

The Vatican, however, cancelled any live-filming of the meeting between the pope and the president. After the meeting and press reports, Spanish bishop Jose Ignacio Munilla of San Sebastian, Spain decried how the president's statements incredibly manipulated the pope to present themselves as innocent of all evil connected with



CELEBRATORY SOUNDS. The beautiful music of the Orawa Polish Highlanders String Orchestra from Chicago enhanced the Holy Mass and birthday celebration held Nov. 7 for Bishop Emeritus Dale Melczek at the St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church in Gary, Indiana, where he serves as administrator. Pictured (l. to r.) are: Jerzy Mszal, Wally Dziazkowicz, Jack Denges (SML music director and organist), Bishop Emeritus Dale Melczek, Robert Stasik, and Andrzej Golak.

promoting abortion. Immediately upon his return to the United States, the president continued to push government agencies to promote abortion, specifically in having the Department of Justice sue the state of Texas to drop its heartbeat law that has cut abortion in Texas in half. Earlier this year Springfield,

Ill. Bishop Thomas Paprocki said, "Sadly there are some bishops and cardinals of the Church who not only are willing to give Holy Communion to pro-abortion politicians, but who seek to block the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops from addressing the question of Eucharistic coherence. The bishops have the issue of Eucharistic coherence of the agenda for their meeting in Baltimore in November.

Czestochowa Icon Links Distant Churches

The Pauline fathers who staff **St. Stanislaus Church** in Manhattan have established a relationship through their Good Samaritan Community with an orphanage in Uganda. A copy of the icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa was sent by Fr. Bushobora who runs the Babies Village in Uganda to the parish in Manhattan to celebrate their 150th anniversary. The icon was brought

to the sister parish of St. Stanislaus and Shrine of St. John Paul II in Buffalo.

Plaque to Honor St. Maximilian Kolbe

Corpus Christi RC Church in Buffalo, N.Y. will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the beatification of **St. Maximilian Kolbe** by installing a plaque to the martyr-saint.

Parishioners Sophie Hodorowicz Knab and Regina Hanchak coordinated the project and raising of funds to cover the cost of the memorial plaque.

Happy Anniversary to....

Holy Mother of the Rosary PNCC cathedral in Lancaster, N.Y., celebrating 125 years. Prime Bishop Anthony A. Mikovsky joined Bishop John Mack of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese in the anniversary Mass.

In 1895 Fr. Anton Kolaszewski led a congregation of Roman Catholics to secede from St. Adalbert RC Church and founded an independent church prompted by arguments with the Roman Catholic bishop of Buffalo over parish ownership and personality issues. Other break-away churches later formed the Polish National Catholic Church and a cathedral, Holy Mother of the Rosary, was built on Buffalo's Sobieski Street. Down the block from that cathedral, parishioners who wished to remain Roman Catholic established a Roman Catholic Church under the patronage of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The Buffalo-based cathedral was sold to an Islamic educational organization, and a new cathedral was established in the nearby suburb of Lancaster. While doctrinal matters were not at issue when the church was founded, married priesthood and episcopacy, rejection of papal authority, and other differences have kept the churches apart. Inter-church dialogue continues today.

Orchard Lake – can it be saved?

by Robert Strybel

Fresh out of the University of Wisconsin with an MA in Polish Language and Literature, I landed my first college teaching job at the beautiful, lakeside campus of the Orchard Lake Schools (OLS). They had started out as the Polish Seminary, set up in Detroit in 1885 by Father Józef Dąbrowski to train priests for America's rapidly expanding Polonia. In 1910, it was moved to its present location some 30 miles north of Detroit. It eventually expanded to include St Mary's College and St Mary's Preparatory.

Years later, when I began teaching Polish-related subjects there, SS Cyril and Methodius Seminary was still training Polish-speaking priests for Polonia. The college was a minor seminary with upper-classmen coming to class in black, floor-length cassocks, and PolAm boys dominated the enrollment of the highly sports-minded St Mary's Preparatory. Much has changed over the years.

In 2003, the last time I taught there, the Seminary was training Polish-born seminarians to minister in English to priest-short American dioceses. St Mary's College had become a four-year, co-educational liberal arts college, but at the end of that academic year was taken over by Madonna University of Livonia, MI. Many said Polonia was to blame for failing to send its kids to a Polish-American college.

Then in July 2021, the closure of SS Cyril and Methodius Seminary was announced with "declining enrollment caused by changing US demographics" among the reasons given. But the Seminary and remaining OLS were far more than just educational institutions.

This was a unique Polonian cultural stronghold that had hosted PolAm retreats and conventions as

well as cultural and patriotic events. Cardinal Karol Wojtyła had referred to the OLS as "serce Polonii" ("the heart of Polonia"), when he visited before becoming pope.

One Sunday a month has been Polish Day, when visitors can attend a Polish mass, tour campus, visit the bookstore, the Galeria (art gallery), Central Polonian Archives and a number of mini-museums dedicated to Poland's World War II veterans. Then things could be topped off with home-style Polish dinner.

At present, the Galeria is undergoing renovation and is closed to the public, access to the, archives and museums is not what it once was and their resources are reportedly scattered, The Polish Mission which was to have been in charge of them has been without a director for some time,

A group of concerned PolAm intellectuals, professionals and activists calling themselves Polskie Lobby (Polish Lobby) have been desperately appealing to the Board of Regents to save the Seminary and hope to salvage Orchard Lake's Polish-American cultural identity, The seminary's new rector Father Bernard Witek is conferring with school officials and Polonian activists from Poland online, as he awaits an American work permit

Following months of the Polish Lobby's spirited lobbying, in November 2021 the Seminary got

at least a temporary reprieve. At a meeting, the Orchard Lake Regents voted to suspend the closure decision until a new reconstruction plan for the Seminary is submitted. Rector Witek and his team (several people from the Administration and Regents, were given until June 1st, 2022 to develop such a plan. But questions still remain.

Will half a year be enough time to draw up a comprehensive plan that will be approved by the Regents? Can Polonia's unique cultural treasure, sustained for generations by our PolAm ancestors, still experience a renaissance? If so, when, in what form and who could bankroll such a project? These and similar questions continue to absorb and trouble PolAms deeply concerned over our Polonia's future.

There still are fears that St Mary's Preparatory might be turned into a private, de-Polonized and de-Catholicized sports high school. After all, the 100-acre Orchard Lake campus is a temptingly prime piece of real estate worth millions of dollars. Let's hope no-one decides to sell off piecemeal much or most of the property to finance the sports high school project or some other non-Polonian venture!

Postscript: You can follow this developing story by e-mailing: polskielobby@gmail.com.

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GENEALOGY

Celebrating a Polish Christmas

by Stephen M. Szabados

We all love Christmas because of its magical atmosphere. It is a special time when people forget all their problems and try to be together. Moreover, Christmas helps people transform themselves from the cold dark realities of winter into a better mind by enjoying the festive celebrations surrounding Christmas. As a result, family, relatives, friends, neighbors, and strangers become kind, friendly, and generous.

Wigilia is a vital occasion for the Polish people. To them, it is a religious experience based on national and family traditions. Preparations for Christmas begin with the four weeks of fasting and prayer during Advent. Then, thoughts shift to the Christmas festivities as Advent closes and Christmas day draws closer. It begins after cleaning and airing their homes, then preparing those special dishes and treats, such as Christmas cakes.

What Christmas traditions do you follow? For example, do you celebrate with your family on Christmas Eve or wait for Christmas Day?

My Polish ancestors hung their Christmas tree from the ceiling and decorated it with walnuts wrapped in silver and gold foil, bright red apples, gingerbread in fancy shapes, and chains made from glossy colored paper. On Christmas Eve, they placed straw under the tablecloth to help tell fortunes after dinner,

and they put sheaves of the four grains in the corners of the room. The most interesting tradition was always setting an odd number of plates no matter how many people attended. My ancestors, especially the children, then watched for the first star to appear in the sky before sitting down at the table to begin the feast.

Your Christmas memories are a magical portion of your family history.

The Christmas Eve meal began with the passing of the Christmas wafer (*oplatek*) around the table for each person to break off a piece before the tasting of the traditional foods could begin. The meal included cheese, sauerkraut pierogi, fish in various forms, fish or mushroom soup with noodles, herring, boiled potatoes, dumplings with plums and poppy seeds, stewed prunes with lemon peel, a compote of dried fruit, and poppy seed cake. The meal was followed with stories, games, and, lastly, Midnight Mass. The family spent Christmas Day at home, eating, singing, and enjoying family. On the second day of Christmas, they visited friends and family in the neighboring villages.

TODAY, MY AMERICAN FAMILY follows a few Polish Christmas

customs, but many have not been passed down and have been forgotten.

- The Christmas tree is set up on the floor in a stand and not hung from the ceiling. It has many ornaments. Some are fancy glass globes, but many are simple handmade figures and designs. We place simple white lights on the tree. We also place a silver plastic garland around the tree.
- We have our Christmas feast on Christmas Day, so the search for the first star in the evening sky on Christmas Eve has been forgotten.
- We start our Christmas feast with the passing of the *oplatek* around the table, say grace, and then begin the meal.
- The meal is not meatless as tradition dictates, but always includes *kielbasa*, *sauerkraut*, *red cabbage*, *cucumber sour cream salad*, *pierogi*, and a *poppy seed cake*. This menu has far fewer items than a traditional Polish Christmas table but still satisfies our appetites and produces leftovers. It

includes traditional Polish foods and tries to honor the memories of our ancestors.

- Recent celebrations have produced singing more Christmas carols after we open the presents.
 - Games, looking through the old photo albums, and stories around the table also are becoming more prevalent as family time has become crucial.
- While growing up, I saw my family drift away from the simple customs our ancestors celebrated. Today, we are trying to capture more of the spirit of Christmas. So far, adding Christmas carols and reviewing the family albums to the day's activities has helped revive some of those feelings. What else can we do to simplify how we celebrate our Christmas festivities and honor our ancestors?

If you are looking for ideas to add to your Polish Christmas traditions, review the pages in the books *Polish Customs, Traditions and Folklore* by Sophie Hodorowicz Knab, and *A Polish Christmas Eve* by Rev. Czeslaw Krysa. Both books

are in English, and contain sections describing many of the traditions and customs for a Polish Christmas that should help.

Your Christmas memories are a magical portion of your family history. If there are small children, read Christmas stories to them. Sing a few Christmas carols to bring the group together. Try to create an atmosphere that encourages everyone to remember family stories. Capture them while they are fresh in your mind. Bring out the family photo albums and scrapbooks. Record or write down what is said. Those words will be an extraordinary gift to your grandchildren and great-grandchildren when they read your family history. Honor your Polish grandparents and capture their memories. Their lives are essential building blocks for our roots in America. Celebrate their Christmas traditions and remember to enjoy the spirit of Christmas every day.

Best wishes and I hope you follow many of my suggestions. Have fun but stay safe.

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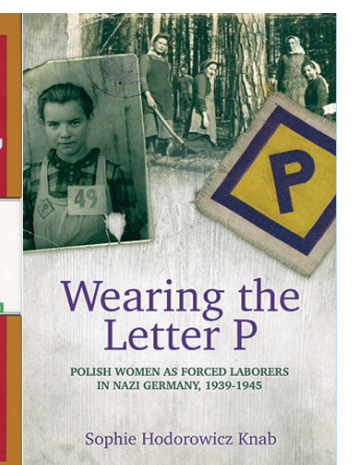
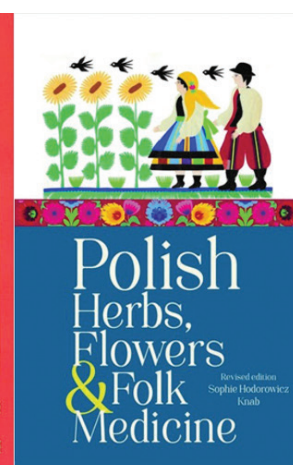
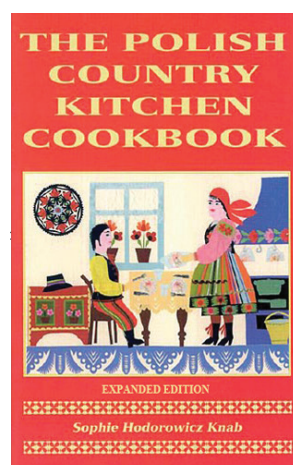
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from
Sophie Hodorowicz Knab

Wigilia Carp. "... one of the many freshwater fish from which to make a dish."

continued from cover

wealthy monasteries. Fishermen could afford to eat them.

