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**SOMETHING DIFFERENT:
GOŁĄBKIS WITHOUT TOMATO
SAUCE — PAGE 19**

**PRIMATE WYSZYŃSKI, MOTHER ELŻBIETA NOW “BLESSEDS” • A GREAT LAKES OUTPOST OF POLONIA
BORDER TROUBLE WITH BELARUS • POLAND SHARES VACCINES • SOLIDARITY’S HISTORIC STRIKE PANELS
AN OUTSTANDING ACCOUNT OF WORLD WAR II • REMEMBERING PETE GREY • JUDGE PIETRUSZKA CITED BY BAR**

Was it Worth it? The 1981 Razing of Poletown



A March 16, 1981 Bruce Harkness photograph taken from the roof of the Greylawn Apartment building, located at the intersection of East Grand Boulevard, Chene Street, and Joseph Campau Avenue. The neighborhood in shown in this photo was one of the first to be

by **Amelia Wroblewski**

Detroit Mayor Coleman Young had a problem. It was 1980 and Detroit had been dealing with a declining population as well as dropping tax revenues for quite some time. Many people were leaving the city for the surrounding suburbs. His goal was to increase the economy and employment rate of the city, which would hopefully help retain more citizens. At the same time, General Motors (GM) was contending with more gas-friendly Japanese vehicles that were steadily increasing their appeal to American citizens. They concluded that a new, modern production plant that could more efficiently manufacture vehicles was necessary. With their headquarters already in Detroit, GM wanted

the facility close by and approached Young and other city officials about the prospect of a new plant in the city (Detroit Historical Society, 2021).

The Deal

General Motors laid its needs out on the table: three-hundred ninety-five acres of land, more land for landscaping, and even more land for parking. In return, city officials believed that a GM plant would increase the economy of Detroit as well as provide many jobs, but the placement of the facility would prove to be troublesome in a populated city. After comparing maps of the proposed facility and the city, they concluded where the plant could work. However, this area was not bare land. This was a thriving, populated,



demolished. It was located in the northwest corner of the project. This photo looks north to Hamtramck, Mich. The steeple in the distance belongs to St. Florian RC Church in Hamtramck. (Photo, right) A photograph taken from the same location in October 1981.

and beloved community that had come to be known as “Poletown.” How was GM and the city of Detroit going to achieve their goals when there was a residential neighborhood, businesses, and livelihoods in the way (Detroit Historical Society, 2021).

GM had more flexibility than Detroit. They told officials that they had ten months to provide the land needed for the project, or they would go to the next city on their list. There were many cities that would welcome a plant at this time. To create legality concerning moving citizens from their own homes and neighborhoods, Michigan lawmakers rewrote their eminent domain law, a law that allows the government to seize private property for public use, if the property owners were compensated. Lawmakers added a clause that permitted the taking of private property for

the purpose of commercial development. City officials also knew that the residents of Poletown were vulnerable, not wealthy, and many were recent immigrants just starting to build their lives in America. Once the law with the new clause was written, there was not going to be anything that residents could do to fight the legislation. By June 1980, the new legislation had been in effect for two months and Young was finally ready to announce the plan for the new facility.

Poletown

Poletown was a neighborhood in northeast Detroit that was at the crossroads of Detroit and the city of Hamtramck. It gathered its

continued on page 9

Emigrants, Exiles, and Wanderers – The Polish American Dream

by **Staś Kmiec**

“America’s immigrant history made us who we are. Amid all the complications of policy, may we never forget that immigration is a blessing and a strength.”

– *George W. Bush, 43rd president of the United States*

The history of the Poles in the United States is a long and glorious one – dating back to the times before Columbus and numbering among its leaders countless great Americans. A variety of causes and circumstances brought them here – the desire to make a fortune, the search for religious freedom, the urge to fight for liberty, the need to escape insurgencies, pov-

erty or famine, professional goals, curiosity, or chance. As emigrants, exiles, and wanderers to the history of American civilization, they forged an American dream ... a Polish American dream.

Through hard work and perseverance, they created a future. Far from their homeland, amid Poles they

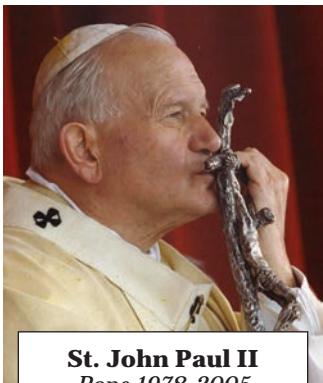
continued on page 6

Polish and American Pride.

Ania Niemiec (left center) and Kasia Canale (right center), of the Sloneczniki Children’s Polish Folk Dance Group of Swedesburg, Pa., wave flags from a truck during Philadelphia’s 2012 General Pulaski Memorial Day Parade.



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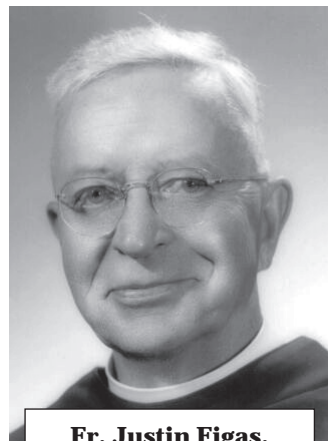


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Primate Wyszyński, Mother Elżbieta – now “Blesseds”

*Papal envoy beatifies
Polish cardinal and
blind nun in Warsaw*

by Robert Strybel

WARSAW — Polish Primate Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, who defied communism but refused to hate communists, was beatified here on September 12, 2021 by Papal Legate Cardinal Marcello Semeraro. Co-beatified at the same ceremony was Róża Czacka who, as blind nun Mother Elżbieta, had devoted her life to aiding the sightless. Beatification is the penultimate step leading to Catholic sainthood.

The beatification, originally planned for 2020 in central Warsaw’s Piłsudski Square, was postponed until now over pandemic concerns. The ceremony was held at the city’s huge, still incomplete, modernistic Sanctuary of Divine Providence. The congregation was limited to 7,000 including some 600 priests and 80 bishops, 45 from other countries. Ten times as many faithful had been expected at capacious Piłsudski Square.

The ceremony recalled the numerous achievements of “the uncrowned King of Poland” and



“the Primate of the Millennium,” as Wyszyński was often referred to. He was best remembered for shepherding the Polish Church and nation through 33 years of Soviet-style oppression up till the peaceful Solidarity revolution of 1981. He died of cancer at 79 in May of that year. Subjected by the communists to three years of total isolation, Wyszyński was publicly slandered by the red regime as a “lackey” of Western imperialism and German “revanchists.” In the notes he made while in detention he wrote: “They [the communists] will not make me hate them. He who hates has already been defeated.”



It was no coincidence that the Primate was co-beatified with Róża Czacka, a Polish noblewoman who had lost her sight in a riding accident at the age of 22. But she saw her disability as a sign from God and dedicated her life to helping the blind. She founded the Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross, an order of nuns devoted to the care and education of the blind and vision impaired. It was based in the forested Laski area outside Warsaw which eventually became a unique, self-contained “city of the blind.”

Father Wyszyński first met Mother Elżbieta in the late 1930s and was greatly inspired by her total service to God and fellow-man as well as her deep devotion to the Blessed Mother. During World War II, the future primate convinced the nun to set up a clandestine hospital in her sylvan retreat for Polish insurgents wounded in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. He would aid and support her Laski facility until his dying day. Those two saintly friends and allies in the Faith have now joined the more than 260-strong heavenly legion of Polish blessed and saints.

More on the lives of Cardinal Wyszyński and Mother Elżbieta, on page 7.

Taiwan thanks Poland for Astrazeneca Vaccine

A Taiwanese news agency reported that Poland is the third-largest vaccine donor, following Japan and the United States.

While a relatively small domestic coronavirus outbreak is well under control in Taiwan, only around 5% of its 23.5 million population are fully vaccinated, though the government has millions of vaccines on order.

It has already received some six million vaccine doses gifted by Japan and the United States, enabling it to speed up an inoculation program that it said had been hampered initially by China, though Beijing denies playing any negative role.

Poland says its vaccine donation is a reciprocal move after Taiwan donated medical equipment during the first wave of the pandemic.

Sends aid to Vietnam

Poland will send humanitarian aid to Vietnam, said Poland’s office of the Government Strategic Reserves Agency. The shipment includes several types of medical equipment: heart monitors, ventilators and infusion pumps in addition to personal protective items: protective clothing, masks, visors, gloves, etc.

Both Poland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Armed Forces carried out the shipments which will be given directly to Ho Chi Minh City authorities. It is in that city that serious Covid conditions reside.

In memory of the Ruszczyk and Meszaros Families



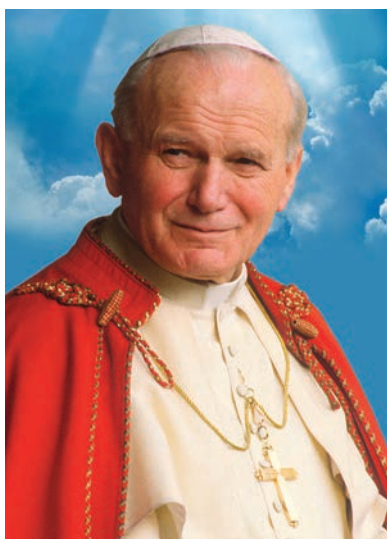
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ALMANAC

October Październik

Polish American Heritage Month.
Sponsored by the Polish American Congress, groups across America's Polonia celebrate Polonia's rich background in the United States.

- 1 **1608. First Poles arrive in America** aboard the *Mary & Margaret* to work as skilled craftsmen at settlement in Jamestown (Virginia).
- 3 **1923.** Birth of symphonic orchestra leader **Stanislaw Skrowaczewski**.
- 4 **ST. FRANCIS**
- 5 **ST. FAUSTINA**
Maria Faustyna Kowalska (1905-1938), also known as Saint Maria Faustyna Kowalska of the Blessed Sacrament, was a Polish Roman Catholic nun and mystic.
1983. Lech Walesa awarded Nobel Peace Prize.
- 6 **1979. President Jimmy Carter** greeted **Pope John II** at the White House.
- 7 **ST. MARK**
- 8 **1982.** All labor organizations in Poland, including **Solidarity**, banned by Communist-controlled government.
- 9 **1435.** Death of **Pawel Wlodkowic**, model for Shakespeare's Polonius (Hamlet).
- 10 **1945.** The **Polish Arts Club** of Buffalo is founded.
- 11 **1779.** Date traditionally observed in American Polonia as **Putaski Day** in honor of death of **Casimer Putaski**.
- 12 **1840.** Birth of **Helena (Modjeska) Modrzejewska** (d. April 8, 1909), Polish American stage actress, in Krakow, Poland.
- 13 **ST. EDWARD**
- 14 **1943.** Some **300 of 600 prisoners escaped** from the Nazi's Sobibor death camp in occupied Poland. The event was later documented in the book "Escape from Sobibor" by Richard Rashke (1982) and the film of the same name with Alan Arkin.
- 15 **ST. HEDWIG**
In old Poland, the last of the crops are harvested around the feast of St. Hedwig
- 16 **1384. Coronation of Jadwiga**, the first female monarch of the Kingdom of Poland.
- 17 **1777.** Americans win crucial Revolutionary War Battle of Saratoga. Victory is credited in large to engineering feats of **Tadeusz Kościuszko**.
- 18 **ST. LUKE**
All field work should be completed by this day.
- 19 **1984.** Abduction and murder of **Fr. Jerzy Popiełuszko** (b. 1947), Roman Catholic priest associated with the Solidarity union.
- 20 **1990.** Plaque honoring abolitionist John Brown supporter, Polish poet **Cyprian Norwid**, unveiled at Harper's Ferry.
- 21 **ST. URSULA**
- 22 **1978. Cardinal Karol Wojtyła** of Krakow, Poland is installed as Pope John Paul II.
- 24 **1795. Third Partition of Poland**, which removed the country from a political map of Europe.
- 26 **1946.** Birth of television game-show "Wheel of Fortune" host **Pat Sajak**.
- 28 **ST. SIMON**
Na Święto Szymona, babie lato już kona. On St. Simon's Day, Indian Summer goes away.
- 29 **1944. Polish 1st Corps**, commanded by General Stanislaw Maczek, takes Breda, Holland as part of the Allied invasion of Western Europe.
- 30 **1939.** USSR and Germany agreed on **partitioning Poland**. Hitler reports Jews.
- 31 **1940.** Nazis declare this day as the deadline for Warsaw Jews to move into the **Warsaw Ghetto**.

This paper mailed on or before **September 30**. The November 2021 edition will be mailed on or before **October 29**.

VIEWPOINTS

Resistance Was Futile — the Poletown Story

by Matthew Stefanski

"I got the deed to my house; how can they say my house doesn't belong to me?"

Forty years ago, in the summer of 1981, police arrested and forcefully removed praying parishioners from the basement of Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church in Detroit as they staged a peaceful protest. Soon after, outside, neighbors and parishioners looked on in horror as wrecking balls made quick work of their grand sanctuary, marking an end to a passionate but ultimately helpless year-long effort to save their church and neighborhood — Poletown.

The story of Poletown is both unique and all too typical in America. It is the story of a working-class neighborhood home to over 4,000 residents who awoke one morning to the shocking news that their homes and businesses were being taken over by the city through eminent domain measures so that a General Motors factory could be built in its place. Countless neighborhoods, often inhabited predominantly by poor and non-white communities, have experienced a similar fate as their homes were bulldozed to make way for multi-lane freeways or other projects under the guise of the common good. In some rare instances, the seemingly unstoppable force of government momentum was successfully challenged, as the Fells Point community in Baltimore led by Barbara Mikulski did in the 1960s and '70s when they saved their neighborhood from becoming a highway. But more often, the unsuspecting, disadvantaged and politically disenfranchised residents are faced with a *fait accompli*.