Fish has long been a symbol of Christ and Christianity, and of health and abundance. The tradition of eating carp for Christmas is alive and well in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. But some families in Hungary, Austria, Germany, and Croatia celebrate and indulge in the delicacy during the Vigil. Southern Italy originated the now Italian-American "Feast of the Seven Fishes" tradition in the United States, this sumptuous meal is a seafood-heavy dinner, known as *la cena della vigilia* — the midnight vigil.

Carp on Christmas Eve is inscribed in Polish tradition, but where did this custom come from?

Carp in Old Polish cuisine

The history of carp is full of surprises. The first information about carp originating from Asia in ancient times, comes from Aristotle and Pliny. It was a farmed fish, which in the 7th century BC was domesticated in Asia. The ancient Romans had artificial *piscina* ponds, in which they cultivated carp, which were to go to their tables. After the fall of the Roman Empire, carp breeding was handled by religious orders.

Strong Catholic traditions in Eastern European countries brought about the carp tradition. It was a solution for the numerous fasting days in the Catholic calendar — 180 to 200 days a year were banned from eating meat; non-compliance was severely punished.

The division of animals into "hot-blooded" and "cold-blooded" is derived from ancient terminology that the Church borrowed. Cold-blooded animals that can be eaten included primarily fish, but also animals associated with water: beavers, turtles, snails, and sometimes certain species of birds.

Because of the medieval calendar, carp was brought to Poland in the 12th century by Czech Cistercian monks, who were engaged in fish farming. Their monastery breeding ponds were in the Barycz valley of the Dolny Śląsk castellany of Milicz in southwestern Poland.

At the end of the 13th century, carp breeding was established in Zator, on the border of the Duchy of Opole and the Kraków district — in the land of the Cieszyn Prince Mieszko. Both farms still exist and most of the carp on Polish tables

At that time, fish became popular for Christmas Eve as a fasting food, as it was the last day of the Advent fast. "Carp was one of the many freshwater fish from which to make a dish," wrote Poland's first historian, Jan Długosz wrote in his "Chronicles" from 1466.

The Republic of the Golden Age in the late 15th century was already famous for a large number of ponds, as well as for the high level of fishery management. Ponds were established on wastelands, therefore in the villages of Śląsk and western Małopolska carp breeding was almost as popular as grain cultivation.

From the Middle Ages to the 17th century, as wars ravaged Poland, breeding ponds sprouted throughout Poland. Carp was gaining in popularity, and specialists from Czechia stocked more economic ponds.

In the oldest preserved Polish cookbook from 1682, *Compendium Ferculorum — albo Zebranie Potraw* (a collection of dishes) by Stanisław Czerniecki, the chef of Prince Lubomirski, you can find eight recipes for carp. It was not a rarity at that time and was served on noble and landed gentry tables. According to Czerniecki, black carp was cooked with the addition of jam dissolved with vinegar, cherry juice, spices.

We have an idea what the kings of Poland ate during Christmas from the steward's books. These were lists, which were issued by the *szafarnia* (pantry) of the court kitchen. The palace book from King Jan III Sobieski, under the date of December 24, 1695, details that snails, and a very long list of fish — including very fatty, migratory carp were served. It was the fat that was desirable after a long Advent fast. At the *Wigilia* table in Wilanów, a bowl of salmon, nine platters — pike, a bowl of perch, two bowls — bream, five bowls — tench, two bowls of "salt fish," a bowl — stockfish (dried cod), three bowls — *czeczugi* (from the sturgeon family), two bowls — herring, two bowls and additionally seven platters of carp were served. To accompany this was rice, almonds, olive oil and onions. There was no *barszcz* or *karpusta* on the menu.

Due to wars, the popularity of carp decreased in the 17th century. At that time, water was drained from the ponds and fish were selected to feed the soldiers. Nobility and landed gentry were left with other

The second half of the 18th century and the entire 19th century was a slow and arduous process of rebuilding the carp's position on Polish tables. Farms damaged mainly by the Swedish deluge could not regain their glory for a long time.

The situation was changed by Adolf Gasch from Kaniów, who bred a new variety of carp, which had an arched back and a small head. The fish gained meat mass, and breeding became even more profitable. He received a gold medal for it at the agricultural exhibition in Berlin in 1880 — amazing breeders with the size and shape of his fish — which was titled as "Galician carp." Known today as "Royal carp," the fish stormed gastronomy in the 19th century and made it impossible to imagine a festive table without carp at the beginning of the 20th century.

On the Christmas Eve table, pike, considered the royal fish, continued to occupy the place of honor. Carp was not a gourmet fish, but an everyday, fasting, not solemn fish. Carp had the advantage that it grew quickly and was easy to breed.

It was very popular, especially among Polish Jews, who prepared it in many ways. *Karp po Żydowski* (in the Jewish style), popular in Poland, is an exceptional dish. It is not found in any other Jewish cuisine. This recipe in sweet gelatin with raisins and almonds comes from Galicia.

Until World War II, the northern range of the dish's popularity marked the border between the Jewish Galicians and the Lithuanian, who used a different dialect of Yiddish. It is the Jewish Poles who are noted for bringing the popularity of carp to the Christmas Eve table. With relation to the origins of Christmas, preparing "in the Jewish way" made sense.

Carp was only one of many freshwater fish served on noble, bourgeois and landed gentry tables.

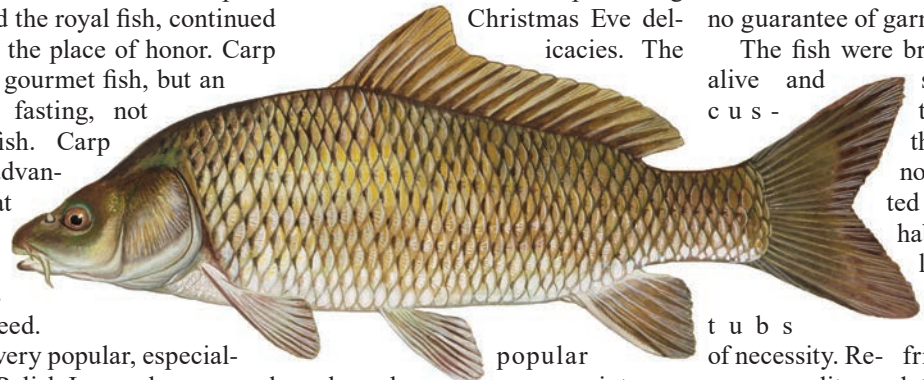
In the 18th century, in Poland and neighboring countries, numerous ponds were created, built by rich princely families and magnates as peculiar family monuments of glory.

It was in the 19th century that carp took the place of pike on *Wigilia* tables. In the 16th century, a fashion for carp consumption was

a fasting dish. Live carp became a delicatessen product, consumed during various celebrations and holidays. In the 19th century, the two kitchens — *szlachetny* (noble) and *włościańska* (peasant) began to merge together. Wealthy townspeople, in addition to the rich feudal lords living in the city, were the main recipients of the fish, but not the only ones, as the urban and rural population of land estates and farms willingly ate carp, as well.

"Carpe à la polonaise" appeared as an item of the Christmas Eve menu proposed by Antoni Teslar, the Potocki chef from Krzeszowice and the author of *Kuchnia Polsko-Francuska (Polish-French Cuisine)* from 1910.

In the 1914 cookbook — 366 *Obiadów - Praktyczna książka kucharska*, Kazimiera Krumłowska who used the pseudonym Maria Gruszecka listed carp among Christmas Eve delicacies. The



popular book was reprinted in 1930. The carp tradition became rooted during the interwar period (1919-1939), due to the favorable Sejm acts of 1919 and 1920 on agricultural land, many new carp ponds were created. In the weekly "Nowości Ilustrowane" No. 2, of January 8, 1921, in the Chronicle of the Week column, there is a description of the Christmas Eve of 1920 and the search for carp.

After the end of World War II, Poland lost part of its ponds in the eastern borderlands, but in return it obtained well-developed carp ponds in Dolny Śląsk.

"Carp on every Christmas Eve table"

After World War II, the fish industry did not exist. The ponds were destroyed by the devastation of war. Others found themselves no longer within Poland's borders. The fishing fleet was in tragic condition with less than half of their trawlers, luggers, cutters, motorboats and row/sail boats remaining after the war. The reconstruction of the fleet did not find support from the

ity of carp in the times of the Polish People's Republic increased. The centrally controlled economy was not able to supply the market, and in this situation the Minister of Industry and Trade and a Communist activist, Hilary Minc, threw out the slogan — "Karp na każdym Wigilijnym stole w Polsce" (a carp on every Christmas Eve table in Poland). Born into a middle-class Jewish family, he grew up knowing the taste of these fish dishes in Kazimierz Dolny.

Minc knew that this species was relatively easy to breed, and at his command, a mass restocking campaign was launched. Carp indeed appeared on *Wigilia* tables — influenced by its affordable price and the distribution of fish through workplaces as "bonuses." Special cards were also awarded. At fish shops, long lines were started several days in advance of Christmas Eve — with no guarantee of garnering a carp.

The fish were brought to stores alive and sold live to customers. Back then, they were not available gutted or frozen. The habit of storing live fish in domestic bathtubs was born out of necessity. Refrigerators were a commodity and the fresh water cleansed the meat and eliminated any silt aftertaste.

Under the Communist regime, the culinary traditions and old recipes for carp, especially those once widely used by noblemen and the aristocracy, were regarded as superfluous reactionary whimsy, and forgotten about. Instead, recipes for basic fried carp bells found their way into newspapers and cookbooks.

Although carp became an important political weapon, ensuring constant supplies to the stores of *Centrala Rybna* turned out to be unrealistic in practice. Despite the periodic mobilization of the supply, it was sometimes difficult to get fish for *Wigilia*.

Recently, there has been an engrained opinion that carp did not appear on the Christmas Eve table in Poland until only after World War II — as a Communist substitute for noble species of fish unavailable on the market at that time. This revisionist history found on TV stations, blogs, and internet media

continued on next page



POLISH HERITAGE SOCIETY OF ROCHESTER

We wish Upstate New York Polonia and the readers of the PolAm Journal a happy and holy holiday season.



Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!

Wealthier Poles even look with contempt at this “not very noble” fish.

continued from page 9

media, calls carp – a “new secular tradition” introduced by a Jewish Communist to Catholic homes. It is difficult to guess where this infamous legend came from, but it does not have much to do with the truth. Even Polish *Newsweek's* Bartek Wejman touted this sensationalist theory in what can be deemed as ill-researched, sloppy journalism.

The popular online encyclopedia *Wikipedia* lists fish among the traditional Christmas Eve dishes, “with the most traditional carp fried and in jelly.” If you enter the set of words “carp communists” in a popular web browser, it will give you well over 100,000 results.

“The fact is this story, assigning a special role to Minc, is completely untrue,” writes historian and researcher of the history of Polish cuisine Prof. Janusz Dumanowski from the Nicolaus Copernicus University. “In the times of the Polish People’s Republic, sturgeon, perch, salmon, eels, pike and many other fish disappeared from Christmas Eve tables. This left only the lonely carp. Besides, should we be suspect of Zygmunt III Vasa or Jan Sobieski – both avid consumers of Christmas Eve carp?”