What made Poletown different was that the neighborhood was being demolished not for a public

good, but rather to build a private automobile factory for GM.

Residents had but a few months to come to terms with the reality that their homes — where some have lived their whole lives, and where some thought they would live out the remainder of their lives — would soon be reduced to rubble, and they would have little to say in

What made Poletown different was that the neighborhood was being demolished not for a public good, but rather to build a private automobile factory for GM.

the matter.

The people of Poletown did not go off into the sunset without a fight. Intrepid *babcias* and outraged residents came together, exchanged ideas, and found support in one another as they were confronted with what was a truly incomprehensible situation. Yet while they found strength in their solidarity, they were seemingly powerless in the face of a determined city and one of the richest corporations in the world at that time. More worryingly, they found little outside support. Almost the entire city council voted to support the land grab, while their congressman and senators refused to meet with the despondent citizens. The Archdiocese of Detroit and the United Auto Workers union likewise supported the development project, giving hardly a second thought to the devout, working class people who would have to bear this unimaginable burden. The allure of thousands of jobs, promised development, and financial compensation cast a shadow over the plight of the people of Poletown who were left to fend for themselves.

"This is America, not Russia. We're not going to let you do this. We're going to fight like hell" said resident Josephine Jakubowski, exhibiting the *esprit de corps* that took hold of many Poletown residents, determined to save their property and community, or at least maintain

their pride and human dignity during a process that treated them like an afterthought. It was not until Immaculate Conception Church was demolished that all hope that something of Poletown could be saved, was lost.

In the end, Poletown was razed and the GM factory built, creating only half as many promised jobs. In recent years, the factory was scheduled to be permanently closed, but instead is now being repurposed for the production of electric vehicles, and currently employs less than 300 workers.

The story of Poletown is many stories in one. It is a story of corporate greed and intransigence; of helplessness and hopelessness; of resistance, courage, grassroots organizing, and pride; it is a story of defeat, betrayal and loss.

Could anything, or anyone, have saved Poletown? Could more have been done by the Archdiocese, civic organizations, the wider Polish American community, to aid the people of Poletown in their fight? And if so, would it have all been worth it?

No one can know for sure what Poletown would look like today if it had not been destroyed for a factory parking lot. Perhaps it would have continued the slow decline visible in many other inner-city neighborhoods. But no neighborhood, and no community, deserves to be treated as the people of Poletown were. No one deserves to be made to feel expendable, and to be told that your home, and your concerns do not matter. We all have a voice, the ability to influence events around us and set the course of our neighborhoods, our cities, our states and our country. If only we care enough to be involved, to exercise our right to vote, to not be indifferent to injustice, and to work for meaningful change.

Remember Poletown!

We thank our grandparents for their foresight and for seeking a better life here in America.

God Bless.

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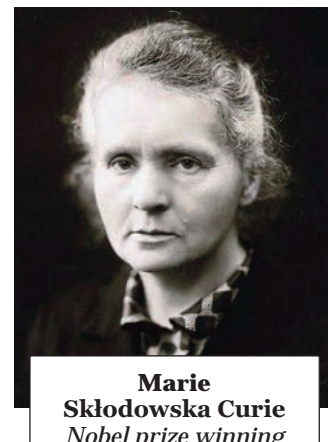
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Poland declares state of emergency over Belarus border provocation

WARSAW — On Sept. 7, the Polish parliament has backed a state of emergency on the Belarus border amid a surge in migration and upcoming Russian-led military exercises.

The tough law bans large gatherings and limits movement for 30 days in areas along Poland's border with Belarus.

Poland accuses Belarus of inducing migrants to fly there on the false promise of legal entry to the EU.

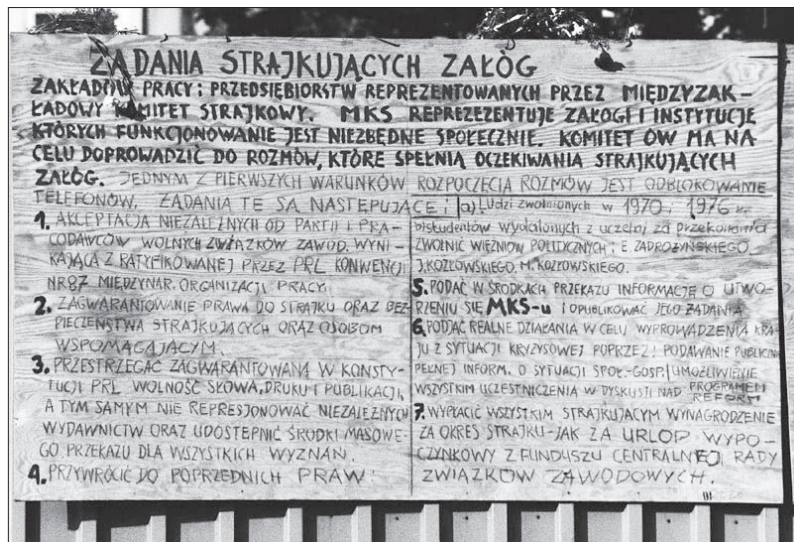
Belarus is not an EU member but borders three countries which are.

Polish MPs voted to approve the law, though many opposition politicians said the emergency measures were disproportionate as close to 200 towns in a 2-mile strip along the border are now off limits.

By barring journalists from the area, they accused the government of trying to cover up a practice of pushing people seeking asylum back into Belarus.

Poland and fellow EU states Lithuania and Latvia have seen massive increases in migrants from Iraq, Afghanistan and other Middle Eastern and Asian countries since the start of the summer.

Solidarity wants its historic strike panels back



SOLIDARITY has long sought to recover the plywood panels on which the then nascent Solidarność movement posted its 21 demands outside Gdańsk's strike-bound Lenin Shipyard in 1980. Soon after Poland dumped communism in 1989, Solidarity split into a workers' wing, headed by Lech Wałęsa, and an intellectual clique, dominated by leftists such as Adam Michnik. When the leftists began openly suggesting that Wałęsa had done his thing and could now go home to his wife and kids, the Solidarity leader became furious. He ordered the union's logo removed from the first page of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, its main press organ edited by Michnik.

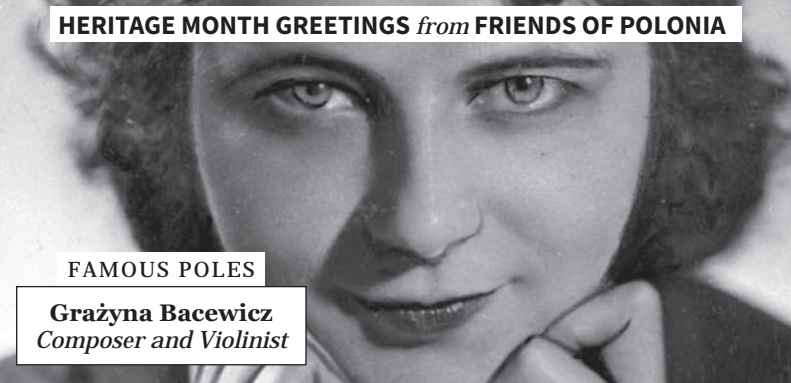
The historic panels were taken over by the leftists and put on display in the European Solidarity Center they set up in Gdańsk. The Solidarity union feels they belong not to the union's former intellectual advisers but to the Polish workers who were the backbone of the 10-million-strong Solidarność, the Soviet bloc's biggest ever anti-communist opposition.

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May Polish Heritage Month serve as remembrance to Polish and young Polish-American generations.

Sto lat, Polonia! Sto lat!

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Heritage Month Greetings

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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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Judge Pietruszka Awarded by American Bar Association

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Bar Association Judicial Division National Conference of Specialized Court Judges (NCSCJ) has selected Hon. Michael F. Pietruszka to receive its 2021 Franklin N. Flaschner Award.

The NCSCJ says the Flaschner Award is given to a judge who embodies the high ideals, personal character and competence in performing judicial duties that were exemplified by the late Chief Justice Franklin N. Flaschner of the District Court of Massachusetts who has made significant contributions on local, state and national levels to continuing education of the judiciary and in other ways improved the quality of justice in courts with special and limited jurisdiction.

The retired Erie County Judge said, "Chief Justice Flaschner was a judges' judge. He was the standard by which all judges are measured. I am deeply honored and humbled to have even been considered for this prestigious award, much less to be chosen as its recipient."

Judge Pietruszka was nominated for the award by Col. Linda Strite Murnane (U.S. Air Force, Retired). Col. Murnane served at the Chief, Court Management Services Section at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in Leidschendam, The Netherlands until her retirement in May 2017. She is the immediate past chair of the American Bar Association's (ABA) Judicial Division, and is a past chair of the National Conference of Specialized Jurisdiction Court Judges (NCSCJ) for the Judicial Division, and currently serves as the ABA House of Delegates Representative for the NCSCJ. She currently serves on the ABA Section of International Law Executive Council.



Judge Michael Pietruszka

Judge Pietruszka said, "Judge Murnane and I have worked on various projects in the American Bar Association for many years. Our latest collaboration was earlier this month when we assisted a legal specialist/advisor at the Afghanistan Legal Research and Development Organization who was coming to Buffalo as a Fulbright Scholar at the SUNYAB Law School this fall find housing after her unscheduled escape from Afghanistan."

Judge Pietruszka began his career in 1982 as a self-employed private practice lawyer. He worked in that capacity through 1987. He also worked as assistant corporation counsel for the City of Buffalo Law Department from 1983 to 1986, as the director of the Buffalo Division of Parking Enforcement from 1986 to 1987, and as general counsel for the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority in 1987. In 1988, he was appointed to the Buffalo City Court. He served the Erie County Court from 1999 until 2018.

Judge Pietruszka was a regular columnist for the *Polish American Journal* for over ten years. He also penned a weekly column for Buffalo's *Am-Pol Eagle* newspaper. The award will be presented during the NCSCJ Awards Program during the 2022 ABA Midyear Meeting scheduled for Feb. 9-14, 2022 in Seattle, Washington.

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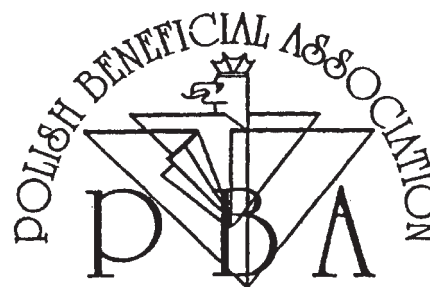
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Polish Americans
Across the Country*



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WORTH REPEATING. "I have sympathy for young people, for their growing pains, but I balk when these growing pains are pushed into the foreground, when you make these young people the only vehicles of life's wisdom." *Nobel Laureate Wislawa Szymborska*

Emigrants: Through hard work and perseverance, they created a future

continued from cover

hardly knew and strangers from other ethnic groups, they formed communities and a culture that blended American and Polish customs into a coherent whole and became *Polonia Amerykańska* –

when he settled in Cadiz, Spain, is said to have been a member of Columbus's crew when he sailed to the New World in 1492. He remained in Hispaniola after Columbus sailed back to Spain and has been attributed the dubious distinction of being the first European to be killed at

English soldier-adventurer Captain John Smith, and included a glass blower, a pitch and tar maker, a soap maker and a timberman; they also knew how to make potash fertilizer for crops.

Captain Smith wrote that the Poles were among the few colonists who knew a trade, the others were gentlemen, soldiers, traders, and fortune hunters – so stirred up with talk of riches that nothing else was spoken of but gold, and the only motive for working was to get gold, to dig for gold, to wash gold, to purify gold and to load gold. "Only the Poles and the Germans know what work is." The skilled countrymen proved to be such an asset to the first English colony that more were invited to settle in Jamestown.

In 1619, the Polish colonists led a strike to protest their exclusion from voting rights by the legislative body. It was a fight for civil liberties, and equal recognition regardless of ethnicity. Their strike was the first labor protest in the New World.



The Virginia House of Burgesses. It was to this office the Jamestown Colony Poles would demand the right to vote. Captain Smith wrote that the Poles were among the few colonists who knew a trade.

American Polonia.

Poles have lived in present-day United States territories for over 400 years – since 1608. Today, there are over 10 million Americans of Polish descent in the U.S. – making it the largest diaspora of Poles in the world. Polish Americans represent the largest group of Slavic origin; they are the second-largest Central-European ethnic group, and the eighth largest ethnic group.

Explorers



Artur Szyk's *Jan z Kolno*.

The accounts of Polish immigration to America begin with the mention of Jan of Kolno. In search of old Norse colonies and to discover a new route to East Asia, many historians believe that the Polish explorer reached the American coast in 1476, 16 years before Columbus. Commissioned by Danish King Christian I, the expedition sailed as far south as the Delaware River before returning to Copenhagen. On the return trip, Jan died, which is why his discovery of Labrador did not gain recognition.

Polish nobleman Franciszek Warnadowicz, whose name got Hispanicized to Francisco Fernandez

the hands of Amerinds.

Though other claims of Poles sailing with Viking ships exploring the New World before 1600 have been made, there is no hard evidence to support them.

Pioneers

Though these stories are cloaked in legend, it is an historical fact that Polish pitch-makers were among the settlers of Sir Walter Raleigh's failed Roanoke Colony in 1585. Raleigh's purpose of bringing the Poles was to reduce the English dependency on timber and pitch from Poland.

From the earliest colonial times, Poles immigrated to America, but never in great numbers, due in part because in the 1600s, before the partitions, Poland was one of the largest countries in Europe. The first Polish immigrants came to the Jamestown colony on October 1, 1608, twelve years before the Pilgrims arrived in Massachusetts. The date of their arrival is now the basis for Polish American Heritage Month.