Carp = poor Poland?

Carp is not a cheap fish from the People’s Republic of Poland. A new propaganda tradition — along with animal rights activists — are attempting to emphasize that carp is a fish that has nothing to do with the Christmas tradition. Wealthier Poles even look with contempt at this “not very noble” fish.

Millennials are stating that carp is a tradition of a poor, Communist Poland. A symbol of a country where there were no refrigerators. One stated on an internet blog that: “young people are living in a completely different world, with a different mentality. Why should we duplicate the traditions of our parents and grandparents, who had no other choice?”

Tradition is clear: there should be a fish on the table. A fish for the times in which we live. Let us not be stuck in a bygone era. We can afford better products. Let it be a sign that Poland is modern and does not mindlessly stick to habits that it cannot explain to itself.”

It is interesting to note that snails and frogs in France began to be a dish only when there was nothing else to eat during the war. Now they

are considered not only a tradition, but also food for the rich.

From Bathtub to Table

Families buy carp alive a few days before Christmas and then put the fish in their bathtub. During that time, children often get attached to

whom may have a change of heart at the idea of devouring their new pet.

Carp are bottom feeders. The idea is that a few days swimming in clean water helps to flush the fish’s digestive tract. The tub time was also a practical way to store fresh fish before refrigerators became common.

have a similar tradition, as carp is often the gefilte fish eaten at Passover.

These memories are so vivid that children’s storybooks have even been written on the topic. In most of them, the children are often conflicted on whether to eat their new pets, as per tradition, or rescue

Why Carp? It’s a Matter of Taste

Carp compete in quality and origin, so choose a good one. Today, it comes from clean waters, from organic farming, which makes sure that the slightest amount of silt does not remain. The carp is put to sleep in ice water before killing it.

Buy carp only from reliable sources, preferably directly from the breeder. Always ask for a certificate, because the fish with it has a guarantee of quality. The document testifies to the fact that carp was bred in ecological conditions, fed naturally, and handled humanely. Good quality fish should not have the smell of silt, and when pressed with a finger, the meat must be resilient. The gills of the fish are to be red, and the eyes are glassy, pronounced, and large. The scales should shine and adhere well to the carcass. The seller is obliged to tell you what age the fish is and where it comes from.

The taste of carp is expressive. It is difficult to find a fish that is so silky and caresses the palate. Tender, slightly sweet, carp meat is second to none. This is the result of breeding, which can be called ecological. Though bred differently, carp can be found in exclusive fish shops in the United States.

The remnants of the carp custom can be heard in the annual song by the journalists of the Polish Radio 3 – *Trójka*. First recorded in 2000, subsequent versions of the special song *Przyjaciele Karpia* (Friends of the Carp), are very popular, especially as the revenue from sales is donated to charity.

Legend has it that the carp itself brings luck and prosperity – one of the reasons it became the Christmas meal of choice. Carp scales are sometimes tucked under dinner plates and carried around in wallets to attract wealth – based on the superstition that the scales resemble coins. Another custom calls for burying the fish bones under a tree on Christmas day, so that it bears fruit in the coming year.

Carp might not swim in many bathtubs anymore, but if you may be fortunate enough to see one at the dinner table, you might snag some of its scales to keep in your back pocket. You never know what blessings the carp might bring in the New Year.

How to prepare carp for Wigilia

The techniques of preparing Christmas Eve dishes have changed. Though we often consider the preparation of Wigilia to be extremely laborious, our efforts are incomparably smaller than those of our ancestors.

Carp was once prepared in many different ways: in dried cherries, blackened in carp blood and beer, in aspic, or in a variety of sauces — some sweet, others savory. It was breaded, fried, sliced or stuffed, and shaped as carp ham or fishmeat-balls.

There were carp soups depending on the region. From Wielkopolska there was a velvety, cream soup and from other areas the addition of beets. In addition to carp, Barszcz Rybny included a tomato paste, pickled beets, carrots, parsley, onions, dill, oil and cream..

Karp po Polsku w Szarym Sosie

Carp in Grey Sauce

This is a famous Old Polish Christmas Eve delicacy and a very old recipe.

1. Kill a finely bred carp of about 2 lbs. and collect the blood into a cup which contains the juice of a half lemon. (Substitute: use plum juice or plum butter)
2. Clean and wash fish, cut crosswise into portions, salt and leave in a cool place for 20 minutes.
3. Prepare a stock of 1 medium celeriac root, sliced into strips, a large onion and one wine-glass of dry red wine (1 cup), a piece of thinly peeled lemon rind, several grains of pepper, 1/3 teaspoon ground ginger and the juice of 1/2 lemon.
4. Place the fish in a flat saucepan and cover with the stock (3/4 pint)
5. Transfer the cooked fish carefully onto a warm serving-dish and keep warm.
6. Strain the stock through a fine metal sieve, 7. Add the blood of the carp, a cup of dark beer, 2-3 cubes of sugar, a table spoon of plum butter, 2 oz. dried and ground gingerbread (baked with honey!), 2 oz. blanched almonds (cut lengthwise), 2 oz. raisins, and a heaped tablespoon of butter
7. Simmer this sauce over low heat for 10-15 minutes and when slightly cooler, check the taste (add a little salt if desired).
8. Pour the hot sauce over the fish arranged on the platter. Serve

Wigilijna zupa rybna z karpia

Christmas Vigil Carp Soup

A favorite from Wielkopolska

- 1 carp, cleaned and cut
- 12 1/2 cups of water
- soup vegetables (celery, leek, parsley, carrots, on-

their upcoming meal and even give the carp a name. Seeing it swim in the bathtub has a lot to do with how popular this tradition has remained over the centuries and is highly appreciated by young ones – some of

As magically as the fully decorated Christmas tree appears, the pet carp’s life not-so-magically ends. Carp crosses cultures — as does the bathtub ritual in Slovakia and Czechia. Some European Jews



Christmas Vigil carp soup.

ion)

- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 allspice
- salt and pepper
- dill or parsley

1. Wash the greens, peel them and put them in a pot with water. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cook until tender.
2. After cooking the soup, strain the broth.
3. Add pieces of cut and cleaned carp to the stock. Simmer for 20-30 minutes. After cooking, strain the stock.
4. Grate the carrots, celery and leek on a large-mesh grater.
5. Add the grated vegetables to the pure fish stock.
6. Dilute the broth with cream mixed with flour.
7. Peel the pieces of carp from the bones.
8. Add the peeled fish meat and greens to the broth. Do not cook anymore, but season to taste.
9. Tastes best after a few hours, when the flavors congeal.

Karp po Żydowsku

(Carp in the Jewish style)

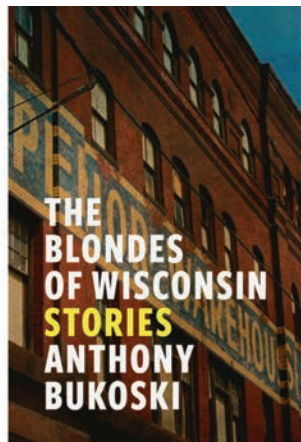
1. Gut, clean, and wash one carp
2. Season with salt and pepper
3. Place either whole or in sections in cold water, just enough to add 5 sliced carrots and 5 chopped onions, 1/2 cup raisins and 2 tablespoons butter
4. Cover and simmer.
5. The cooking liquid will gel when cooled. *Optional:* form in a mold.
6. Serve cold in gelatin with quartered lemons on side.

them.

Today, many families buy carp, already dead and gutted, and put them in the freezer until December 24.

Smaczej Wigilii i zdrowych, rodzinnych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia dla wszystkich!





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BOOK REVIEWS

Truly a delightful read

WHERE THE STORK FLIES
by Linda C. Wisniewski
Sand Hill Review Press
Available on Amazon and www.lindawis.com
268 pages



reviewed by David Trawinski

The Christmas season can be a time of gift-giving and childish delights, and, as it rightly should be, a celebration of the birth of the infant Jesus. Yet so often we find ourselves in today's world stressing out over the purchasing of material presents that we lose sight of the presence of all that is good and sacred in our lives. Bucks County, Pennsylvania author, Linda C. Wisniewski, has written a charming time-travel novel, "Where the Stork Flies," to remind us to appreciate the precious moments of our lives, and to not lose sight of them amongst the artificial deadlines and demands that our modern lives can so often impose on us.

"Where the Stork Flies" opens by introducing us to Kat, a 50-ish librarian in Bucks County, Pennsylvania whose life choices seemingly have caught up with her. After developing a too close, albeit non-sexual, relationship with a male coworker, her husband has left her. Her young adult daughter cannot believe the way her mother has acted, and also has struck out on her own, moving across country to California. These departures only compound the stress of abandonment that Kat, whose own mother left her and her father unexpectedly, has lived with all her life. She deals with her troubles through any New Age medium she can find: Goddess Cards, mantra-like affirmations and even an "altar" of smooth and cherished stones she keeps in her home.

Kat's life takes an unexpected twist when one morning she finds a scared and oddly dressed woman in her kitchen hungrily eating a piece of Kat's cheese. The woman speaks no English but responds to the lim-

ited Polish that Kat struggles to recall from her childhood. This intruder is frightened by all modern inventions including the telephone, television and automobile. After hiring an interpreter named Aniela who was recommended by the Our Lady of Częstochowa Shrine in Doylestown, Kat soon discovers the mysterious woman, Regina, is a peasant from a small Polish village in the year 1825.

Kat, Regina, and Aniela are wonderfully developed characters, and their interactions form the joyous core of this novel. The story thereafter becomes a joint effort of the three women to return Regina to her place and time, but not before Kat herself learns from the experience. Sometimes faith is the most powerful weapon we have, even if we are prone for some reason not to draw it from its sheath.

If you are thinking that time-traveling novels are not your cup of tea, relax. This is not the Polish equivalent of "Outlander," with its all-too-explicit depictions of steamy romance and gratuitous violence. Instead it is more a tongue-in-cheek voyage of self-discovery. It is a novel exploring the connections that women make in their lives, and sometimes the complications that can arise from them. The overarching theme of the novel is that, in whatever predicament our life choices may appear to have us trapped, so long as we do not lose faith, all issues can be overcome. In fact, we will grow in our dealing with them directly. Sometimes the past truly is prologue, and we just have to allow a talented writer and her story to open our eyes to this fact.

I highly recommend this book. It is truly a delightful read.

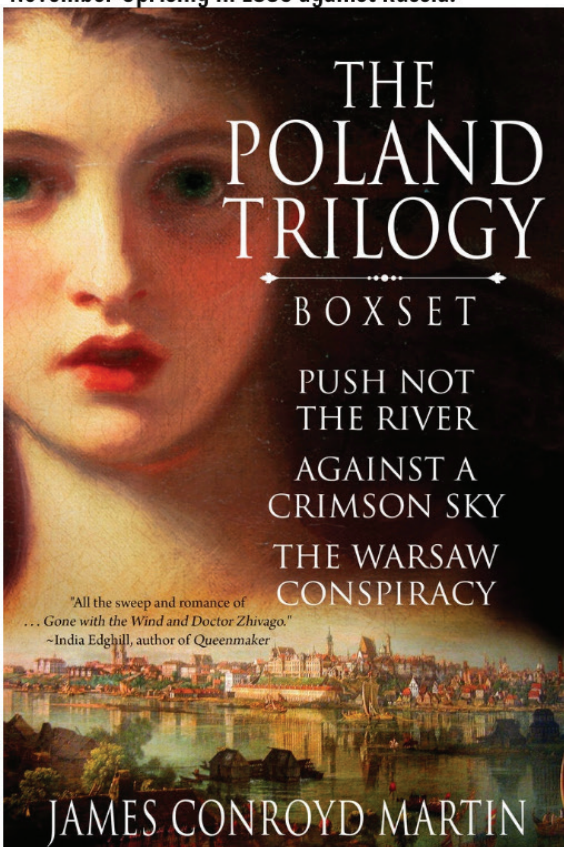
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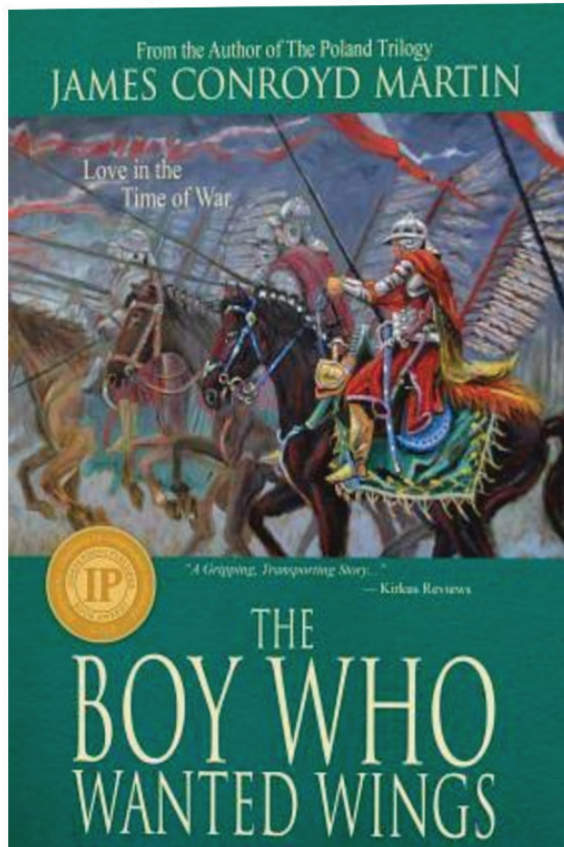
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POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE (a non-profit corporation, State of New Jersey) begins its 36th year of helping children. An all volunteer non-profit organization receiving generous donations from Polonia and American supporters makes it possible for over 2000 Polish children to be treated annually by cardiac surgeons and physicians in hospitals in Poland. As requested, equipment critical to pediatric care is provided to seven hospitals in Zabrze, Katowice, Lodz, Suwalki, Bialystok, Grajewo, and Ostroleka. Contributions may be made in memory of and/or honor of family and friends. Each donation is tax exempt and acknowledged. We thank you for your support and ask for your continued support for much help is still needed. "If we don't help our Polish children, who will?" —Doreen Patras Cramer, President

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HAPPENINGS CHICAGO STYLE

Brzozowski's Twelve Cities Exhibit

by Geraldine Balut Coleman

CHICAGO — The POLONIKA National Institute of Polish Cultural Heritage Abroad, in cooperation with the Polish Museum of America (PMA), held an exhibition titled "Tytus (Titus) Brzozowski - 12 Cities." This unique art exhibition opened on October 23 and runs until December 11. On November 12, guests had the opportunity to meet the artist in person at a Polish-language event.

It took Brzozowski six months to paint the series of watercolors commissioned by the POLONIKA Institute; the PMA presented 12 of the Brzozowski paintings.

His artistic visions are of cities from Chicago and Padua and include Lviv, Ukraine; Tbilisi, Georgia; and Rapperswil, Switzerland, and show how various cities relate to the history of Poland. One of his watercolors is a panorama of Chicago that emphasizes the city's metropolitan character. The painting includes the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America which houses the PMA, the Roman Puciński Control Tower at O'Hare International Airport, the Cloud Gate sculpture (the "Bean"), the Copernicus Center, the Kościuszko monument near the Adler Planetarium, and the churches of St. Michael, the Archangel, Holy Trinity, and St. Stanislaus Kostka. If you look closely at the painting, you can also detect the Magdalena Abakanowicz sculpture, "Agora."

Brzozowski is a graduate of the Warsaw University of Technology with a degree in architecture.

Brzozowski Holding *Chicago Panorama* painting

journey through a fairy-tale world. His watercolor paintings are full of his masterful details and occasional light-hearted looks at reality. It's no wonder Brzozowski's exhibitions always attract enthusiastic crowds.

U.S. NATURALIZATION CEREMONY AT CHICAGO BOTANICAL GARDEN. Every year thousands of immigrants take an oath of naturalization in the Northern District of the Illinois Federal Court. Swearing-in ceremonies normally take place in the Chicago Federal Court building, but the COVID-19 pandemic changed that. Since April 2021, most of the naturalizations have been held in front of the Court building allowing for social distancing for a limited number of

people. Lately, the naturalization ceremonies for U.S. citizenship have been held at various federal buildings or even museums, such as the Polish Museum of America. However, this past October 18, a special naturalization ceremony for new American citizens was held in the Nichols Hall at the Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG) in Glencoe, Illinois. The CBG is part of the Cook County Forest Preserve System. There, 35 immigrants swore their allegiance to the U.S. Constitution. Sixteen countries were represented, with anywhere from one to six new citizens per country.

Federal Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer officiated the taking of the Oath of Allegiance. Each candidate recited the oath in which he/she pledged to abide by the U.S. Constitution and the laws of the United States. Illinois Congressmen Brad Schneider (10th Congressional

District) and Jan Schakowsky (9th Congressional District) attended the event. The new Americans were also congratulated by **Jean Franczyk**, the president and CEO of the Chicago Botanical Garden. Additionally, the new American citizens were greeted by President Joe Biden in a special video.

One of the newly naturalized citizens, **Leszek Kuzniarz**, mentioned that he had been waiting for 10 years for the special moment when he would become a U.S. citizen. As a citizen of Poland, he stated, "Since I live in this country, I have a family and a job here, this step had to be taken. I am really happy."

Katarzyna Maciorowska decided to naturalize after living in the United States for 20 years. Citi-

Most Reverend Bishop Andrew P. Wypych, national executive director of the Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland and Polonia. The President's Award was given to **Andrew Sochaj**, president of Cyclone MFG Inc. The Polish American Foundation honored **Dr. Willie Wilson**, businessman and humanitarian, with its Humanitarian Award. **Ewa Cholewinski** and **Jan Plachta** were recognized for their long-term dedication and contributions to the PAC-IL. **Walter Bochenek** and **Bozena Hasztrakiewicz** were recognized for their unparalleled contributions in presenting successful PAC-IL banquets.

A performance about Polish roads to freedom, entitled "The Poland of the East." was presented



Katarzyna and Leszek.

zenship means greater certainty and security for her, especially when traveling. Soon she is planning a vacation to Mexico. "I won't have to worry anymore, I can go easily and I know I can come back."

PAC-IL CELEBRATES POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH.

The Polish American Congress-Illinois Division (PAC-IL) held its 51st Polish American Heritage Awards Banquet on October 24, 2021, at Allegra Banquets in Schiller Park, Illinois. This year's master of ceremony was **Lukasz Dudka**, general manager of the *Dziennik Zwiqzkowy* (Chicago's Polish Daily News). The PAC-IL honored eight individuals and organizations for their contributions to the Polish American community. Two Heritage Awards were granted to **Marek Rudnicki, MD**, and the **Polish American Medical Society (PAMS)**. Peter Brukas, MD, accepted on behalf of PAMS. The Academic Award was given to **Bożena Nowicka McLees**, director of Polish Studies at Loyola University Chicago. The Civic Award went to **Krzysztof (Kris) Wąsowicz**, village president of Justice, Illinois. The **Legion of Young Polish Women (LYPW)** was honored with the Philanthropic Award, accepting on behalf of the Legion was Kathy Lesny Evans, president of the LYPW. The Business Award was given to **Marek and Agnieszka Kowalczyk**, owners of Idea Furniture. The Public Service Award went to the

Jaminski, gala chairperson, and **Elżbieta Sawczuk**, PMA's mistress of ceremonies as well as a newscaster for Polish Radio 1030AM. This was followed by an invocation by the PMA's chaplain, **Rev. Andrzej Totzke**, SChr, of Holy Trinity Parish.

This year the PMA celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Room. In the summer of 2007, after being closed for a few years and badly in need of repairs, it reopened in November 6, 2009, as a newly renovated 21st Century museum-quality exhibit.

This year, the PMA awarded dual Polish Spirit awards to Frank Spula, president of the Polish National Alliance and the Polish American Congress, and to the **Józef Pilsudski Institute** of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York. Presenting these awards were **Richard Owsiany**, PMA president, and **James Robaczewski**, president of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America.

The award is presented to a person and/or organization in recognition of their commitment to American Polonia in promoting Polish American and Polish culture, Polish heritage, and the Polonian community, as well as for their support of the PMA in its mission "preserving the past for the benefit of the future."

As part of the program, **Barbara Kozuchowska** of the PMA staff gave a delightful presentation as Antonia Paderewski Wilkowska,



PAC-IL Heritage Award winners.

by its creators, **Walter Bochenek** and **Mary Sandra Anselmo**. The performance, directed by Walter Bochenek, featured the Polonia Song and Dance Ensemble under the direction of Anna and Jaclyn Krysiński.

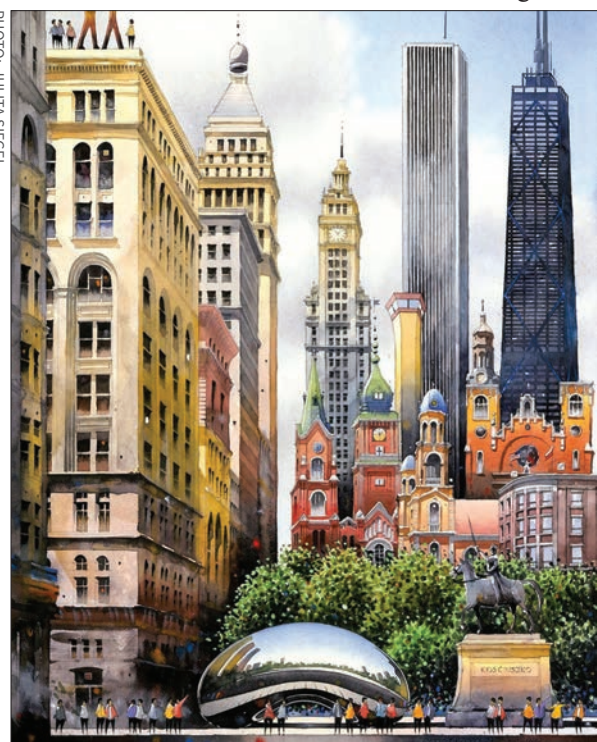
PMA HOLDS ITS 41ST GALA VIRTUALLY AND IN PERSON. On October 8, the Polish Museum of America (PMA) held its 41st Gala in the Sabina Logisz Great Hall with a select group of approximately 50 donors, dignitaries, and PMA staff invited to be present. The event was also live-streamed through the PMA's website (www.polishmuseumofamerica.org).

The evening began with welcoming remarks by **Micheline**

sister of Ignacy, via video from the Paderewski Room. **Malgorzata Kot**, PMA's managing director, presented an update of the PMA today, and **Maria Bronny Ciesla**, president emeritus, identified and recognized several outstanding Gala Appeal donors.

The program also included memorials to three outstanding former members of the PMA: Edmund Gronkiewicz, who was the PMA's legal counsel and a board member; Leonard Kniffel, board member and active PMA supporter; and Marcin Zielonka, a PMA Museum assistant.

Thinking ahead, the PMA is planning to have its 42nd PMA Gala in person in June 2022 at Cafe Le Cave in Des Plaines, Illinois.



Chicago Panorama

He studied and worked in Finland where he researched Nordic art and design. As a watercolorist, architect, and creator of fantastic fairy-tale-like murals, Titus has decorated the streets of Warsaw with whimsical dynamic colors and designs, in which he incorporates detailed architectural images.