With a lack of lumber and wood products, England had to import these products from other countries, one of which was Poland. The Poles who arrived in Jamestown were experts and instructors in the manufacture of the products that England imported. These early settlers were brought as skilled artisans by the

Religious Exodus

Seeking greater religious freedom, Protestant Poles left Poland for America. The Polish Brethren (*Bracia Polscy*) were members of the Minor Reformed Church of Poland, a Nontrinitarian Protestant sect that existed from 1565 to 1658. After the Swedish Deluge, Polish Brethren were seen as Swedish sympathizers and were told to convert or leave the country. The Polish Brethren faced physical abuse, seizure of property, court fines for preaching their religion, and were then banished by law in 1658. Most of the exiled Poles arrived in New Sweden (both sides of the Delaware Valley in the region of Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland and Pennsylvania). These Poles were generally well-educated and aristocratic.

Protestants (and other non-Catholics) regained their rights and religious freedom in Poland in 1768, ending pressure to leave Poland on these grounds.

The Poles of New Amsterdam (now New York City) were considered a distinct asset to colonial life. Governor Peter Stuyvesant made every effort to encourage them to settle in New Netherland (the East Coast – Delmarva Peninsula to southwestern Cape Cod), to help in farming and assist in the defense of the colony against the British. Many Polish educators were also invited to the colony.

Also among the Poles in colonial America were backwoodsmen who explored the remote and uninhabited wilderness in their quest for land and adventure.

The War for American Independence

Due to military partitions by foreign powers, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was being stripped of its independence. The colonial battle for independence, ignited the imagination of freedom fighters from around the world. Over 100 Poles, among them Count Kazimierz Pułaski and Tadeusz Kościuszko left to fight in the American Revolutionary War. Recruited by Benjamin Franklin, the two generals played pivotal roles in the Colonists' victory and were hailed as heroes of the New Republic.

Following the Revolution, Americans held positive views of the Polish people. Polish music and

dances, such as the *Mazurka* and *Krakowiak* were popular during the Antebellum period. A relatively small but continuous migration of Poles continued to come to America.

Austria-Russia-Prussia Partition

Poland had undergone a third partition in 1795, which divided the nation among its three neighbors. Political exiles – either military men by profession or members of the upper classes made their way to our shores. Many who came made significant contributions in literature and art.

In 1834, Martin Rosienkiewicz wrote the first known Polish book printed in America. It was an English language handbook entitled *Dialogues to Facilitate the Acquisition of the English Language by the Polish Emigrants*.

Many of Poland's political elites were in hiding from the Russians following an unsuccessful uprising in 1830 to 1831. Hundreds of military officers, nobles, and aristocrats were hiding as refugees in Austria. The U.S. Congress and President Andrew Jackson agreed to take several hundred Polish refugees. Jackson wrote to the secretary of the treasury to secure 36 sections of land within Illinois or Michigan for a Polish settlement. Beyond the gesture, no land was ever officially handed to the Polish emigres; most remained in New York.

The political exiles founded organizations in America, and the first association of Poles in America, *Towarzystwo Polakow w Ameryce* (Association of Poles in America) was founded March 20, 1842. The association's catchphrase was "To die for Poland."

About 434,000 Poles came to the United States from Prussian-controlled territory between 1850 and the 1890s. Russian and Austrian Poles began arriving in large numbers after 1890. About half of the 800,000 Galician Poles who came before World War I arrived in the 1890s. About 170,000 came from Russian Poland before 1900 and 635,000 afterward.

Those who immigrated between 1820 and 1914, included former Polish citizens of Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or other minority descent. As the Polish State did not exist from 1795 to 1918, many immigrants were classified as "Russian," "German" or "Austrian" by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service when Poland's former territories were under foreign control.

Future immigrants referred to the group who arrived in the United States before 1870 as the *stara emigracja* (old emigration) and differentiated them from the *nowa emigracja* (new emigration) who came from 1870 to 1920.

Early settlements

With regards to a nation that no longer existed, Polish peasants arrived as rural settlers and developed a sense of Polish identity based on family, church, custom and tradition. Prussian Poles who came in the mid-1800s usually became part of German or Czech communities.

Ślązacy (Silesian) immigrants from the Prussian partition established the first Polish American settlement and first independent Polish Catholic parish on the Texas plains in 1854 – creating a private, agricultural community that carried their



A Polish immigrant on board the steamship *Victoria* receives vaccinations at quarantine in New York Harbor. Detail of wood engraving, 1881

language and culture. The land they chose was barren, unpopulated countryside, and they erected homes, churches, and municipal accommodations.

Polish priest, Leopold Moczygemba founded Panna Maria by writing encouraging letters to Poland to emigrate to Texas – a place with free land, fertile soils, and golden mountains. A few hundred Poles took the trip and nearly revolted, when they encountered the desolate fields and rattlesnakes of Texas.

The settlers were thrilled however, by the freedoms of shooting wild game in the countryside. Hunting and fishing became favorite pastimes. The farmers used agricultural techniques that maximized crop yields of corn and cotton. Excess cotton was sold to nearby communities and profitable businesses of selling crops and livestock were created. The language used by these settlers was carried down to their descendants, and the Texas-Silesian dialect still exists.

Next Month, Part II: Poles during the Civil War, Avenues of Work, Child Labor, World War I, Interwar Period, World War II.

Heritage Month Well Wishes to All

FAMOUS POLES



Jan III Sobieski
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RELIGION

Beatification of Cardinal Wyszyński and Sr. Róża Maria Czacka

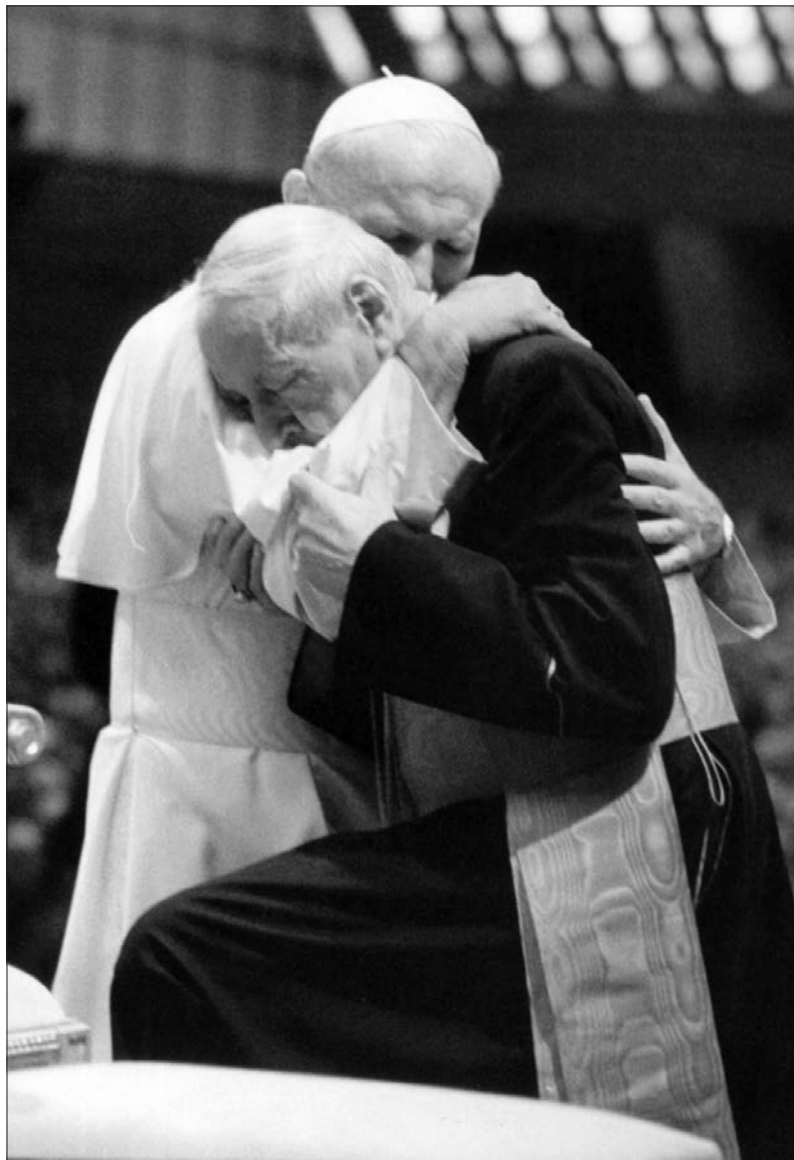
by Benjamin Fiore, S.J.

Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński's cause for beatification covered 37 volumes on his sanctity and included the cure at his intercession of a 19-year-old cancer patient. His leadership of the Church in Poland as Primate Archbishop of Warszawa Gniezno from 1950 on, brought both a political victory as well as a lesson in how to secure Church freedoms under hostile conditions, as Catholic historian **Andrzej Micewski** noted. He signed an accord with the communist government which gave the Church institutional protection in exchange for "respect for state authorities." This gave some breathing room for the Church under Stalinist communism but was eventually violated by the government's arrest and imprisonment of the Primate for three years (1953-1956) when he refused to yield Church appointments to the state control. A new communist leader, **Władysław Gomułka**, sought his help in 1956 to quell popular unrest which led to allowing freer Church appointments, religious teaching, and Catholic seats in the State Assembly. His rebuilding of ties with the German Church angered the government.

In preparation for the celebration of the millennium of Catholicism in Poland in 1966, he invoked a nine-year novena with pilgrimages to the image of the Black Madonna throughout Poland, with 1,000,000 people present at Jasna Góra on the millennium anniversary. While strengthening the Church in Poland, this helped the Church survive in Russia. He also saved the Greek-Catholic Church in Poland while it was being extinguished in Russia. Mentor to **Bishop and later Cardinal Karol Wojtyła**, he introduced the reforms of Vatican II without compromising the tradition of faith and practice in Poland. He supported Solidarity but urged prudence. His funeral was attended by several hundred thousand people in 1981.

Mother Elżbieta Róża Czacka is known as the Apostle of the blind and people far away from God. She lost her sight at 22, leading her to decide to serve blind people and those who were "spiritually blind." In the town of Laski, near Warsaw, the school she founded still functions along with the Franciscan congregation of women religious that she founded.

Born in an aristocratic family in what is now Ukraine, she lost her sight in a fall from a horse. She learned Braille and for 10 years she learned from centers for the blind in Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and France. In 1908 she opened the first small institutions for the blind in Warszawa, and took up radical poverty as a Third Order Franciscan. She founded the Congregation of Franciscan Sisters of the Cross in 1918 and moved the institutions for



Arturo Mari of *L'Osservatore Romano* photographed one of the most popular images of the 20th Century: Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński embrace at the pope's 1978 inaugural at the Vatican.

the blind to Laski.

With the spiritual direction of **Fr. Władysław Kornilowicz** she was able to reach students, intelligentsia and non-believers — the "spiritually blind." A retreat house, a library and a publishing house soon followed and Laski drew visits from prominent European philosophers and theologians. Fr. Wyszyński visited Laski in 1926 and served as chaplain to Laski outposts elsewhere in Poland in the war years and also was chaplain to the sisters and units of the Home Army in Laski. He remained close to Mother Czacka until her death in 1961, after years of illness and suffering following a stroke in 1948. Through her intercession a 10-year-old girl was healed from a hopeless head injury. These spiritual and practical colleagues and servants of Poland were beatified together in Warszawa's Church of Divine Providence.

Golden Rose from Pope to Icon of Mary

Pope Francis blessed a golden rose and sent it to adorn the 600-year-old icon of Our Lady of Skalmierzycze in Poland. The parish church where the icon is housed was first mentioned in writing in 1343. The icon was crowned by Cardinal Wyszyński in 1966 after the crown was blessed by St. Paul

VI. The golden rose was bought by the rural community of Skalmierzycze, which is near Poland's reputedly oldest city, Kalisz, whose Roman name Calisia meant "station" on the "amber road" to the Baltic Sea.

RIP

Sr. Theresa M. Gondek, CSSP (formerly Sr. M. Anthony), 92, who died in Enfield, Conn. She had been a Felician sister for 74 years and was born in Middletown, Conn. During her life she was a teacher and principal in Amsterdam, N.Y., and served in Hartford, Rockville, Windsor, Enfield and Waterbury, Conn.

Mass Mob at Corpus Christi

The Dożynki Harvest Festival Mass at Buffalo's Corpus Christi Church will be the setting for the revival of the Mass Mob event. This is the first such event since the COVID-19 virus lockdowns.

The Mass Mob events aim to bring crowds of worshippers into churches they are unfamiliar with but that have particular artistic or historical significance. They also give a financial boost, especially to churches that are in inner city neighborhoods.

Corpus Christi church was founded in 1898 and served by the Franciscan friars in Buffalo's heav-

ily Polish American East side. The Pauline fathers replaced the Franciscans in 2003 and now serve a diverse population, many of them non-Catholic.

Sto Lat to ...

Rev. Mr. Christian Zombek, S.J., who, along with four fellow Jesuits, pronounced vows in the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

Juliana Dziedzic on receiving the St. John Paul the Great Scholarship from the Catholic League for Religious Assistance to Poland. **Fr. Walter Grabowski**, pastor of St. Gabriel Church, Elma, N.Y., nominated her for the scholarship.

Bishop John Pzak, C.S.S.R., on his retirement as bishop of the Byzantine Eparchy of Holy Protection of Mary, a Byzantine-Ruthenian Catholic Church serving California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, Alaska, and Hawaii from its seat in Phoenix, Ariz. In the interim before the appointment of a successor, Phoenix's **Archbishop Thomas Olmstead** was appointed as Apostolic Administrator.