His works, created in his studio in Warsaw's artistic Praga neighborhood, are invitations to a surreal

PHOTO: JULIJA SIEGEL

PHOTO: JULIJA SIEGEL

PHOTO: JACEK BOGACZANSKI

PHOTO: DANUSZ PIŁKA

MINNESOTA VOICE

Faith in people and a renewed November 11 Memorial overcomes a City on Fire

by Mark Dillon

Two years ago, at Brit's Pub in Minneapolis, Poles and Polish Americans were one of the largest group of attendees at an Armistice Day memorial at a tavern that has been one of the downtown Nicollet Mall area's popular gathering spaces.

It was the first time a Polish delegation was officially invited to a Minnesota event that first began in 2008, at the time the 90th anniversary of both Polish Independence and the ending of World War I.

This year the Armistice Day Memorial event has re-emerged, with additional leadership from a French diplomat, and the support of a tavern manager and a lender who have not been stopped by the multiple challenges of COVID, an arson fire during the August 2020 Minneapolis protests and loss of business from COVID-related government restrictions.

"Things are coming back," says Brit's general manager Shane Higgins. "As a lot of people know, we had all that riotin' and lootin,' and the fire. We reopened in March with 40 employees, down from 170 the summer before. It's not like the old days, but people are comin' in. We had a good summer."

Brit's needed to repair a fire and water damaged dining room inte-

The damage came just five months after Brit's owner Kaskaid Hospitality had refinanced the business on March 2 – and two weeks before the spread of COVID began to shut down restaurants across America.

"That's the quickest I've ever defaulted on a loan," Kaskaid founder & CEO Kam Talebi, an Iranian-American, says on a YouTube video. "When Covid hit, the restaurant industry was devastated. As a business owner who had multiple restaurants, it was a very difficult time."

Fortunately, Brit's owner's lender – Crown Bank, a Minnesota community bank, has been supportive to the point of bank President & COO Jeffrey A. Wessels appearing with Talebi on YouTube to discuss how they have worked together as the crisis unfolded. The banker and restaurateur have faced a distressing financial and operational environment, one that might have tested the patience of fictional banker George Bailey.



Solidarity to Remember Sacrifice. Two Polish priests from different parishes, Fr. Cyprian Czop (Roman Catholic) and Fr. John Kutek (Polish National Catholic), join three Polish tenors in singing the Mazurek Dąbrowskiego at a Nov. 11 Armistice Day memorial at Brit's Pub in Minneapolis. The tavern was rebuilt after being set ablaze in August 2020 during the city's riots. Diplomatic and cultural representatives from former World War I allies, as well as Germany, attended the event, co-sponsored by Partners for Peace and the Minnesota chapter of Alliance Francaise.



Aug. 26, 2020 screenshot of National Guard troops attempting to restore order in front of Brit's Pub amid a fire and a riot.

Together with another riot in the Lake Street area of the city in June 2020 following the death of George Floyd, the city suffered \$350 million in damage to more than 1,500 properties last year, (Source: *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*) including Target Corp.'s downtown operations. That prompted the retailer to announce plans to move its headquarters, just a few blocks from Brit's on Nicolett Avenue, out of Minneapolis.

Thanks to Brit's survival, the Nov. 11 memorial organizers are glad to be reviving not just a hospitality business but restoring some sense of civic fellowship in a city

center that still has many boarded up windows, vacant storefronts and rising violent crime. Shutdowns and relocations have included some Minneapolis Polish American businesses such as Sikora's Market, and 7-Sigma, a plastics manufacturer.

Over the years Higgins and the event-sponsoring Partners for Peace organization had put together a collation of diplomatic and cultural representatives that include not only nearly all of the former Allies of The Great War, but Germany as well.

The Nov. 11, 2019 Brit's event – the 101st anniversary of Polish Independence and the ending of

Margl, a retired Polish American businesswoman whose efforts succeeded in getting Minneapolis area Polish Americans involved in the event.

Some 118,500 Minnesotans fought in World War I in the U.S. armed forces, with Polish Americans sending one of the largest contingents. Also, approximately 450 Polish Americans from Minnesota enlisted in the Polish Army in France at recruiting stations in St. Paul, Duluth-Superior, Wisc. and Minneapolis, with the Minneapolis recruiting station #20 being just a few blocks from Brit's.

Many Minnesota Czechs, Slovaks and Carpatho-Rusyns were also actively involved in efforts to create Czechoslovakia in 1918 at the close of the war.

Historically the Brit's event has included playing of bagpipes for hymns such as Amazing Grace, as well as historical thoughts and reflections on the sacrifices of the period. Participating this year were regional diplomatic representatives from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Slovenia, Belgium, German, Italy and Austria.

CORRECTION. For more information about the placement of stained-glassed windows from Philadelphia's St. Laurentius ("Preserving a Part of the St. Laurentius Legacy," PAJ, November 2021), or to help in finding a home for its murals, contact John Wisniewski at jrwl53@comcast.net.



The Minnesota chapter of Alliance Francaise produced this flyer inviting all to a renewed memorial event at a rebuilt Brit's Pub.

rior and replace furnishings, equipment, windows and inventory after arsonists set fire to the pub on Aug. 26, 2020. It was one of 150 downtown Minneapolis businesses damaged that night following a false report about police actions involving an African-American.



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SPORTS

Looking Back at Wohlers and Atlanta's First World Series Championship

by Tom Tarapacki

The Atlanta Braves won a World Series this year for the first time since 1995, a time when the Braves knocked off the Cleveland Indians, with **Mark Wohlers** closing out the deciding Game 6.

Mark Edward Wohlers was born in Holyoke, Massachusetts, on January 23, 1970, the second child of Frederick G. and Irene Kobylanski Wohlers. Fred, a welder, and Irene, a factory worker, divorced when Mark was nine years old, and he and his sister, Cindy, were raised primarily by their mother.

Wohlers developed a strong work ethic at an early age. At age 14, he began working the 4:00 p.m.-to-midnight shift as a dishwasher at Mel's Restaurant, where 16-year-old Cindy was the cashier.

The right-handed pitcher starred at Holyoke High School before being drafted in the eighth round by Atlanta in 1988. Three years later he became the Braves' setup pitcher.

Wohlers was known for his velocity, becoming the first pitcher to consistently throw in excess of 100 miles per hour.

He garnered a great deal of attention during the 1994 player strike when he took a \$10/hour job at an Atlanta area auto body shop. "I'm half-Polish and Polish is a working class," he said at the time.

In 1995, Wohlers became Atlanta's closer and had a remarkable three years, recording 97 saves. His biggest save came in Game 6 of the 1995 World Series against Cleveland. Tom Glavine pitched the Braves to a 1-0 lead, but Braves manager Bobby Cox brought in Wohlers to start the ninth. Wohlers retired the three batters he faced, and the Atlanta Braves won their first world championship!

In 1996, Wohlers had 39 saves, 100 strikeouts, and was an All-Star selection. However, in Game 4 of the 1996 World Series against the New York Yankees, he gave up a stunning 3-run home run to Jim Leyritz that tied the game at 6. After that, the momentum of the Series shifted and the Yankees won it in six games. Many observers felt that Wohlers was never the same after that.

Wohlers turned in another 30-save campaign with 33 in 1997, but then in 1998 he suddenly lost the ability to throw strikes. He was sent to the minors to work on it, but that didn't help. In 1999, he was traded to Cincinnati, where he underwent Tommy John surgery and was diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. He was traded to Cleveland and was improving but after having to undergo a second Tommy John surgery, he decided to move on from baseball.

Over his 12-year major-league career, Wohlers posted a 39-29 won-lost record, a 3.97 ERA, and 119 saves. His 112 saves as of the end of the 2019 season stood at fourth place on the all-time Atlanta Braves list, and when he retired he was second only to Gene Garber's 141.

Wohlers, now 51, owns a real estate business in the Atlanta area.

LOREE JON OGWONOWSKI: FROM PRODIGY TO PRO. When she was four years old Loree Jon Ogonowski was already shooting pool. Her father built wooden boxes around the pool table in the family's Gar-



Hard-throwing Wohlers led Atlanta to 1995 series win.

wood N.J. home so that his daughter would be at the proper height. He became her teacher, while her mother, a competitive player herself, became her daily practice partner.

Ogonowski went on to a career that led to her induction into the Billiard Congress of America Hall of Fame in 2002 and the Women's Professional Billiard Association Halls of Fame in 2008. But just because she's in those halls of fame doesn't mean she's stopped playing the sport.

With her parents' help, Ogonowski advanced quickly at a very young age. She was five when she ran her first rack of balls. When she was six she performed her first three trick shots in Chicago at a men's World Straight Pool tournament before about a thousand spectators.

"Every day when I was in grammar school, I had an hour for lunch, and I lived a half-block from the school, and I used to hurry home as fast as I can. My mom would have my sandwich already made, and I'd eat that, and then I'd play her in a 25-point straight-pool match," she recalled. "We did that forever."

At age 11, Ogonowski became a pro player with the WPBA. At age 15, she won the World 9-Ball tournament, becoming the youngest player ever, male or female, to win a world title, a feat recognized by the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

When she attended all-girls Mt. St. Mary's Academy in North Plainfield N.J., Ogonowski played other sports, but billiards was her passion.

Her father John worked as a lineman for the local utility, and served as union president for ten years. After he retired, John opened a pool hall named after his daughter, "Loree Jon Billiards," in Greenbrook N.J.

Many of the world's best players visited Loree Jon Billiards to compete in sanctioned tournaments. Ogonowski played with and against most of the top players, including another Polish American from New Jersey, **Steve Mizerak**. "Loree Jon's been my team partner, and I'll take her as a partner any time," he

once said.

From 1987 to 1993, Ogonowski, also known by her married names, Loree Jon Jones and Loree Jon Hasson, won 18 tournaments. She also won three World Pool-Billiard Association (WPA) World Championships, and eight World Championships, three National Championships, three U.S. Open Championships, and every title possible in women's professional pocket billiards. Ogonowski was recognized five times as "Player of the Year" by *Pool & Billiard Magazine* and *Billiards Digest*.

Ogonowski did more than win pool tournaments; she helped make the sport more acceptable to the American public. "More women are coming into the billiard rooms," she told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1989. "They aren't afraid. A whole new group of girls are coming in. Most of the pool rooms you'll find today are usually clean, beautiful places."



Loree Jon Ogonowski has won just about every title in women's billiards.

Ogonowski presented a very positive, wholesome image. Her manager would say that "it isn't every day you find somebody who plays like Minnesota Fats and looks like Grace Kelly."

Now 55, Ogonowski has over 60 major titles to her name and is a member of two halls of fame. Despite those achievements, she's not quite ready to hang up her pool cue. She still competes, and is ranked 16th by the WPBA.

GICEWICZ KEEPS PLAYING. After leading the University of Massachusetts (UMass) to its first Division 1 hockey NCAA title, redshirt senior forward **Carson Gicewicz** has signed an AHL contract with the Rockford IceHogs, the AHL affiliate of the Chicago Blackhawks.

The Orchard Park, N.Y. native led UMass with 17 goals, good for fourth in the nation as a senior. The two-time Hockey East Player of the Week propelled UMass to its second straight Frozen Four with four goals in the NCAA East Regional, including a hat trick vs Bemidji State in the Regional Championship game and earned a spot on the All-Region Team.

Over five seasons of college hockey between St. Lawrence and UMass, Gicewicz appeared in 129 career games and logged 78 points on 38 goals and 40 assists. He served as team captain for the Saints from 2018 to 2020 and was a two-time ECAC Hockey All-Academic Team honoree. The 6'-3", 213-pound forward came to UMass as a graduate transfer after playing three seasons with the Saints, serving as a team captain for two years, missing 2019-20 due to injury.

Carson hails from an athletic family. His father Rich, played football for the 1988 Michigan State Spartans Rose Bowl Championship team, and spent four years in the NFL. Carson's brother, RJ, is a coach for the Fargo Force hockey team in the USHL and both of his sisters play for the University of Vermont Women's Lacrosse Team.

KUBIAK IS FIRST.

Jim Kubiak has been named the first coach of the newly created Hilbert (N.Y.) football program. Jim has been a coach and executive at the collegiate level and in the Arena Football League (AFL). He served as the offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach at Mansfield University (2017-18). In the AFL, he spent time with the Georgia Force as director of football operations and the Philadelphia Soul as offensive coordinator.

Kubiak played quarterback collegiately at Navy where he is the all-time leading passer. He also spent about six years as a professional quarterback, including spending time in five NFL training camps. Kubiak was a member of the New York Jets practice squad and started in two seasons of NFL Europe play. He was an all-star during four Arena League seasons,

making All Rookie as a member of the Buffalo Destroyers and All Pro for Jerry Jones' Dallas Desperados.

Kubiak spent eight years as the radio analyst for the University at Buffalo football program and runs the Western New York Quarterback Academy. He also analyzes Buffalo Bills quarterback play in a weekly in-depth feature in the *Buffalo News*. He and his wife, Jennifer, have three children.



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Ingredients

For the pastry:

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1 1/2 cups butter
- 3 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 – 1 1/2 cups filling, such as fruit preserves or jam, nut or poppy seed filling

Instructions

1. Cream the cream cheese and butter until light and fluffy
2. Stir in flour and salt
3. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for an hour
4. Preheat oven to 350°

5. Roll out the dough by first dusting the surface (mat or counter-top) with granular sugar
6. Roll to 1/4 inch and cut into 2-inch squares. I used a fluted pastry cutter to get the zig-zap along the edge of the cookies.
7. Place a teaspoon of filling (see below) in the center of each square
8. Fold over opposite corners and seal well
9. Bake for 15 minutes or until corners just begin to brown
10. Cool on a rack and dust with powdered sugar

Fillings

Any pre-made canned filling works best in these cookies. Canned fillings are very thick, which means

they will not seep out of the cookie.

You can use a jam, but that the filling might run out.

Make your own. For example, to make apricot filing, combine 3/4 cup dried apricots, 1 1/2 cups water, 2 tablespoons sugar, and 1 teaspoon lemon juice in a sauce pan. Simmer until the fruit is tender, approximately 15 minutes, cools and mash or purée with an immersion blender or food processor.

Ciasteczka Migdalowe

Polish Almond Cookies
PolishHousewife.com

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter, soft
- 1/8 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar, plus more

- for finishing the cookies
- pinch salt
- 3/4 cups flour
- 1 cup ground almonds
- 1/4 cups toasted, chopped almonds

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325°
2. Combine butter with almond extract and 1/2 cup powdered sugar
3. Add salt, flour, ground almonds, and toasted chopped almonds
4. Wrap dough in plastic wrap or foil, chill 30 minutes
5. Shape rounded teaspoons of dough into crescent shapes
6. Bake for 15 – 20 minutes, they should still be light, but just beginning to brown

7. Cool two minutes before carefully removing from cookie sheet, dust or roll in powdered sugar

Pierniczki

Gingerbread Cookies
by Barbara Rolek

Pierniczki are Polish gingerbread cookies. The Polish city of Toruń has been famous for its gingerbread cookies and cakes (*piernik*) since the Middle Ages. The cookies were originally baked in intricately carved wooden molds, but today are more often cut into rounds or the shapes of St. Nicholas, hearts, and other fanciful designs.

Ingredients

For the Cookies:

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon cloves
- 2 teaspoon baking soda (dissolved in 3 tablespoons water)
- 1 cup honey
- 3 cups all-purpose flour

Instructions

1. In a large bowl, beat the eggs with sugar until light and lemon-colored.
2. Add the spices, baking soda-water mixture, and honey. Mix well.
3. Add flour gradually and mix until a stiff dough forms. Shape into a ball, wrap in plastic, and let it rest for 30 minutes.
4. Preheat oven to 400° F.
5. Roll the dough to 1/4-inch thickness on parchment paper to fit your baking pans.
6. Cut into your desired shape. Remove remnant dough. Lift the parchment paper by opposite corners and place on the baking pans.
7. Bake for 10 minutes or until lightly brown around the edges. Let cool completely before storing in an airtight container. It's best to ice or glazes these cookies right before serving.

For Royal Icing

- 3 ounces egg whites
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar

Directions

In large bowl of stand mixer combine the egg whites and vanilla and beat until frothy. Add confectioners' sugar gradually and mix on low speed until sugar is incorporated and mixture is shiny. Turn speed up to high and beat until mixture forms stiff, glossy peaks. This should take approximately 5 to 7 minutes. Add food coloring, if desired. For immediate use, transfer icing to pastry bag or heavy duty storage bag and pipe as desired. If using storage bag, clip corner. Store in airtight container in refrigerator for up to 3 days.

For a Chocolate Glaze

- 4 ounces semisweet chocolate (chopped)
- 4 ounces butter
- 1 tablespoon water

Combine all the ingredients in a microwaveable bowl and nuke for 20 seconds at a time until almost completely melted. Stir until smooth.

Use immediately to decorate cookies.

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Ambassador Wilczek Bids “Do Widzenia”

by Richard Poremski

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Ambassador Piotr Wilczek was an active proponent of expanding the Republic of Poland’s network of honorary consuls during his tenure here. There now is an expanded network of 17 honorary consuls/consulates established across the length and breadth of the United States. Wilczek’s heartfelt farewell address to the honorary consuls – and by extension to the Polonia and the people of America – is stated as follows:

Dear Honorary Consuls of Poland,

My tenure as Ambassador of Poland to the United States is coming to an end after almost five fruitful years spent in Washington, D.C., and I will be heading back to Warsaw on October 31. The time has come for new challenges, perhaps even more interesting and more difficult, but I will miss the United States and my friends here very much.

I am writing today to thank you for your friendship, advice, and support over the last few years. My cooperation with Honorary Consuls was especially important to me. I am delighted that we have managed to achieve a lot together and that I had an opportunity to meet most of you in person many times.

Now is time for me to reflect upon all of the moving, dramatic, difficult, and rewarding moments that I have experienced in the United States since early November of 2016. It has probably been the most rewarding and, simultaneously, the most challenging period in my professional life.

I witnessed two U.S. presidential elections, in 2016 and 2020, and attended two presidential inaugurations, in 2017 and 2021. I arrived in Washington as Ambassador-designate a few days before the 2016 election, presented my letters of credence to President Obama, worked closely for four years with the Trump administration, and now continue my mission in cooperation with the Biden administration.



PHOTO: MATT STEFANSKI

Diplomatic Comradery. Richard Poremski (l.) Poland’s honorary consul-elect in Maryland, and Polish Ambassador Piotr Wilczek, networking at a past European Union (EU) gala event in Baltimore.

I have visited dozens of places throughout the United States, spoken with hundreds of people, including many proud Polish Americans, and forged new friendships. Throughout these years, I have seen, thanks to the endurance and resilience of the American people and American institutions, how American democracy works, why it is strong and how it overcomes unprecedented challenges. I am proud to have represented Poland as part of “a Europe whole and free.”

Thank you again for your help and friendship, please stay in touch.

Piotr Wilczek

American Council for Polish Culture



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IN MEMORIAM

World War II veteran, Warsaw Uprising fighter Julian Kulski, 92

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A funeral service for Professor Julian Eugeniusz Kulski, 92, a veteran of the Warsaw Uprising and founder of the Kulski Foundation promoting Polish-American relations, was held in the Washington Cathedral, November 17. Mourning ceremonies were also held in Poland, the foundation said.

State services were held in Poland for his funeral ceremonies in October. Kulski's ashes were buried in the Kulski family tomb at the Powązki Cemetery with the participation of a military honor guard.

Kulski, whose wartime code-name was Goliath, was a hero of the Warsaw Uprising, an architect of the World Bank, an academic lecturer and the unquestioned authority of several generations of Poles. In August 2020, he told the Polish Press Agency that the Warsaw Uprising was the most important part of his life, and his participation in the resistance movement resulted from the knowledge he drew from history and patriotic upbringing.

Brought up in the cult of Polish independence uprisings, the son of Julian Spitosław Kulski, the mayor of Warsaw during World War II, quickly got involved in the fight against the German occupier, first through minor sabotage actions, and in 1941 he took the soldier's oath and joined the Union of Armed Struggle.

Together with Ludwik Berger, his guardian and commander, Kulski managed to enter the ghetto several times to talk to members of the Jewish underground. Arrested by the Gestapo in 1942, imprisoned and beaten in Pawiak, Kulski avoided Auschwitz only because of his young age and his father's position. This experience additionally increased his will to fight. He fought in the Warsaw Uprising from the moment it broke out, in the "Żywiciel" group. In an interview with the Polish Press Agency in April 2015, he assured that he had no reduced fare due to age. — I was tall and said that I am 2-3 years older. But I did everything the others did. After what I had experienced in Pawiak, I was a full soldier — he said. He was wounded in the Uprising and was awarded the Cross of Valor for his courage in battle.

Kulski assumed that he was the youngest prisoner of war when, after the fall of the Uprising, as a 15-year-old he was sent to a prisoner-of-war camp in Altengrabow in Saxony. Five days before the liberation of the camp by the Red Army, he escaped by jumping on a truck from the American Red Cross. The English smuggled him into England as a returning English prisoner of war.

There, he was taken care of by the very wealthy Lady Ida Copeland,



PHOTO: TOMASZ GZELL/PAP
Swords; Warsaw Uprising Cross; Home Army Cross; Commemorative Medal on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising (2015); Badge for Wounds and Injuries; Cross of the Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of the Order of Malta; and many others.

Professor Julian Eugeniusz Kulski was a hero of the Warsaw Uprising, architect of the World Bank, academic lecturer, and authority on several generations of Poles.

who had met Kulski's father before the war. It was at her estate in Cornwall that he regained his strength by occupying a room in which Ignacy Paderewski — a family friend of the Kulskis — had previously lived. Kulski's time in the German labor camp left him exhausted and suffering from tuberculosis.

In 1949 he went to the United States, where he graduated in architecture from Yale University. He became a valued architect. His projects, including for the World Bank, were carried out in 30 countries. He believed that he owed these successes to the hard training he had

undergone during the war.

Kulski was the author of several books of memoirs, the latest of which, published in 2014, is entitled *The Color of Courage: A Boy at War: The World War II Diary of Julian Kulski*.

His honors included the Commander's Cross with a Star of the Polonia Restituta Order for his outstanding contribution to Poland's independence and for cultivating Polish national traditions.

Others included: Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland (2007); Silver Cross of Merit with

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PONDERING POLE

“I owe everything to America”

by Edward Poniewaz

Many of the shows I watch have current or former special forces people, such as Navy SEALs or Army Rangers as analysts or commentators. News coverage of the pullout in Afghanistan and the 20th anniversary of 9-11 were two recent examples. Since special ops are the best of the best, I’m always looking for a Polish name. I recently got my wish and more — maybe an early Christmas present. It is the kind of story that fits well for our times and hopefully will lift your spirits as it did mine.

Appearing on *Unfiltered w/Dan Bongino* on Fox News in November, Thomas “Drago” Dzieran is a former Navy SEAL, born in Poland, who came to the United States in the 1980s to escape the Communist oppression that gave rise to the Solidarność movement. His first job was as an auto mechanic but later he became interested in serving in the U.S. military and aspired to become a SEAL even though at 32 he was several years past the normal age limit for admittance.

After completing rigorous testing, he was admitted to the program, served in the Iraq war, and stayed on with the force for 20 years as a member of SEAL Team 2, SEAL Team 4, and as an instructor at the Naval Special Warfare Center. He specialized as a Naval Special Warfare Lead Breacher

performing “over 100 combat direct action missions” while in Iraq.

“Everything I have, everything I own, I owe to America ... Now I have a wonderful family, and everything I need to live, and most important – I am a free man.”

Dziękuję bardzo for your service Drago. You inspire all of us with your life and your heart.