Happy Anniversary to ...

Fr. Thaddeus Bocianowski, administrator of St. Padre Pio Church in Oakfield, N.Y., celebrating 50 years as a priest. Joining him at the anniversary celebration was Buffalo's **Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus Edward Grosz** also celebrating his 50th anniversary. Celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary were **Mira** and **Ziggy Szramel**, Mrs. Szramel is the principal of the Msgr. Adamski Polish Saturday School held in St. Stanislaus B&M Church school building.

50th Reunion class of Queen of Peace school **Barbara Gorny, Sr. Mary Christelle, Linda Goss Lindsly, Michael Krzyzanowski, Lorraine Burczynski Marczak, Mary Eileen Arent Beaudoin, Judge Michael Pietruszka.**

Bishop Zielinski Blesses Radio Facility

Bishop Chad Zielinski of the RC Diocese of Fairbanks, Alaska, visited the facilities of KNOM Catholic radio station in Nome Alaska as they celebrated 50 years on the air serving Western

Alaska. After the anniversary Mass, the bishop blessed the new transmitter and FM tower.

Cause for Canonization Opens

Fr. Joseph Walijewski (1924-2006) grew up in Grand Rapids, Mich., left for the priesthood and then struggled to find a bishop-sponsor because of his limited academic abilities. The bishop of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, accepted him and said, "Joe Walijewski may not be the most intelligent priest, but he will be a holy priest."

After ordination he received permission to serve as a missionary in South America, where he established parishes, constructed churches, and cared for the poor in Bolivia and then in Peru. When St. Pope John Paul II visited Lima, Peru, he gave \$50,000 to the diocese and these funds enabled Fr. Walijewski to build Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II, a home for orphaned and abandoned children, and he directed the home in Lurin, Peru for over 15 years. Thousands attended his wake and funeral and the bishop of LaCrosse opened his cause for canonization in 2013.

Abuse Charges Trouble Seminaries

Fr. Adam Park, vice-rector of Rome's seminary for U.S. seminarians, the North American College, resigned after charges were posted against him by victims' rights attorney **Gene Gomułka**, for his client **Anthony Gorgia**. The charges allege sexual misconduct and cover-ups at the seminary for many years and implicate other personnel of the Rome seminary as well as clergy in the United States.


A former professor at the now-closed Buffalo Diocese seminary in East Aurora, N.Y., has been accused of stalking a reporter investigating reports of abuse and cover-up in the Buffalo Diocese, which led to the retirement of **Bishop Richard Malone**.

Prof. Paul Lubieniecki pleaded guilty of making harassing phone calls to a lawyer who was investigating allegations of abuse, as well as to former diocesan employees who raised charges of abuse and cover-up. Diocese Administrator (between the retirement of Bishop Malone and the appointment of his successor) **Bishop Scharfenberger** said of the situation, "There is no place — nor should there be any tolerance — for threats or harassment toward members of the news media or anyone else ... As a Church we must be able to withstand the glaring light of scrutiny — even as we seek to pierce the darkness with our own light, demonstrating Christ's abundant love, forgiveness and care for all."

MODLITWY

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HANKSGIVING PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. Father, as a Church Family, we are grateful to You for sealing us with the promise of Your Holy Spirit. We are thankful that the same power (Holy Spirit) that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is now working in us to do Your good will and pleasure. Holy Spirit, we thank You for being our Helper and living in us forever. We thank You for teaching us all things and bringing to our remembrance all things God, our Father, has said. Thank You, for leading us and guiding us into all truth. Thank You for freeing us from the bondage of our fleshly desires; for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Holy Spirit, thank You, for producing in us the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as we walk in You. Holy Spirit, because of You, we have the power to love unconditionally; power to perform miracles and healing; and the power to cast out demons. We can do all things through Jesus Christ because of You. S.B.




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Land of 10,000 Kroliki



After a one-year hiatus, the Minnesota State Fair re-opened this year. More than two dozen black, white and mixed color Polish breed rabbits were among those exhibited on September 5, many raised by Mariya Schoenhais of Isanti, Minn. One of her all-black Polish bunnies earned Best in Breed. The Polish breed originated in 19th century England and was raised for meat, and evolved into a show breed after emigrating to the U.S. in 1912. They weigh about 2.5 to 3 pounds and are considered calm and friendly.

— Mark Dillon

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Mowicpolsku.com is the URL.

“The Witcher” to Return in December

After several pandemic-related delays, Netflix announced December 17, 2021 as the premiere date of *The Witcher* season 2.

The Witcher is a Polish American fantasy drama streaming television series created by Lauren Schmidt Hissrich, based on the book series of the same name by Polish writer Andrzej Sapkowski. Set on a fictional, medieval-inspired landmass known as “the Continent,” *The*

Witcher explores the legend of Geralt of Rivia and Princess Ciri, who are linked to each other by destiny. It stars Henry Cavill, Freya Allan and Anya Chalotra.

The first season consisted of eight episodes and was released on Netflix in its entirety on December 20, 2019. It was based on *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny*, which are collections of short stories that precede the main *Witcher* saga.

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Saving Our Heritage for Our Grandchildren

by Stephen M. Szabados

Now is a time for us to celebrate our Polish heritage, and the story of our immigrant ancestors is the foundation of that heritage.

I spent much of my early life with my Polish grandparents, and my genealogy research began because I wanted to learn more about

their lives in Poland. The success of my early research shifted my goal to saving my discoveries for my children and grandchildren. I decided that I can best do this by compiling a written family history that is a narrative and contains stories, photos, maps, and documents. I envision my family histories as greatly enhanced scrapbooks that focus on the narratives that explain the images, maps, and documents. I also describe my family histories as collections of summaries of individual ancestors that I have organized into one large document.

I started my research by collecting family photos, family papers, and oral history and quickly moved on to census, naturalization, passenger, and marriage records. These records led me to identify their birthplace and more documents for my Polish ancestors.

I found accounts that described Polish life in the places where they lived. I also found vintage pictures of the town, church, and homes. Polish relatives also gave me copies of the family members who stayed. I included all of this information in my family histories as it was related to my ancestors.

As I compiled my family history, these steps started to bring my grandparents and their ancestors back to life. Note that this process did not happen quickly or with one significant revelation. Instead, the vision of my ancestors came together one piece at a time and over many years.

Capturing the immigration story is an essential step in honoring our Polish heritage. Envisioning the challenges that our Polish immigrants faced on their journey to America is another critical aspect. Identify the port they left and the size of the ship. Review the passen-

ger manifest. How was life on board the ship? What was their destination? Link the information in the documents and find the stories.

It was not easy to immigrate to America. Leaving home was a very emotional decision. Those

Capturing the immigration story is an essential step in honoring our Polish heritage. Envisioning the challenges that our Polish immigrants faced on their journey to America is another critical aspect.

who left saw immigration as their only chance to escape the poverty of their life in Poland. Not only were they leaving their family and friends, but the emigrants were leaving their beloved homeland. Some may have been excited about emigrating, but there was also fear of the unknown — most left home with tears in their eyes.

Try to describe their lives in America. Look through old pictures in family albums and also history books of the local area and neighborhoods. Pictures of their homes, neighborhood and their church are vital. Next, identify where they worked because this would have been a significant part of their lives. Finally, look at their overall experience in America. How did they enjoy their new life? Did they do anything outside of work? Did they have a hobby? Were they active in a fraternal group? Did you find pictures of family gatherings? How was their life here better than what they would have had in Poland?

We will not find answers to most of these questions. However, asking the questions and doing the research will give us a perspective of what our ancestors experienced and better understand their character and our Polish Heritage. Do not minimize the lives of our ancestors. They were important.

Our immigrant ancestors were heroes, and they are the foundation of our roots in the United States. Do not underestimate their contributions. They may have left us some material wealth, but their most significant contribution is their role in the factories and farms of the United States. Their names will not appear in history books, but their efforts impacted American history, and without their sacrifices, our country would not have developed as it did. Their lives were the building blocks in the growth of their new country, and their immigration influenced the quality of our lives today in the United States. Remember that they made many sacrifices for you and helped build the United States.

Be patient. Keep asking questions and looking for records and stories. Then, write down the stories and organize them in family histories. Save the stories for future generations.

Have fun and enjoy your Polish heritage.

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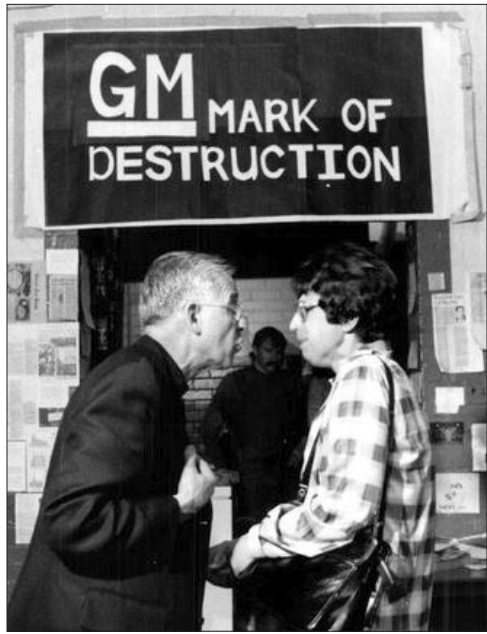
The Prawdzic coat of arms was shared by the szlachta (gentry) lines of over 500 variously surnamed Polish families including: Baranowski, Ząb, Dąbski Sowiński, Bielski, Lang, Cybulski, Szuba, Trębski Rudzki, Dobrowolski and Gołębiowski.

Poletown. SWAT team escorted Immaculate Conception protestors out of church

continued from cover

nickname from the multitude of Polish immigrants that chose the neighborhood as their home. Other groups also resided in this neighborhood: African Americans and immigrants from Albania, Yugoslavia, Yemen, Ukraine, and the Philippines, to name a few. Despite the mesh of several cultures, a sense of community was well-established in the neighborhood. Many would have described the area as a place that seemed more like Poland than America due to the keeping of customs across the area. Poletown was also affordable, presenting new immigrant families a good area to make their start in America. The majority stayed after establishing themselves, continuing to add to the rich, ethnic region. Ironically, Mayor Young was concerned about city folk leaving for the suburbs, while Poletown residents were least motivated to leave Detroit (Detroit Historical Society, 2021).

Once the news broke out of the plan, the numbers shocked many:



The Rev. Joseph Karasiewicz (left) pastor of Immaculate Conception, led his flock's protest of the taking of the land and razing of the church. He defied Cardinal John F. Dearden and fought to keep the church open for the faithful. Karasiewicz would die of a heart attack six months after his church was leveled. *Photo: The Detroit News Archives.*

fifteen-hundred homes, one-hundred forty-four businesses, and sixteen churches were scheduled to be bulldozed to fit GM's requirements. Because of the eminent domain law, citizens were offered an average of \$13,000 and moving expenses to move elsewhere. While some were content with this offering, many had chosen to live their entire lives in Poletown and were furious, heartbroken, and determined to fight. They decided to create the Poletown Neighborhood Council for this purpose (Detroit Historical Society, 2021). Critics of the plan offered alternatives: building multi-storied parking structures or using the plant's roof as parking instead of the surrounding neighborhoods. However, these ideas were dismissed as unfeasible by GM (Serrin, 1981).

The Quick Impacts

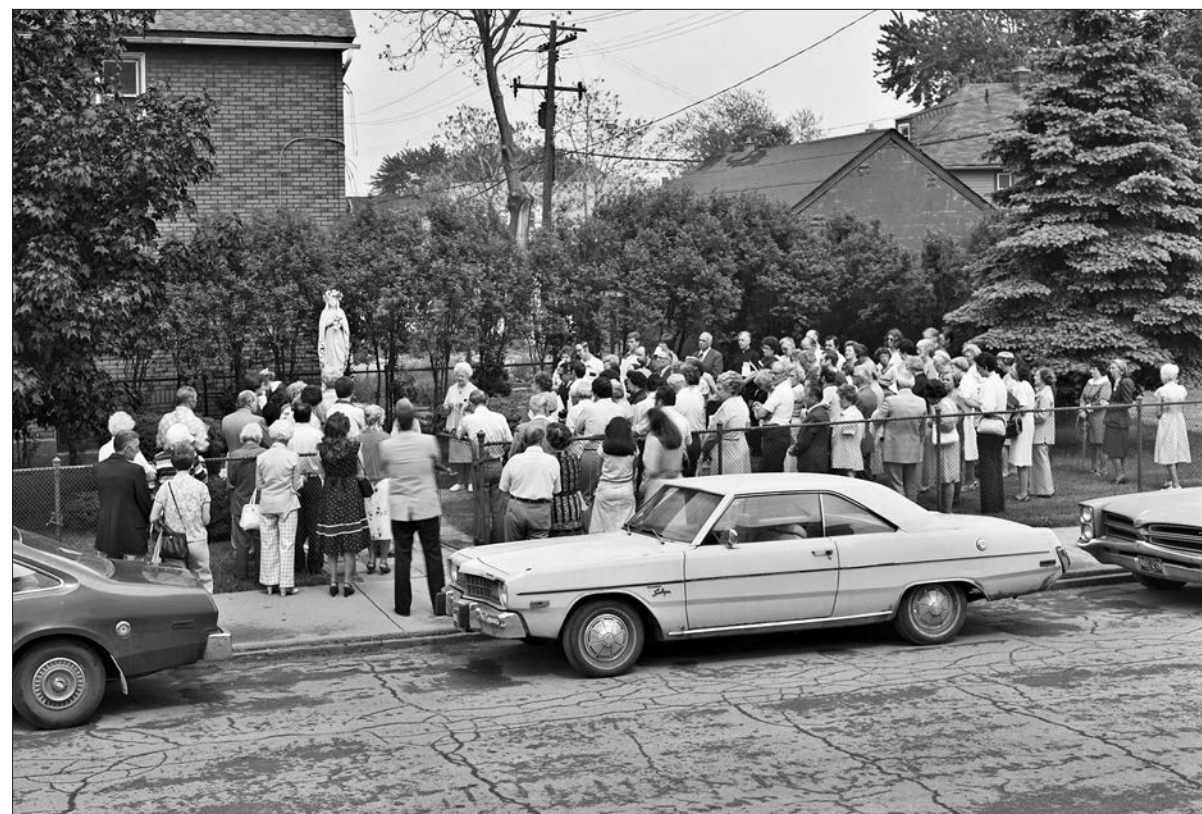
The impacts of the plans of Young and GM began as soon as the mayor made the initial announcement. The first impact was the excruciating choices required of families whether to stay and fight the decision or to take the money offered and leave. Already busy with work and families, vulnerable people had

this decision weighing on their shoulders. Many of the younger Polish American families were among the first to take the money offered by the city and move to the suburbs. The older, first- and second-generation Polish-Americans were not appeased by money and had spent a valuable time building their new life in this neighborhood. They had raised families, worked, worshipped, and built a vibrant community, and were not adept with or accepting of change now (Detroit Historical Society, 2021).

However, as more families moved out, the neighborhood grew more and more desolate and dangerous. Arson and looting would increase alongside relocation efforts. Some people found themselves as the last person on their block. Businesses started to close, forcing people trying to stay to find other places to do business. The cultural and ethnic magnetism of Poletown started to diminish. This slow beginning to the full destruction of Poletown would be the second impact of Detroit's decision (Hedberg, 2021).

The Third Impact

The third impact of GM's takeover of Poletown was the incredible effort put in to fight the decision. Residents were already furious with the idea of the city destroying their neighborhood, but even more resentful of the decision of the city to destroy their churches. Poland being a heavily Catholic nation, many immigrants stayed immensely devoted to the church



The last May crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary ceremony across from Immaculate Conception Church, May 24, 1981. *Photo: Bruce Harkness.*



Interior and exterior of Immaculate Conception Church, Moran at Trombly Streets. *Photos: Library of Congress.*



when they arrived in America. These factors of destruction of livelihood, community, and churches combined to motivate the families that stayed to demonstrate, start campaigns, appeal to representatives, and act in other ways. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader even joined in the fight, urging residents to stay and contest GM's plan as well as providing associates to travel and assist the effort in Detroit. His own motivation was to stop this precedent from happening and allowing it to continue in other cities.

Nader's presence and dedication gave the Poletown community national attention (Serrin, 1981). The Poletown Neighborhood Council even went so far to attempt to bring an action against the city and rule the new eminent domain law as unconstitutional. This case made it to the Michigan Supreme Court, where the justices ruled in favor of the new Michigan law. They stated that the economic relief that would be delivered by the project would be crucial to the public, and therefore, had a true public purpose, especially since Detroit was in economic distress at the time. Simply put, in the eyes of the judges, the pros of the project outweighed the cons, and the legality was sound.

Once the decision was finalized, many began to lose hope, and the reality of the situation was recognized (Crawford, 2018). A lot of the protestation that occurred was held

within the church communities in the area.

While the Archdiocese of Detroit cooperated with the city's plan, one church specifically did

rin, 1981).

The Fourth Impact

The fourth impact on Polish Americans was the eventual sur-

The city's new eminent domain law was challenged, and made it to the Michigan Supreme Court, where the justices ruled in its favor. They stated the economic relief that would be delivered by the project would be crucial to the public, and therefore, had a true public purpose, especially since Detroit was in economic distress at the time.

not comply or accept the situation. This church was Immaculate Conception Church on Trombly Avenue, a church that usually could house hundreds of worshippers on Sundays. Parishioners were deeply connected to the church and the sense of community it embodied. Passionate about saving the historic property as well as the unifying religious spirit present, letter-writing campaigns began from within the church, led by Father Joseph Karasiewicz, who was impassioned about defying the archdiocese for the good of the church and parishioners. In July 1981, some protestors staged a twenty-nine-day sit-in that quickly ended when they were escorted out of the church by SWAT teams. A few days later, the church would be completely torn down, signaling the end to one of the major efforts to protect Poletown (Ser-

render to the city that all residents had to face. Whether leaving right after Young's announcement was made or becoming one of the last remaining citizens that had no choice but to leave in the end, everyone in the way of the project had to leave. No relief was brought to Poletown residents that had spent many hours writing letters, reaching out, demonstrating, and guarding themselves from the thought of having to move from their beloved home. There was no victory.

The Fifth Impact

The fifth major impact from GM's project was the displaced and destroyed history, tradition, and community. Many Polish Americans from Poletown now resided elsewhere in Detroit, whether in the city or the suburbs. The displaced residents had to rebuild their lives, make new friends, find new churches, and deal with the fact that the community that had understood them, watched their families grow, and celebrated and struggled together was gone for good. What was once a blooming, ethnic city had turned into a parking lot, and with the forced movement of people came the disappearance of the culture and tradition that had once encapsulated it.

One must remember that some residents of Poletown were content with the money offered to them by the city and felt safer in the suburbs of Detroit, eager to take advantage of new opportunities in a new area. Other people, many who were elderly, had to accept their new fate.

Some came to realize that the suburbs were not as terrible as they thought they would be and started to embrace the change after the pain wore off. Others, especially businesspeople who had to move their businesses as well, noted a loss of

continued on next page

GM's actions still questioned today



NEIGHBORS DISPLACED. (Above, left): Homes along Piquette Street on April 30, 1981; (center) That same day, the owner of 2275 Adele St. rakes her lawn; (right). A family on Joseph Campau Avenue poses for photographer Bruce Harkness.

continued from page 9

business as well as a loss of their loyal customers in Poletown that now lived too far away to visit. No matter the outcome, many people held a newfound distrust in the government to protect their private property and communities. As for Mayor Young, whose father had also owned a business in a community that was bulldozed to make way for highway, his lack of understanding for people in a similar situation led to many Polish Americans to condemn him for his actions (Foley, 2021).

Was it Worth it?

The Detroit-Hamtramck Plant, known infamously as the “Poletown” Plant, opened in 1985. In 2004, the Michigan Supreme Court reversed their decision from 1981 and invalidated the clause in the law that allowed Poletown to be sentenced to becoming a parking lot. Only thirty-three years later, in 2018, GM announced that they’d be closing their plant, causing many to question if the city’s decision had been worth all the pain of prior Poletown residents. GM had first promised six-thousand jobs with the plant’s opening, but au-

tomation made the number of jobs quite lower than they had predicted. With the closing of the plant, Hamtramck, who had been excited about the prospect of new jobs back in the 1980s, would now be losing out on jobs as well as a large portion of property taxes (Crawford, 2018).

Had GM’s plan really been a godsend to the public and Detroit’s economy like officials had imagined? Was the displacement and lost community worth it for this project? These are some of the questions still asked today.

In 2020, after a change in contract, GM announced that they would now put forth the effort to turn the Detroit-Hamtramck into a plant for electric vehicles. However, some citizens, upon hearing the news of the potential closure back in 2018, especially those that are old enough to remember the events of 1981, wish that the community could be put back in place (Hedberg, 2021).

The impacts of the 1981 razing of Detroit’s Poletown on Polish Americans are too many to count. They include the devastating (for many) decision to move away from their beloved homes and communities; the slow buyout of Poletown, leading to crime sprees and loot-

ing; the amazing effort to stop the bulldozing; the acceptance of the tragedy; and the requirement of starting over in a new community. In no other time in United States history had so many people been moved in such a short amount of time. One cannot delete the resentment and heartbreak the first- and second-generation Polish Americans in Poletown felt during the erasure of their community for the sake of a parking lot. It is difficult to offer words of positivity towards these displaced residents. However, one may say that, if anything, perhaps this series of events will serve as a lesson so that nothing of this sort will happen again in the United States of America (Crawford, 2018).

For a list of works cited, visit www.polamjournal.com/feature.html

About the author

Amelia Wroblewski, a first-year graduate student at the University of Colorado at Boulder, is the recipient of this year’s Kamylla and Czesław Kaszuba College Scholarship. A graduate of the State University of New York at Fredonia, she has been active in Polonia since grade school, when she began volunteering at Bożego Ciała processions at



Corpus Christi Church in Buffalo. Wroblewski attended the Msgr. Adamski Polish Saturday School and was an active member of its Polish Dance group, which performed at various events throughout Western New York. She is a member of the Polish Arts Club of Buffalo, Polish American Congress, and the Fredonia Student Keyboard Association, where she served as publicity chair and secretary. She was also a member of the Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor Society and the Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society.

Among her awards and honors are: SUNY Fredonia Excellence in Student Teaching Award (2020); President’s Award of Excellence

Scholarship (SUNY Fredonia, 2016, 2017), and numerous other awards, including: Polish Arts Club of Buffalo Scholarship, Kosciuszko Foundation, Polish American Congress Charitable Foundation Gorecki Scholarship, and Polish Roman Catholic Union of America Scholarship (2021).

Wroblewski studied Polish language and culture at Jagiellonian University in Kraków in 2017 through the Kosciuszko Foundation Summer Study Scholarship, and in 2018 with a scholarship from the American Council of Polish Culture. As a pianist, she has always had an interest in Polish composers. Her Senior Piano Performance Degree Recital at SUNY Fredonia featured the music of composers Lutosławski, Chopin, Paderewski, and Szymanowski. Cancelled due to COVID restrictions, her work ethic did not go unnoticed by her professors, as she balanced two extremely challenging majors in Childhood Education and Piano Performance, while sustaining an overall 3.97 GPA.

At the University of Colorado at Boulder, she hopes to earn her master’s in Curriculum and Instruction, and pursue a career in teaching curriculum and instructional design.

The Story of Poletown in Word and Film

by Matthew Stefanski

In the years since the unjust takeover of the neighborhood on Detroit’s East side, the story of Poletown has inspired several accounts and documentaries. From both witnesses to the events as well as researchers decades removed, below are four accounts of the Poletown tragedy.

POLETOWN LIVES!

Directed by George L. Corsetti. 1982. 52 minutes

George Corsetti’s *Poletown Lives!* depicts the whirlwind of activity that engulfed Poletown, from the announcement of the land grab, through to the bulldozing of the neighborhood. A Detroit activist and lawyer, Corsetti was a witness to much of the local organizing, including the grassroots efforts to do something – anything – by the residents to get their pleas to save their neighborhood heard by the wider public. The strength of the documentary are its subjects, the people of Poletown, who, through their speeches, activism and discussions invite the viewer to a front row seat of what it felt like to go up against what was then the sixth-largest city in America and the world’s second-richest corporation. Released soon

after the destruction was completed, the documentary went on to win several awards, and 40 years later still powerfully conveys the naked emotions of the people who suddenly had their community turned to dust. The documentary is available for purchase via <http://www.informationfactory.info/>

POLETOWN: COMMUNITY BETRAYED

University of Illinois Press

Jeanie Wylie. 1989. 269 pages

Jeanie Wylie’s *Poletown: Community Betrayed* is the definitive work on Poletown and its destruction. While not from the neighborhood, Wylie was a witness to and at times participant in all the major events relating to Poletown’s takeover. She also served as a producer to *Poletown Lives!* She published this book because, as she writes, “I still felt that the story remained largely untold: The powers which coalesced to force the demolition of Poletown were unexposed. And I believe that at the heart of this story is something critical to democracy in America.” Wylie superbly interweaves all the vital elements of the story into a captivating and highly readable account, leaving the reader feeling the burden of

the struggle that residents faced. Wylie’s work is a lasting testament to the enterprising spirit of the Poletown residents, who worked, organized, protested, prayed, fought back, and did what they could to save their neighborhood. It is available for purchase on Amazon.

DETROIT’S LOST POLETOWN

The Little Neighborhood that Touched a Nation

The History Press

Brianne Turczynski. 2021. 142 pages

Forty years after the GM takeover, the story of Poletown continues to inspire new writers and researchers. Brianne Turczynski, a freelance writer from Rochester, Michigan, stumbled upon the story of Poletown one day while antiquing in Detroit. The story moved her so much that she spent months writing and researching her latest book *Detroit’s Lost Poletown*, published earlier this year. This work focuses not just on the GM takeover, but more broadly on the people and places that made up Poletown. It offers a broad overview of the neighborhood’s history and main landmarks while sharing insight into some of the Polish customs that the people living there

would have practiced. This slim book includes numerous historic photographs of the neighborhood, as well as scenes from the Poletown protests and also scans of various artifacts and letters from the neighborhood’s political activism against GM. The work provides a good introduction to the topic of Poletown, including the main event and key players, portrayed in a decisively pro-Poletown perspective. One does wonder, however, just how much the story of Poletown truly managed to “touch a nation.” Available for purchase online.

TAKING POLETOWN

A Community’s Fight Over Economic Justice & Eminent Domain

Directed by Tim Hedberg for the Federalist Society

2021. 28 minutes

Taking Poletown is a well-made and very watchable short documentary directed by Tim Hedberg for the Federalist Society, a conservative legal organization. The documentary, available for free on YouTube, tells the history of the Poletown eminent domain dispute, focusing on the legal aspects of the conflict, the economic justification, the judicial ruling, and the

later overturning of the State Supreme Court decision. To the creator’s credit, the video showcases a wide array of voices on the matter, highlighting the difficult economic prospects facing decision makers, as well as the plight of the local Poletown inhabitants. Through on-location filming, the documentary gives viewers a sense of what the area surrounding the GM Poletown plant looks like today, and conveys the sense of community loss. Among the voices featured in the documentary are current Hamtramck Mayor Karen Majewski. One thing missing is any mention of the fact that most of the Poletown neighborhood that was being bulldozed was not actually needed to build the GM factory, but rather was going to be used as a parking lots for GM factory employees. It would have been insightful to hear the various scholars who debated the Poletown issue offers an opinion on why the GM factory, which many of the residents were not opposed to, could not proceed in a modified format with, for instance, a parking garage rather than a parking lot, which would have allowed for the economic development to proceed with much less residential devastation.