“Well, you got it right.”

In August of 2018 I read and wrote about a book called *The Clarinet Polka* (Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 2002). The book was wonderful (but be advised there is adult language and content), and I deemed the author, Keith Maillard “amazing” for his knowledge of the “Polish soul” even though he was not Polish.

Every once in while I will page through my emails to make sure I have not missed something and I came across the one that I received from Keith at the time about the interest and purpose of the narrative in *Clarinet*, especially why the Polish part. In rereading that email, he told the moving story behind the story. Here is part of what he said, the fond feelings and his connection to Polonia:

“Thanks for contacting me and for reading my book. In 2005 *The Clarinet Polka* won The Polish American Historical Association’s Creative Arts Prize, and my

wife and I went down to Seattle to receive the prize. What I said to the historians on that night was that the prize should go to the people in the Polish community in my hometown, Wheeling, West Virginia, because I wrote the book to honor them and their culture, and that’s true.

After many years of research, I published the book. One of my Polish American friends called me up and said, “Well, you got it right.” I was so relieved and happy to hear that. If people are still reading and enjoying the book, that makes me happy too. If you want to see the massive amount of research I did, turn to the back of the book and you will see much of it listed.

In one of the standard academic texts, there’s a letter that sticks in my mind. A Polish man in the 1890s is writing back to his family in Poland. He has come to America for the work. He writes something like this: ‘America is a terrible country. Here everyone has to be alone.’ But that’s not true. When the Polish people settled in South Wheeling, they established the wonderful community that I still remember. They weren’t lone isolated atoms, but interconnected and caring people. That’s what the music was saying and what I could never forget.”

Forgive me, Keith, for reading this in 2018 just as a confirmation

on your sincerity and knowledge in writing *The Clarinet Polka*. While it is that, it is also a wonderful testament to something greater, something even many Polish Americans do not realize. You said it beautifully and we are humbled. Rereading it is one of the best Christmas cards I could receive. God bless you, thank you, and good luck.

Polish or not?



Johanna Maska (above) is one of those very savvy in the communications and political realm. Johanna hales from Galesburg, Ill., and became the Director of Press Advance in the Obama administration. That high profile job and her communications background subsequently catapulted her into jobs with the *Los Angeles Times*, the University of Southern California, and “she was senior vice president of communication and marketing for Karmic Labs.”

Johanna Maska, Polish name,

Polish face, but does she have a Polish connection, or not?

Another high-profile and successful person is **Chris Markowski**, the “Watchdog on Wallstreet.” (watchdogonwallstreet.com).

“For 20 years, savvy, independent retirement savers and individual investors have tuned into our radio show and now our popular podcast,” says his website, “for a raw, unfiltered take on the intersection of Wall Street and the Beltway.”

Watchdog is billed as “the longest running financial program in the country” and represents the pinnacle in a career for Markowski as an author, investment banker, and equity analyst, all under the umbrella of helping the consumer make good and sound decisions regarding their financial health.

Along with the *Watchdog* radio show and podcast, Chris is Partner and Advisor with Markowski Investments, Inc. (along with his brothers Matt and Michael), and has appeared on Fox Business, CNN, Newsmax, and other cable networks. You can read more about the company at <https://minvest.com>. Polish name, but Chris Markowski, Polish or not?

At Christmas, especially, remember that we do belong to that “wonderful community” of people and believers. Cherish it. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your family.

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Poland launches international English-language news channel

WARSAW — To counter the Belarusian regime’s propaganda, Polish Television (TVP) is launching an international news channel.

The channel was to begin broadcasts next year, but the migrant assault on the country’s eastern border has speeded things up.

TVP World is already beaming

a Polish take in English on current events worldwide. The channel has received an initial budget of \$5.8 million.

TVP World can be accessed by computer at tvpworld.com. The Polish news channel also plans to broadcast via the Astra 19.2 E satellite in HD.

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NAME	BORN	DIED	KNOWN FOR	CITY, STATE
3 Joe Tiberi			Musician	Pa.
4 Gene Wisnewski	1922	3/7/02	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Rockville, Conn.
4 Jack Beachly III			Musician / Vocalist	Pa.
6 Li'l Richard Towalski	1944	3/28/01	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist / DJ	Chicago
7 Alex Meixner			Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Fla.
7 Seth Dzrewicki	1980		Polka D. J.	Mich.
8 Steve Coblisch	1948-		Polka D. J. / Promoter	N.Y.
8 Rocco Naples	1986-		Musician / Vocalist	Pa.
9 Paul (Pookie) Kuharski	1926	6/11/08	Polka D.J. / Promoter	Dubois, Pa.
9 Bob Zielinski	1948	8/23/14	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Toledo, Ohio
10 Pan Franek Piotrowski	1955		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Mich.
11 Eddie Slomkowski			Polka D. J.	South Carolina
13 William Binkiewicz	1963		Bandleader / Musician	Ohio.
15 Darrell Weltin			Bandleader / Musician (New Brass Express)	Mich.
17 Frank Gibala	1943		Musician / Vocalist (Bell-Hops & Versa Js)	Pa.
17 Dennis Motyka	1950		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Chicago
18 Ray Budzilek, Jr.	1960		Musician (Drummer)	Cleveland
18 Michael Biela	1987		Polka D. J. / Promoter	Wheeling W.Virg. /Ohio
19 Johnny Bomba	1921	9/13/18	Bandleader / Musician	Chicago
19 Tom Goldyn	1955		Musician / Vocalist (Special Delivery)	Buffalo, N.Y.
20 Chet "Hoot" Filipiak	1929	11/1/14	Musician (Hi-Notes / Marion Lush Band)	Chicago
23 Ken Bartkowiak			Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Indiana
25 Kristine Piotrowski			Musician / Vocalist	Mich.
27 Alicia Yesenowski	1933	11/12/11	Polka D.J. / Promoter	Central City, Pa.
27 Helga Leonard			Polka Tour Guide	Pa.
27 Gary Rhamy			Recording Engineer / DJ	Youngstown
28 John Huchrowski	1927	9/3/16	Musician (Violin) / Vocalist	Pa.
28 Lynn Richnafsky			Polka DJ	Uniontown, Pa.
29 Judy Spitek		2/6/09	Polka Promoter / Columnist	Pa.

POLKA CALENDAR

Compiled by John Ziobrowski

To list your event, please send date, band, location, times, and contact number to:
ziobrowskijohn@gmail.com

DECEMBER 4

- Dennis Polisky — PNI Club, Worcester, Mass. 5-9, (508) 361-260
- Jimmy Sturr — Paramount Theater, Middletown, N.Y. 3-5, (845) 346-4195
- The Boys — Holy Spirit Party Ctr., Parma, Ohio, 6-10 (216) 496-0223
- John Stevens — Tilbury Hall Naticoke, Pa., (570) 417-5725
- Tony's Polka Band — Roselawn New York Mills, N.Y. 4-8, (315) 736-5030
- Mike Surratt — White Rose York, Pa. 7-11, (717) 848-5368

DECEMBER 5

- Jimmy K — K of C Kalida, Ohio, 2-6, (419) 532-3669
- Polka All Stars — Polish Club, St. Petersburg, Fla., (727) 894-9908
- John Stanky — VFW, Dupont, Pa., 2-6, (570) 650-0436
- Crusade — PACC, Ludlow, Mass., 2:30-6:30, (413) 283-4596
- Jimmy Sturr — Cadillac Ranch, Southington, Conn., 2-4, (860) 621-8805
- The Boys — PRCUA Hall, Toledo, Ohio, 2-6, (419) 691-5684

DEC 11

- Special Delivery — Broadway Market, Buffalo, N.Y., 12-3 (716) 893-0705
- Dennis Polisky — PACC, South Deerfield, Mass., 5-9, (413) 665-8735
- Mike Surratt — Club Fidelitas, Baltimore, Md., 1-5, (410) 4428189

DECEMBER 12

- New Brass Express — PRCU Hall, Wy-

andotte, Mich., (248) 881-6819

DECEMBER 19

- Dennis Polisky — St. Joseph Polish Society, Colchester Conn., 1-6, (860) 537-2550
- Jimmy Kilian — Lone Tree Manor, Niles, Ill., 12:30-3:30, (847) 209-1385
- Nu Sounds — Polish Club, St. Petersburg, Fla., (727) 894-9908

JANUARY 1

- Dennis Polisky/Eddie Forman — PACC, Ludlow, Mass., 2-7, (413) 283-4596
- DynaBrass — Pulaski Club, New Castle, Pa., 5-9, (724) 658-6221

JANUARY 2

- DynaBrass — Slovenian Hall, Yukon, Pa., 1-5, (724) 722-9700

JANUARY 30

- Squeeze Box — Polish Club, St. Petersburg, Fla., (727) 894-9908



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DANCE TIME

New Pastorałki from Troy Gawlak's Carolers

by Jennifer Pijanowski

New Brass Express entertained polka fans at the Cleveland Polka Association Anniversary on October 23rd. Polka enthusiasts gathered to enjoy the sound of this band, and to celebrate the induction of **Charlie Tansek** into the World Concertina Congress Hall of Fame.

The award was presented to Charlie by **Kathy Urbanczyk**, the widow of Buffalo's own polka musician **Ron Urbanczyk**. Ron was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2016, and worked tirelessly to ensure his fellow concertina musicians get the accolades they deserve.

The World Concertina Congress had its beginning back in 1975, when a handful of concertina enthusiasts formed an organization that would honor individuals who excelled in promoting the Chemnitzer-style concertina. They created the Hall of Fame and in 1976 inducted its first class of fourteen members, with a living and a deceased category. For 2021, the Congress welcomes seven new inductees into the Hall of Fame; four in the Living Category, two in the Deceased Category, and one in the Pioneer Category. Inductees into the living category are: **Ted Kiewicz**, **Eugene Maroszek**, **Chad Przybylski**, and **Charlie Tansek**. The Deceased Category includes two new members **Don Gralak** and **Anton Wolfe**; **Li'l Richard Towalski** was honored in the Pioneer category.

It was a fitting tribute to have Kathy present this award as Ron prided himself on constantly keeping the love of the concertina alive



Rayanne and Anya Bakowski at the Gomulka dance.

through polka music. He was always on hand to share his knowledge and experience while also passing that knowledge on to many new students. Congratulations to all of the new Hall of Famers for 2021. You can find out more information about this organization or learn about becoming a booster by visiting their website www.concertinamusic.com/wcc/

A GENTLEMAN who shares the love of the concertina and has been greatly impacted by Charlie Tansek as a musician and friend is **Troy Gawlak**. Gawlak has been diligently working on a new project, a musical venture that is sure to touch the hearts of those of us who hold a special place for the Christmas season and the beautiful music that accompanies this time of year. The



Lori & Kathy Urbanczyk, Charlie Tansek, Troy Gawlak — CPA Anniversary Party.

official release date for the CD was November 19 and it is now on sale. Gawlak has taken the time to pick songs that truly embrace the joy of this beloved season. You will be instantly transported to a simpler time when friends and families gathered to prepare and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. Nothing can compare to these beautifully written carols. The CD offers a short synopsis of each song to give you a general idea of the message contained in the lyrics. Troy offers a wonderful explanation of the selections found on this new release *Folk Carols of Poland*:

Polonia throughout the world have a special fondness for Christmas, which is evident in the enormous volume and beautiful nature of our Christmas carols. While kolędy like "Dzisiaj w Betlejem" and "Lulajże Jezuniu" are much better known and more commonly sung throughout the season, there also exists a whole other realm of Polish Christmas carols.