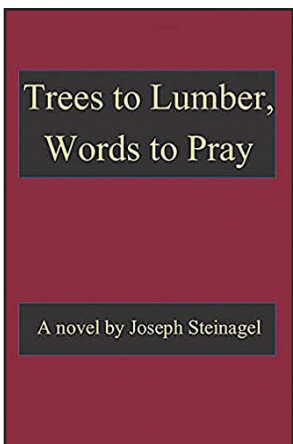
BOOK REVIEWS

An Outstanding Narrative of World War II and its Impact on Poles

TREES TO LUMBER, WORDS TO PRAY
by Joseph Steinagel
Self-published
Available on Amazon. 302 pp.

reviewed by David Trawinski

This book is an extremely impressive fictional account based on the very real World War II experiences of a young female Polish villager named Zofia. It begins before the Nazi invasion and ends when the German farm on which she was confined was liberated by the Americans. It is a turbulent, emotional story with many unexpected twists and turns and captures her feelings of angst, loneliness, survival and redemption. And, so very impressively, Zofia's story was put to paper by her great-grandson, while he himself was a graduating high-school student!



which the readers can quickly become completely immersed, unaware of the author's presence. They will lose themselves in the thoughts and observations of this teenage tom-girl during a series of apocalyptic wartime experiences.

Consider the passage below from Zofia's happy days working on a farm before the war:

"The mornings on the farm were sacred times. To the workers, it was the only time of the day that could be used for self-reflection, and the mornings were the most appropriate for this because everyone was still coming from their dreams. Their dreams would cast a shadow onto the fields without any assistance from the sun, and their conscience would examine the shadow of all things that passed through their minds as they transitioned from the land of dreams to the land of the fields."

The passage is innocent and tainted with the run-on exuberance of the young teenage girl in whose head these hopeful thoughts had kindled. Contrast it with the following passage after Zofia has survived the Nazi invasion only to end up on a German SS officer's farm estate outside Munich:

"There was no justice for us Polish workers. We were sent here to

Germany on a broken promise that we would find work and be able to support ourselves during this time of war. We were all tricked when we got into the cattle cars, those many months ago. I was foolish enough to believe since then, since the terrible nightmare of the doctors and the showers and the selective services that brought me to this place, that I was still going to be able to earn money for myself and my family... We were working involuntarily. We were slaves."

Even though only a matter of months separates these two passages, the latter lacks the enthusiasm and hopefulness of youth. It is more that of a young woman, shell-shocked from her disastrous experiences, awakening to a grim reality. In this way the author skillfully guides the reader through the transition of his great-grandmother, without ever leaving a trace of his own presence in those written words. To think that this is a debut novel, by a writer not much older than his protagonist Zofia, is simply mind boggling.

Many famous male authors have attempted first-person narratives of female characters and have come up exceedingly short. Ian Fleming in the Bond novel, "The Spy Who Loved Me" comes to mind. It simply feels like a man trying to describe a woman's life from a male's perspective. That is not the case here. You truly will feel that the author of these words is Zofia, not her great-grandson.

I strongly recommend this novel.

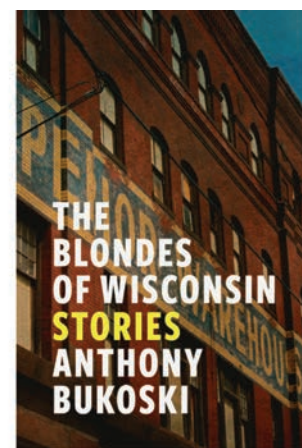
Don't fear that it is overly dark or saturated with excessive description of Nazi atrocities. While it contains a few dire scenes, in the end it is a very uplifting story of hope, love and survival that is nothing short of inspirational. Most inspirational of all is that it is a tale of a Polish family's legacy passed to an emerging generation who lovingly embraces it.

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Tadeusz Kosciuszko (left) and Casimir Pulaski (right) by Henry Dmochowski Saunders (1810-1863). Marble, 1857. U.S. Senate Collection.

How easily our government ignores the Polish heroes Kosciuszko and Pulaski, who were a major influence in establishing this country and government for all citizens.

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God Bless our patriot and my friend, Mark Kohan*

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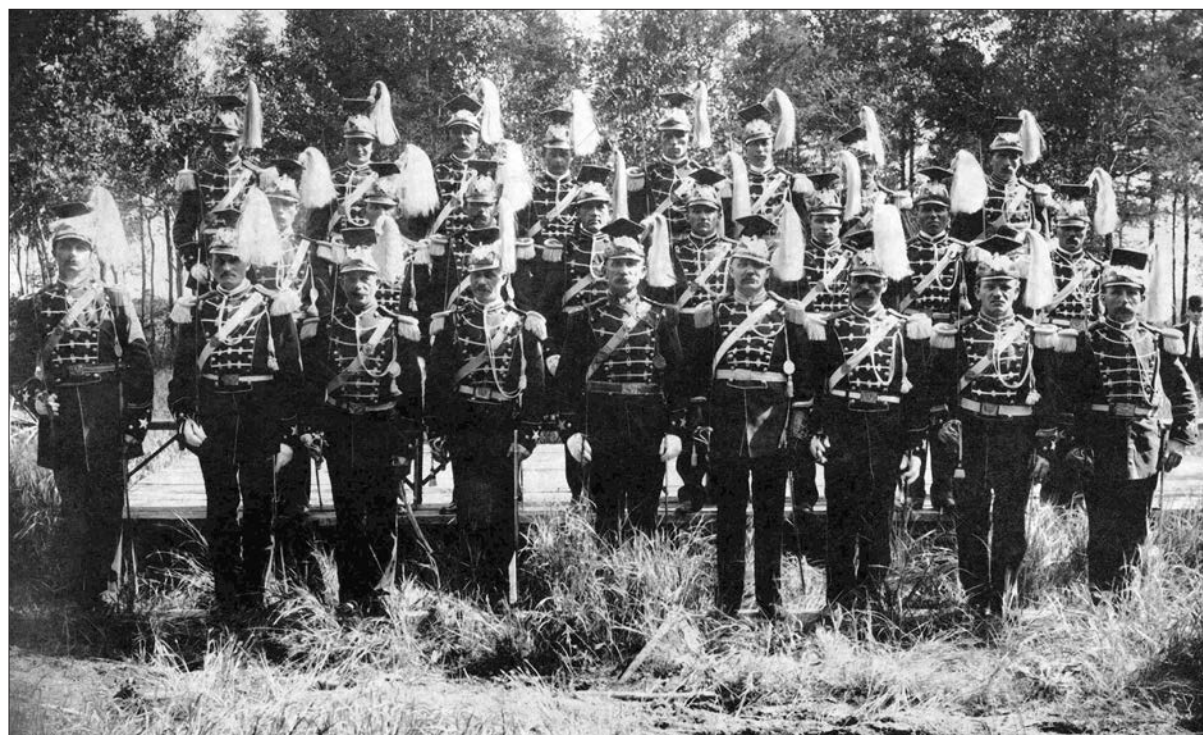
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NEW BOOKS

Recalling a Great Lakes outpost of Polonia: The Polish Club of Superior, Wisconsin and the Pulaski Guards

by Anthony Bukoski

Editor's note: Minnesota author Anthony Bukoski's works include The Blondes of Wisconsin, a collection of 16 stories of devotion and degeneration rippling through a working-class Polish American community in the postindustrial Midwest. Superior, Wis. is a small city opposite Duluth, Minn. along Lake Superior.



The Pulaski Guards pose in uniform in the early 1920s. Among their members over the years were Polish sailors who defected to the United States during the Solidarity period and a young man of mixed Polish and African-American heritage.

When my grandfathers came to Superior, Wisconsin as young men, one worked at the Webster chair factory, the other, a “car knocker,” repaired boxcars in a railroad roundhouse. Polish immigrants also labored on the ore and coal docks, in the shipyards, and at the mills and grain elevators on the waterfront. Still others worked at the foundry, ran stores and taverns, or, like my great uncle, farmed outside of town.

Of Superior’s Roman Catholic parishes, three ministered mainly to the spiritual needs of Slavs. St. Stanislaus was organized in 1901, Ss. Cyril & Methodius in 1907, and St. Adalbert in 1908. St. Stanislaus had the most parishioners. To accommodate those wanting to worship there, a new church was erected. Bishop Joseph Koudelka dedicated it in May 1916.

Various societies met at St. Stanislaus, among them the Pulaski Guard. Long ago, one of my Polish Club brothers told me that *Kapitan* Joseph Sniogel, head of the *Gwardyo Pulaskiego*, rode a white horse in parades. His uniformed men wore helmets with white plumes. From

these and other church groups, the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Fraternal Aid Society of Superior formed on August 1, 1928 “for the mutual and moral support” of members. Father L. S. Nowacki of St. Stanislaus, Ladislaus Nowacki, was the Polish Club’s first adviser. Years later, I like to think our members love the club as much as members of past years loved it. Given our members’ advancing age and declining health, however, it seems like there’s not much we care to do anymore.

One thing we possess in 2021 is memories, this and a few artifacts. We have a black cloth ribbon with TOWARZYSTWO ŚŚ.

PIOTRA i PAWŁA, Society of Ss. Peter and Paul, embroidered on it in silver thread. We have a lovely medal from another society with the word CZŁONEK, MEMBER, on it. I have my father’s dues book from December 3, 1950, issued by financial secretary Walter Simzek, my uncle. In another dues book, a receipt shows Joe Bukoski was paid up on March 7, 1965, the day before I landed in Vietnam. By then, the financial secretary was George Sitek, who later became one of my cherished Polish Club brothers. Finally, we have the club’s “Constitution and By-Laws,” whose Order of Business has largely remained the

same for 93 years. After our sergeant-at-arms has brought out the U.S. and Polish flags and the president and other officials are seated at the head table, meetings begin with an opening prayer followed by the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, the treasurer’s report, the report of the Guardian of the Sick, and so on.

Most of us recall when the club’s headquarters stood at 1710 Broadway with a bar downstairs and the clubrooms and dance hall upstairs. Our parents brought us to the Christmas party or occasionally to a wedding dance. The old building housed the club from 1943 to 1963,

at which time the club moved up Broadway to the former Red Men’s Hall. The new headquarters also had a bar open to the public. Upstairs were a large dance hall and the adjoining Pulaski Room for our meetings. For a brief period during the Solidarity Era, several Polish sailors, who’d left ship to seek asylum in Duluth-Superior, belonged to the club.

BY THE TIME I became president, walk-in trade at the bar had decreased. By 1995, the seemingly indestructible building, our home for many years, needed extensive repairs. We sold the building to two young men who opened Norm’s Beer & Brats. Now nothing stands on the property; the building has been razed. We have another artifact from the old days. The white button with red print reads, “Survivor! POLISH CLUB Grand Closing June 23, 1995.”

Today, we meet at the Eagles Club on 12th Street. Our generous hosts let us keep the flags and other materials in a closet. We hold meetings in a room off of a noisy bar.

No one needs despair for the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Fraternal Aid Society of Superior, Wisconsin. At 6:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month, we say the opening prayer and attend to our business, including charitable giving to the Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, the Center Against Sexual and Domestic Assault, and other organizations. After that, we socialize, and the next month on the first Thursday, we again greet one another, worthy brothers of an old and beautiful club.

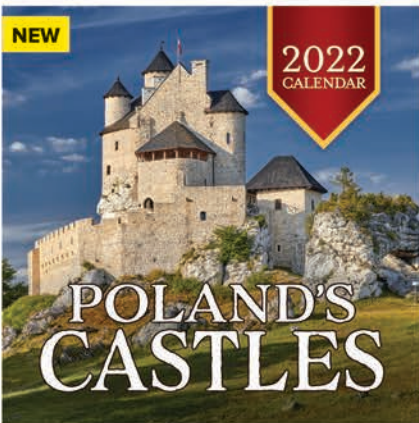
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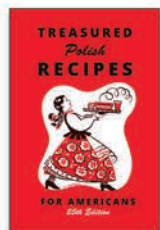
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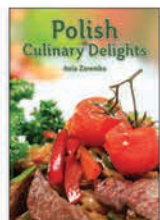
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HAPPENINGS CHICAGO STYLE

Lira Performs “American and Polish Sacred Music”

by Geraldine Balut Coleman

CHICAGO — The Lira Ensemble of Chicago, artist-in-residence at Loyola University Chicago, and the Polonia Council of the Archdiocese of Chicago presented a concert on September 12 at St. John Brebeuf Church in Niles, a near northwest suburb of Chicago. **Father Jason Torba**, pastor of St. John Brebeuf, began the concert with bilingual welcoming remarks. **Lucyna Migala**, artistic director and general manager of the Lira Ensemble, narrated the entire concert in English. The Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Chicago graciously provided a livestream of the concert on YouTube/St. John Brebeuf Niles.

The concert celebrated the Catholic Church's beatification of **Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński**, which took place the same day in Warsaw and remembered the **Victims of 9/11** following the 20th anniversary of the attacks on America in 2001.

The Lira Singers Quartet of **Katarzyna Dorula**, **Bridget Ascenzo Labozetta**, **Anna Mazur Krawczyk**, and **Anita Switzer**, along with piano accompanist, **Andrew Blenderman**, performed. Highlights of the concert sung in English by the Lira Quartet were the emotional “Amazing Grace” and “On Eagle's Wings.” Soprano Katarzyna Dorula sang the Samuel Barber musical composition, “The Prayer of Soren Kierkegaard,” a Danish philosopher. **Iwona Puc**, Choreographer and Dance Director for the Lira's Dance Troupe, read two of her original poems “September 11” and “Shepherd.” Soprano Anna Mazur Krawczyk sang a special song “*Jak orly*” (As Eagles), from Piotr Palka's oratorio “*Soli Deo per Mariam*,” in honor of Cardinal Wyszyński and to symbolize Poland's and America's Eagle. The Quartet also sang two emotional songs for the audience, “*Modlitwa za Polskę*” (The Prayer

of Poland), which accompanied the beginning of the Solidarity movement, and “*Czarna Madonna*” (Black Madonna). The concert concluded with an arrangement “*Zdrowas Mario/Hail Mary/Ave Maria*” sung in Polish, English, and Latin, Our Father, “*Ojciec Nasz*,” and a Polish and American Patriotic Medley.



(WPNA 103.1 FM). The Sauganash-Edgebrook Chamber of Commerce added to the success by promoting the event. The attendees included not only Polish Americans, but also non-Poles who were interested in viewing an array of historically interesting vehicles.

“Cars of the PRL versus the Rest of the World”



“European Versus American” Auto Show. (Top): Best in Show, a 1984 Ursus C330 tractor. (collage, from top left): Maluch, Warsaw, Packard, and Porsche. Photos: Jacek Boczarski.

Cardinal Wyszyński, the Primate of Poland of the Millennium during the difficult decades of Communism, was kept under house arrest from 1953 - 1956. By continuing to put pressure on Communist officials, he managed to keep all Polish churches open and operational, while churches in other Communist countries were closed and often used as garbage dumps.

He is regarded as the mentor of St. John Paul II.

“EUROPEAN VERSUS AMERICAN” AUTO SHOW. On August 29, despite an extremely hot, humid, and stormy day in Chicago, over 1,500 visitors attended an auto show that was organized and hosted by the Polish National Alliance (PNA) and Polish American Radio

was the car show's slogan. Filling the grassy area of the PNA headquarters on Chicago's Northwest Side were 150 autos manufactured in the Communist Polish People's Republic (PRL) and other manufacturers' vehicles. Some visitors referred to the auto show as “European versus American.” The vehicles on display were American, Polish, European, plus some interesting gems. Members of the PRL Automobile Club of Chicago added an oral history of Polish motoring during their childhood in Communist Poland. The PRL small autos were in sharp contrast with the European and American “classic” cars.

Visitors voted, with these results:

Best in Show: An Ursus 1984 C330 tractor (Łukasz Liszka).

Best European: Porsche 356 Speedster, 1956. (Tomasz Szczerba).

Best Classic: Packard Patricia Custom, 1954. (Tomasz Korzeniewski).

Best PRL: Warsaw 223, 1969. (Łukasz Liszka).

Best *Maluch* (tiny car): Fiat 126p, 1977. (Paweł Filipczyk).

During the show, rain and showers arrived but deterred no one. Of course, a Polish-oriented event could not take place without the attraction of Polish-style food, which included potato pancakes and *Krupniok*, a Silesian version of *Polska Kaszanka* (*kiszka*), provided by the Silesian Association in Chicago. Children were also welcome to enjoy an inflatable playground and face-painting provided by the You Can Be My Angel Foundation.

ALLIANCE OF POLISH CLUBS IN THE USA HOLDS CONVENTION. The Alliance of Polish Clubs in the USA (APC), *Związek Klubów Pol-*



Lucja Mirowska-Kopec

skich w USA (ZKP) held their 30th APC convention on September 11. During this convention, held every three years, discussions concerning its members' businesses, its activities, and its plans for future were on the agenda.

Almost 100 conventioners attended and voiced their concerns about what the pandemic has done to this and other organizations. Another discussion dealt with the fact that the younger generation is not very interested in being involved in Polonian organizations. Thus, with older-aged membership dwindling, APC needs to find some solutions.

Established in 1928, the APC was formed as a not-for-profit charitable and social organization to unite diverse Polish American clubs that represent a variety of Polish regions, cities, and villages in order to cultivate the Polish language, Polish history, and varying cultures and traditions. In the United States, the APC supports Polish American clubs in which the main language used is English.

Through the years, the Alliance has organized Chicago's May 3 Polish Constitution Day Parade, supported *Rzepicha*, a folk theater, *Wawel*, a youth dance ensemble, and the Frederic Chopin Choir. Additionally, it organizes the Polish Harvest Festival and historic commemorative events at the *Katyn* and *Smolensk* Monument at St. Adalbert Cemetery. All in all there are 38 clubs belonging to the APC.

On Sun., Sept. 12, a special Convention Mass was held at St. Francis Borgia Church, followed by a banquet at the Lone Tree Manor in Niles. Over 150 guests attended the banquet to enjoy an evening of good cheer and to celebrate with the newly-elected APC officers.

Dr. Lucja Mirowska-Kopec was sworn into the office of APC president, the first time in APC history that a woman has held this office. Lucja is the retired principal of Chicago Public Schools' Cnty Elementary School.

Other officers sworn in included four vice-presidents: Maria Boduch, Maria Majchrowska, Ryszard Bober, and Władysław Wyrwał. Also, newly-elected were Jan Bator as general secretary, Ewa Rumińska as treasurer, Maria Rysz as financial secretary, and Iwona Wolski as corresponding secretary. Each represented a club within the APC.

It is the hope that, following its mission, the *Związek Klubów Polskich w USA* (APC) can continue to initiate and coordinate the activities of individual clubs and organizations within Polonia and continue to celebrate Polish culture, history and language, while supporting Polish culture.

PHILATELICS

Of Stamps and War

by Basia Szydłowski

The world of stamps is fascinating and as a collector one can learn about the past.

In issue of the Polonus Philatelic Society *Bulletin*, Dr. James Mazeppa, RDP, wrote an interesting article on “The Poland Flag of the United States Overrun Country Series.” The late 1930s was not a good time in the world. The United States was recovering from a major depression and the clouds of war were looming over Europe and Asia. Germany annexed Bohemia, Austria and invaded Poland. President Roosevelt was committed to supporting England and France against Germany, but the American Congress — recovering from the disaster of the Depression — wanted to return to its earlier isolationist policies and resisted such a move.

President Roosevelt wanted to prepare the American people for what he saw as the inevitable involvement of the United States in the war. The president personally worked on designs for a set of three stamps which were called the First War Propaganda issue. The three stamps were in denominations to supply the three most-used rates.

The one-cent pictured the Statue of Liberty, the two-cent a 90 millimeter anti-aircraft gun, and the three-cent the Torch of Enlightenment. The stamps were issued on October 16, 1940 to coincide with the National Conscription Bill's deadline for draft registration.

A Second War Propaganda Issue of new stamps was issued once the United States entered the war. This new issue was to promote the war effort and give inspirational messages to the American people. This set was issued in the same denominations as the previous set. The three-cent value was issued on July 4, 1942 with a V for Victory theme “Win the War.” The two-cent stamp was issued January 14, 1943 to coincide with United Nations week. The one-cent stamp issued on February 12, 1943 proclaimed the Four Freedoms to which every human being is entitled: Freedom of Speech, Religion, from Want, and from Fear.

The new addition to this set, actually the second of the series, was issued on July 7, 1952, a five-cent stamp supporting Chinese resistance. The five-cent rate was for international surface mail and intended to show the world, the U.S.'s support for oppressed countries.

To learn more about stamps, including those issued in Poland and those related to Poland but issued elsewhere, join the Polonus Philatelic Society. Visit its website at www.polonus.org.

“SILENT UNSEEN” COMMEMORATED. On September 1, 2016 Poland issued a 3.70 zł stamp honoring the “Silent Unseen,” special operations paratroopers of the Polish Army-in-Exile known as *Cichociemni*. 2,613 Polish Army soldiers volunteered for training by Polish and British SOE operatives to become *Cichociemni*. Only 606 people completed the training, and eventually 316 of them were secretly parachuted into occupied Poland. 103 perished in the war, and an additional nine were executed after the war by the Communist Polish People's Republic.

On their 75th anniversary, the *Cichociemni* were honored in London. The lone surviving member of the group was 95-year-old Aleksander Tarnowski, who attended the gathering.

The unique stamp depicts a symbolic black raptor in flight, about to attack. The designer of the stamp is Ewa Szydłowska.

MINNESOTA VOICE

A Leap to Freedom: Recalling Poles' Decisions to Jump Ship

by Mark Dillon

In September 1986, the then-Communist Polish government declared a general amnesty and began several minor reforms. However, it was too little, too late for three sailors on the Polish freighter *Ziemia Olpolska*. Two men and a woman decided to jump ship while loading flax in Port of Duluth-Superior 35 years ago this month.

One of the first stops for the three Poles from the cargo vessel was the Polish American cultural club in Superior, Wisc. They didn't come for a picnic or beer. They sought asylum and opportunity and thought the club's leaders were in a position to help them make a transition to American life.

The sailors had good reason to think help would be forthcoming in Minnesota or across Lake Superior in Wisconsin. Just seven years earlier, *PolAm*, an independent newsletter operated in Minneapolis led by the late Czeslaw Rog, raised more than \$250,000 to help the Solidarity movement in Poland.

A global mutiny

Forty years ago this December will mark the imposition of martial law in Poland, an event that would lead to some 270 Polish sailors jumping ship over the next five months in Alaska, Canada, Sweden, the Panama Canal Zone, Germany, Holland and Australia. In two cases, even the captains joined the departing crew.

Ships involved around the world included the *Ziemia Wielpolska*, *Ziemia Bialostocka*, *Ziemia Chelminska* and *Ziemia Gnieniefiska*, *Olpolska's* sister ships, part of a group of

bulk cargo steamers mostly built in the Bulgarian port of Varna in the mid-1970s that were about the size of most late 19th century steamers.

In 1986, Paul Grymala, then president of the Thaddeus Kociuszko Fraternal Aid Society, was the point of contact as *Olpolska's* third engineer, his wife and a cook found refuge at the home of a Polish man in Duluth who himself was a former Polish sailor, according to a report in Sept. 21, 1986 *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

It was reported that the trio left the ship in the middle of the night while ship's captain, Tomasz Lepowski was asleep. A year after the *Olpolska* trio came ashore, two more sailors from the ship *Pomorze Zachodnie* left while docked at the same Twin Ports grain elevator facility in Superior.

The fishermen who got away

Cargo ships weren't the only nautical means of escape from communism. Polish fishermen also jumped ship. In fact in 1988, four men who overstayed shore leave to defect in Alaska wound up in Winona, Minn., including Jan Pingot. His son, Adam Pingot, came to America at age 8 with his mother Jolanta a year later from Szczecin, Poland and is now the office manager at the Polish Cultural Institute & Museum in Winona.

As a young child, Pingot remembers the excitement and change of the Solidarity movement, even as he was not old enough to fully appreciate its risks and dangers.

"On my father's last trip home after fishing, he asked my mom to burn all their letters. I later learned he wanted to eliminate anything associated with Solidarity," Adam said.

Jan had correctly anticipated that communist operatives would come knocking at the Pingot's high-rise city apartment door after he jumped ship.

"Mostly they wanted to snoop around, but they didn't find anything," Adam said.

One cherished possession of Adam's from those days is his Dad's Solidarity lapel pin.

Scarlotka for freedom

Adam's and Jolanta's journey to America and reuniting with their father after eight months of separation was made possible by a March 1990 bake sale jointly sponsored by



A 1991 photo in St. Catharines, Canada, of the 16,120 ton freighter *Lake Tahoe*, formerly the *Ziemia Olpolska*, originally a Polish cargo ship that traveled to the Port of Duluth-Superior in September 1986. Several Polish sailors defected from this ship at that time. An uncrowned Polish *Eagle* is visible from the ship's bow, retained after the ship, built in 1973 in Varna, Bulgaria. The ship was sold by *Zegluga Polska SA* after the fall of communism.

the Polish Heritage Society of Winona and Winona's Central Lutheran Church. A weekend Lenten sale raised \$1,475, enough to buy Adam and Jolanta tickets on a PanAm flight from Warsaw to New York's JFK Airport a month later.

"We were detained about two hours when we arrived and got the connecting flight to Minneapolis just in the nick of time," he said, explaining that a carefully wrapped package of family records was initially viewed as suspicious by customs agents.

Minnesota was initially a bit of a surprise, Adam said, because the 8-year-old's visual conception of the United States at the time was based on viewing episodes of *Miami Vice* in Poland on television, and in April 1990 snow was still on the ground in the Twin Cities.

Last year Jan retired from a long career at a heating and cooling equipment company while Jolanta became a beautician. Of the three other Polish fishermen who were Jan's peers, two returned to fishing. The fourth married a woman from Winona but was later deported to Poland.

Keeping Polish heritage alive

For the past 11 years, Adam has been working at the Polish museum, and is especially delighted that visitor volume has been strong since the museum, which houses the largest collection of Kashubian Polish heritage items in the United States, re-opened for tours on August 15.

"We have booked as many four tours before noon. People have returned" Adam said, adding that the

ors who were thinking of defecting would use would be to get married just before setting off to sea. It was hoped this might convince communist officials to not watch them too closely, since tying the knot would give sailors a reason to come home.

Defections occurred even in the last days of communism in 1989. Forty-six Polish sailors fled three fishing trawlers in Boston Harbor that year, in the same waters where two centuries earlier Americans showed their disdain for British tea. In one incident, 16 sailors climbed from the ship *Kantara* onto a refueling barge, duffle bags in hand, and were taken to safety by the U.S. Coast Guard. Other sailors overstayed their shore leave and sought help from Boston area-based Polish American Citizens Club.