Pastorałki (Shepherd's Carols) are the folk carols of Poland. Like kolędy, they also tell of the birth of Christ, but their lyrics and melodies are much more informal. A common lyrical theme of *pastorałki* is the re-imagining of the Nativity as though it were occurring in one's own village—the shepherds of Galilee are portrayed as local shepherds or farmers, and the Mary and Joseph as fellow villagers. By humanizing and localizing the Holy Family and other characters from the Nativity, *pastorałki* make the story more relatable and understandable to the average person. The lyrics of *pastorałki* are sometimes profoundly intimate, as though you yourself are cradling the Christ Child, making Him laugh, or playing music for Him. Other times they can be humorous and playful—such as Joseph chastising a shepherd for how



Ed Gawron, Denise Skorik, Pat Mazur, Jen Sikorski, Greg, Chris Tanski, Gail and Jeff Fronczak — Lenny Gomulka dance — Potts Banquet Hall.

he smells, or for playing his instrument too loudly. While still other *pastorałki* are almost completely secular, with lyrics about caroling and merrymaking. The rich tapestry of Polish Christmas music would be incomplete and much less colorful without *pastorałki*. These

Jim Kucharski (left) and Eddie Siwiec recording *Folk Carols of Poland*.

are the everyday carols that our grandparents and great-grandparents would have sung throughout the Christmas season. It is my hope that in some small way, this recording will help to revive that musical tradition, and that these songs will bring you the same joy throughout Christmas that they brought our ancestors.

Please be sure to get a copy of the new Christmas album, *Folk Carols of Poland*, by Troy Gawlak's Polish Carolers. It contains 14 beautiful folk carols, lovingly collected and arranged by Troy Gawlak, including some that have never before been recorded outside of Poland! *Folk Carols of Poland* features an all-star lineup of talent assembled by Troy Gawlak, including Polka



Charlie Tansek, newly-inducted member of the WCC Hall of Fame at the CPA Anniversary Party.

Hall-of-Famers **Eddie Siwiec** and **Kevin Adams**, nationally renowned violinist **Steven Greenman**, Polka Jammer's own **Jim "Chainsaw" Kucharski**, and other guest vocalists and musicians.

Folk Carols of Poland is a re-

vaccinated travelers from Canada. We cannot wait to get the chance to catch up with all of you at the next big polka event. The dance floor remained crowded as attendees enjoyed beautiful music to close out a Sunday evening. The band took some time to acknowledge those who have served their country by inviting veterans to the floor as they played a medley of the Armed Forces anthems. **Mitch Biskup** made a guest appearance singing a few crowd favorites, entertaining, and keeping fans in hysterics through his antics. Whether it was on the dance floor or fixated in front of the band, it was clear to see that everyone enjoyed the band's performance.

I was thrilled when Gomulka took time to play one of my favorite tunes, "Coming Home" polka from his 1998 *Push It To The Limit* release. Although he admitted that the band had not performed it in some time, you would have thought it was a part of their regular set list.

Many folks were buzzing about taking the trip to Pulaski Polish Club in Phoenix, Ariz. in January

freshing new addition to the Polish Christmas repertoire and will quickly become one of your holiday favorites that you'll want to listen to every Christmas.



You can visit FolkCarolsOfPoland.com for more information on the project, the music, and the musicians.

LENNY GOMULKA RETURNED to Buffalo with a blockbuster crowd at Potts Banquet Hall after performing at the USPA Mini Fest in Cleveland, Ohio. It was great to see so many polka fans enjoying time together for one of the first out-of-town bands to perform in Western New since spring of 2020. We know our Canadian friends were disappointed as this event took place just one day before the border opened to

for their event featuring the Chicago Push. You can visit www.pulaskiclubaz.org to check out the schedule and make plans to escape to sunshine and cheerful polka music.

EDDIE BIEGAJ is making his return to Buffalo on Saturday December 4 with the help of **Buffalo Touch**. The event will take place at Potts Banquet Hall and admission is just \$15.00. Doors open at 5:00 with music from 6:00-11:00 p.m. and you can contact Andrew at (716) 598-8466 for more

information. Biegaj will continue his weekend, appearing in Ludlow, Mass. on Sun., Dec. 5 from 2:30-6:30 p.m. Feel free to contact Ernie at (413) 592-0367 for information.

RICHEYVILLE FIRE HALL 14, Fire Hall Road, Fredericktown, Pa., will be hosting some December polka events. First up is **Kosmix** and **Mon Valley Push** on December 11, from 5:00-11:00 p.m. and then you can ring in 2022 with the talents of Mon Valley Push for a New Year's Eve dance being held from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Merry Christmas!

More Wigilia and Christmas guidelines and suggestions

by Robert Strybel

Here are some ways to make your Christmas Eve celebration closer to those celebrated in Poland and by you ancestors.

Decorations: In addition to your Christmas tree, consider sticking an evergreen sprig or branch behind hanging pictures and mirrors. They can also be displayed in a large crystal vase. If you can add several stalks of grain (wheat or rye), you will approximate the old Polish Wigilia custom of standing sheaves of grain in all four corners of the room.

Empty place-setting: Traditionally there is an empty place-setting at the Wigilia table in memory of a dearly departed loved one. But it may be offered to any lonely person who would otherwise have to spend this festive evening in solitude. It's best to invite that person well in advance.

Family kolędy sing: For the words (in Polish and English) and music simply Google "Polish Christmas carols" or "polskie koledy." You can then print out and pass around to family members as many copies as needed. Kolędy may be song a capella, to music accompaniment (piano, guitar, accordion) or along with a CD. For the words (in Polish and English) and music simply Google "Polish Christmas carols" or "polskie koledy." You can then print them out and pass around to family members as many copies as needed.

Gift distribution: If there will be young children present, it might be nice to have someone the kids don't know turn up in the role of the kindly, old bishop Święty Mikołaj (Saint Nicholas). If not, then appoint one of the youngsters to read and pass out the labeled presents from under the tree.

Shepherds Mass: Midnight Mass (now often held earlier than midnight) is a fitting culmination to this "magic Polish night." Pastertka (Shepherds Mass) is especially solemn and festive at our older Polonian parishes, so it may be worthwhile driving a little farther than usual to attend. If possible, take the entire family.

St. Stephen's Day (Dec. 26): In old Poland on the second day of Christmas, worshipers in the countryside would throw oats at each other and at the priest as a sign of well-wishing; the custom originated to commemorate the first Christian martyr who was stoned to death for his faith.

St. John's Day (Dec. 27), traditionally the third day of Christmas, is the day priests bless wine in church. This might be a good occasion to hold a Polish wine-tasting party with refreshments, community caroling and other attractions. If a clergyman is present, he should first bless the wine and explain the origin of the custom: Enemies once served St. John the Apostle poisoned wine, but after he blessed it, he could drink it unharmed.

POLONIA PLACES

St. Joseph Parish in Central Falls, R.I.

391 High Street
Central Falls, Rhode Island
Status: Open

by Gregory L. Witul

In the waning years of the 1800s, Poles began settling in Central Falls, just north of Providence, Rhode Island. The thriving textile industry drew the immigrants in with the promise of steady and stable work. This first wave of Poles attended local Catholic churches, while a few more affluent members of the community traveled to St. Adalbert's in Providence. Occasionally, on the high holy days, Father Adalbert Duczmal traveled up to Central Falls to celebrate Mass in the Polish tongue.

The small colony quickly grew and on November 11, 1900, the Poles formed the St. Joseph's Brotherly Aid Society. The stated mission of the group was to organize the effort to establish a parish for the Poles of Central Falls. A committee was created and it began to gather signatures for a petition that would be presented to Bishop Harkins. After five years of effort, Szczepan Pokraka presented the document to the bishop and Harkins agreed to honor their request, once a full census of the area was taken. Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Valley Falls were canvassed and two hundred Polish families were found. With this information, the bishop entrusted Rev. Francis Kiuger to head St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church which was officially established on December 6, 1906. Jan Rzepiela and Jan Bozek served as the first two trustees.

The first Masses of the parish were celebrated at Sacred Heart Church in Pawtucket. In March of the next year the old Temperance Hall on High Street was purchased to

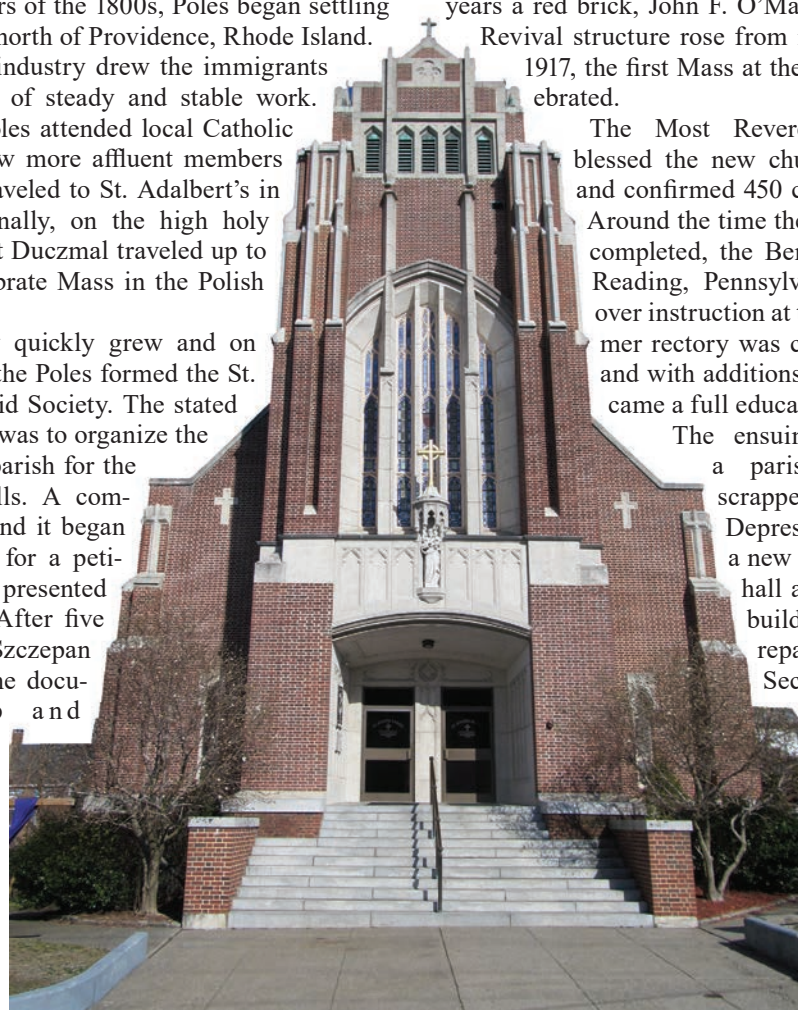
serve as the church, and that autumn, the building's basement became the first parish school, led by the parish organist Mr. Krawczyk. From this humble start, the parish quickly grew and soon the humble Temperance Hall could no longer hold the congregation. In 1915 a lot was purchased on Clay Street and over the course of the next two years a red brick, John F. O'Malley designed, Gothic Revival structure rose from it. On Easter Sunday, 1917, the first Mass at the new church was celebrated.

The Most Reverend Bishop Hickey blessed the new church on July 6, 1919 and confirmed 450 children of the parish. Around the time the church building was completed, the Bernardine Sisters from Reading, Pennsylvania arrived to take over instruction at the school. Soon a former rectory was converted to a school, and with additions over the years, it became a full educational complex.

The ensuing years would see a parish auditorium plan scrapped due to the Great Depression, the addition of a new parish organ, a parish hall added, and the church building remodeled and repainted. The end of the Second World War saw the parish expand greatly for a second time. A number of homes around the church were purchased and replaced with a kindergarten and a memorial honoring the young men of the parish who sacrificed their lives

in defense of America.

Saint Joseph's would safely navigate the rest of the twentieth century and — unlike many other historically Polish parishes — still survive in the twenty-first. Today St. Joseph's is open and retains its Polish flavor. It has Polish Masses, a split Polish and English bulletin, and even a Polish American Christmas Bazaar.



*Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year*

Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union wishes its Members, Friends,
and the entire Polish community a peaceful and joyful Christmas
and financial success in the New Year 2022.



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