PAJ PDF Archives

Thanks to the Polish American Journal Foundation, PDF back issues of the Polish American Journal, starting with the August 2008 edition, are now available to the public — free of charge. Visit www.polamjournal.com/PAJ-PDF-Archives.php

SCHOLARSHIPS

PACIM awards 2021 Polanie Awards

The Polish American Cultural Institute of Minnesota has awarded three Polanie academic, merit-based scholarships of \$2,000 each to three women of Polish heritage planning careers in journalism/diplomacy, veterinary medicine/cattle ranching and architecture.

The recipients are:

Shelby Krebs, of Sobieski, Minn., a fourth generation Polish Minnesotan. Crowned as both a Beef Princess and a Dairy Princess by Minnesota farming trade organizations, Shelby is pursuing a degree in Veterinary Medicine and Agricultural Business at the University of Minnesota-Crookston, and raising her own South Devon breed beef herd.

Carolyn Macon, of Winona, Minn., a high school senior, plans to pursue a career in architecture at Iowa State University beginning in fall 2022. Macon is a co-founder of the Kashubian Voices of Winona choir and member of the extended Breza family, one of Winona's founding Polish fami-

lies. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, Ms. Macon spent time in Japan as a cultural exchange student.

Natalia Wolny, a native of the Chicago area and an English major and minor in Film Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. A dancer for the Chicago-based Wici Polish folk group, Natalia is considering careers as either a diplomat or journalist. She is an intern at the Double Exposure Investigative Film Festival & Symposium.

PACIM's board of directors this past spring raised individual scholarship amounts for its Polanie program from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per student keep pace with rising higher education costs.

The Polanie program is an endowment legacy of the former Polanie Club of Minneapolis, a women's group active from the 1920s through 2014 in Polish civic and cultural activities. PACIM will mark its 40th anniversary of incorporation in January 2022.

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SPORTS

Remembering Pete Gray, the “One-Armed Wonder”

by Tom Tarapacki

One of baseball's most remarkable stories was that of **Pete Gray**, who played in the big leagues despite just having one arm. He only played one season, during the manpower shortages of World War II, but had a long career in the minors. More than that, he inspired many people with disabilities, especially many injured veterans returning from World War II.

Pete Gray was born Peter J. Wyshner Jr. on March 6, 1915 near Scranton, Pa. to Polish-Lithuanian immigrants from Vilnius (Wilno), which was then under Russian control. Peter and Antoinette (Keulewicz) Wyshner Sr. had five children, two girls and three boys, of which Pete was the youngest. The couple lived in Chicago before moving to Nanticoke, Pa., in 1911, where Peter, Sr. got a job in the mines. According to Mel Marmer of *sabr.org*, his wife was frustrated by the lack of well-paying jobs for women. In response, she dressed as a man and got a job in the mines. She worked there for almost a week before being caught and sent home.

Gray was six years old when he lost his right arm in an accident while hitching a ride on the running board of a produce truck. Pete's family still treated him as they did their other children, and Pete never gave up his dream of becoming a baseball player. He had great determination and an incredible work ethic, and constantly practiced with a rock and a stick to improve his hitting.

SOMETHING TO SEE. “He was really something,” later recalled Polish American big league pitcher Eddie Lopat. “He was worth the price of admission.” In the outfield, Pete caught flyballs with a glove that had no padding, rolled the ball on his chest, took it in his left hand and threw it. On grounders, he flipped the ball a couple of feet in the air, tossed the glove aside, caught the ball and threw. Batting with one arm gave him limited power, but he excelled at bunting and had tremendous speed.

As he started playing semi-pro ball, Pete Wyshner decided to take on a non-ethnic-sounding name, Pete Gray. His oldest brother, Joseph, had boxed under the name Whitey Grey. Gray was 6-1, 169-lb., fast, aggressive and a good contact hitter, but no major league teams were interested in a one-armed ballplayer.

Gray tried to enlist after Pearl Harbor, and was disappointed when he was rejected. “If I could teach myself how to play baseball with one arm,” he once said, “I sure as hell could handle a rifle.”

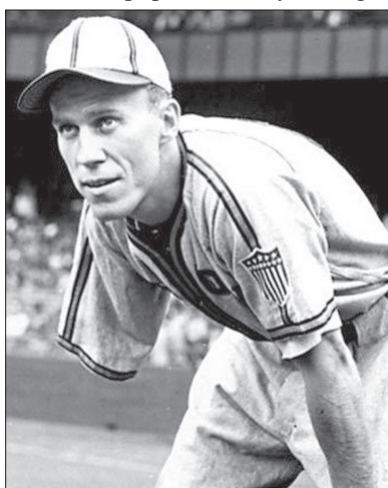
He eventually worked his way up to Memphis of the Southern Association in 1943. In 1944 Gray was named the league's Most Valuable Player. On top of being the league's best fielder, he batted .333, hit five home runs, and stole 68 bases. In late September, the St. Louis Browns purchased the contract of the 30-year-old for \$20,000, the largest sum paid for a Southern League player to that date.

Some teammates resented Pete, thinking that signing the “One-Armed Wonder” was just a publicity stunt and that his limitations could hurt the team's chances to win



Gray played his first game on April 17, 1945, starting in left field at home against the Detroit Tigers. He singled once in four at-bats in a 7-1 Browns victory.

another pennant. Since the cross-town Cardinals, with stars like Stan Musial and Whitey Kurowski, were far more popular, many thought



that Pete was just signed to bring in more fans. In addition, Pete was a loner with a bit of a mean streak. In his book, *The Spirit of St. Louis*, author Peter Golenock quoted teammate Elis Clary about Gray: “He was a Polack hard-headed bastard, you know, and he didn't want nobody feeling sorry for him.”

HARASSED BY JAKUCKI. Some teammates harassed him, including a hard-living Polish American pitcher from New Jersey named **Sig Jakucki**. Sig's parents, John and Johanna (Opszynski) Jakucki, were Polish immigrants who settled in Camden. Their son became a big league pitcher, but was best known for his drinking and fighting off the field. “He was a mean son of a bitch, a big strong bastard that would turn over a juke joint every night if he could,” Clary said of Jakucki. “But you could not help but like him if he was on your side.”

Sig pitched for the St. Louis Browns in 1944 after being out of organized baseball for almost six years. In his only full season in the majors, he won 13 games and pitched a complete-game victory over the New York Yankees on the last day of the regular season to give the Browns their only pennant.

Jakucki was one of Gray's main tormentors, and frequently pulled pranks on him. Once Sig put a fish in the pocket of Pete's coat where he kept his cigarettes. When Gray reached down and felt the fish, he went after Jakucki. Teammates broke up the fight or, as Ellis put it, “he (Sig) might have killed Pete.”

FIVE HITS AGAINST THE YANKEES. Gray played his first game on April 17, 1945, starting in left field at home against the Detroit Tigers. He singled once in four at-bats in a 7-1 Browns victory. On May 19, 1945 the boyhood Yankee

fan got the chance to play in Yankee Stadium, and he collected five hits and two RBI as the Browns swept New York in a double header.

However, batting with one arm allowed Pete limited bat control, so as the season went on pitchers started throwing him a lot of breaking balls, as well as low outside and tight inside pitches. When fielding Gray took slightly more time, and batters would try to take an extra base on hits. Pete ended his only year in the majors with a .218 average, no homers and 13 RBI. After winning the pennant the year before, the Browns finished third.

With major leaguers starting to return home from the service in 1946 Gray was sent down to the minors, where he had a couple of good years for the Browns' top farm team, the Toledo Mud Hens. In 1948 Pete played for the Elmira Pioneers and hit .290, leading the Eastern League in batting. He later played for various minor league and barnstorming teams until he retired in 1953, still bitter about how he was treated by major league baseball.

TV MOVIE STARRING KEITH CARRADINE. Pete often visited military hospitals and spoke with veterans. He once told them: “Boys, I can't fight. And so there is no courage about me. Courage belongs on the battlefield not on the baseball diamond. But if I could prove to any boy who has been physically handicapped that he, too, can compete with the best—well then, I've done my little bit.”

The lifelong bachelor then returned to Nanticoke in 1953 where owned a billiards parlor. He was a skilled pool player and golfer as well. Pete didn't like attention, but in 1986 there was a TV movie about him called *A Winner Never Quits*, starring Keith Carradine. In 1995 the biography *One-Armed Wonder* by William C. Kashatus was published. Pete spent his final years in a nursing home, and he died at age 87 on June 30, 2002.

Immigrants To Poland

If you watched the Olympics you might have noticed a couple of Poles of color who were part of their adopted country's team in Tokyo.

One of them was a star of the Polish men's volleyball team, **Wilfredo Leon**. The 6' 7" native of Cuba started playing for that country's national team in 2008 when he was 14. He later became, at 17, the youngest captain of the national team. In 2013 he left to play in Europe. He met Polish journalist Małgorzata Gronkowska and they



Hicks



Leon

married in 2016. Leon became a Polish citizen in 2015, but it wasn't until 2019 that he became eligible to compete for Poland. That year at the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup Poland won silver, and Leon was named one of the two best outside spikers.

Another was **Michael Hicks**, a player on the Polish men's 3-on-3 basketball team. The 6' 4" Nashville native was a Division II All-American at Central Missouri before going to Europe to play professionally in 2006. He played extensively in Poland, including helping Polpharma Starogard Gdanski win the Polish Cup in 2011. Michael

met his wife Dagna while playing there, and became a Polish citizen in 2016. In 2018 he became eligible to represent Poland. Lately he's specialized in 3x3, or half-court, and in the 2019 World Cup he was the overall top scorer and led Poland to the bronze medal.

Both squads failed to medal in Tokyo. The 28-year-old Leon is expected to compete for Poland well into the future. Hicks is 38, but could continue for some time in the 3x3 game.

Inducting Peaches

The International Tennis Association recently inducted “The Original 9,” a group of women who risked their careers to fight for equal rights with their male counterparts. Fifty years ago, in a big move for equality, they broke with the tennis establishment and formed the first women's tour—the Virginia Slims Circuit.

One of the “9” was **Jane “Peaches” Bartkowicz** from Hamtramck, Mich. She was probably the most dominant female player in the history of American junior tennis, known for efficiency from the backcourt and two-handed backhand. Peaches won 17 national junior titles in the 1960s, plus a Wimbledon juniors singles crown in 1964 and added 14 pro titles before retiring in 1971. She was a 2010 inductee into the National Polish American Sports Hall of Fame.

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Pillars of Polish Dance in the United States

by Staś Kmieć

The Polish folk-dance community recently lost two pillars of its early movement to promote Polish culture in the United States.

Known to many simply as “Pani Ada,” **Ada Dziewanowska** had many roles, many experiences, and many adventures. She passed away on July 3rd, at the age of 104.

Born in Pomorze, an area in northwestern Poland along the Baltic Sea, Ada left Poland during the tumultuous times of World War II – first to Sweden and then England. She moved to the United States in 1947 with her husband, historian/professor Marian Kamil Dziewanowski.

She taught Polish language courses at Harvard and studied dance at the Boston Conservatory of Music. In 1961, Ada became the dance director and choreographer of the *Krakowiak Polish Dancers* of Boston. In 1975, she became the artistic director of the *Syrena Polish Folk Dance Ensemble* of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and in 1999 added the *Syrenka Children’s Polish Folk Dance Ensemble*.

In 1979, Ada completed her studies and received certification in Polish dance from the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. Hippocrene Books published *Polish Folk Dances and Songs: A Step-by-Step Guide* by Ada Dziewanowska, with Basia Dziewanowska, Jaś Dziewanowski, Staś Kmieć, and Jacek Marek in



Pierce

1997.

Pani Ada was a “firecracker” of a woman – direct, full of life, vigor and a passion for Polish folk dance. A memorial mass and reception were held on September 24 at the Basilica of Saint Josaphat in Milwaukee.

For an extensive account of Ada’s life – written in advance of her 100th birthday celebration, please check the PAJ article “Born to Dance,” November 2016.

Alvin Pierce was the last surviving member of the four Pierce family directors of the *Krakowiak Polish Dancers* of Boston. At age 95, he passed away on August 5th.

Born in Hyde Park, Massachusetts, to Alvin and Mary (Putnicki/Krezolek) Pieczkowski, he graduated from Boston Latin School



Dziewanowska

After his first dance encounter, Al returned to the all-male members, saying “Guys! All the pretty Polish girls are there!” Overnight, there were eight mixed couples, and the group name was changed. In 1950, he married Mary Sinkiewicz.

As co-costume directors of the group for 50 years, Al and Mary oversaw the accumulation and creation of an extensive costume collection. In recognition of their lifetime work, they were awarded the Oskar Kolberg Award by the government of Poland. Graduating from the *Course for Instructors of Polish Folk Dance Ensembles* in Lublin, Poland in 1978, Al was instrumental in establishing the *Krakowiak’s* orchestra (*kapela*) and adult singing group.

Al practiced oral and maxillofacial surgery in Hyde Park and Sherborn, Mass. for over 73 years and was a fellow of the American Endodontic Society. He enjoyed skiing and was an avid gardener.

He is survived by sons Eric, David, Donald, and Adam Pierce, daughters Andrea Haber and Aleta Deyo, their spouses, and twelve grandchildren.

Interment will be held on October 16, 2021.

Marczewski departs “America’s Got Talent”

Jane Marczewski, aka “Nightbirde,”

has become a shining ray of light and positivity on social media ever since her brief but impactful appearance on *America’s Got Talent*. She was poised as one of the favorites to win, but announced her departure prior to the live shows, as she con-

tinues to battle cancer.

She returned

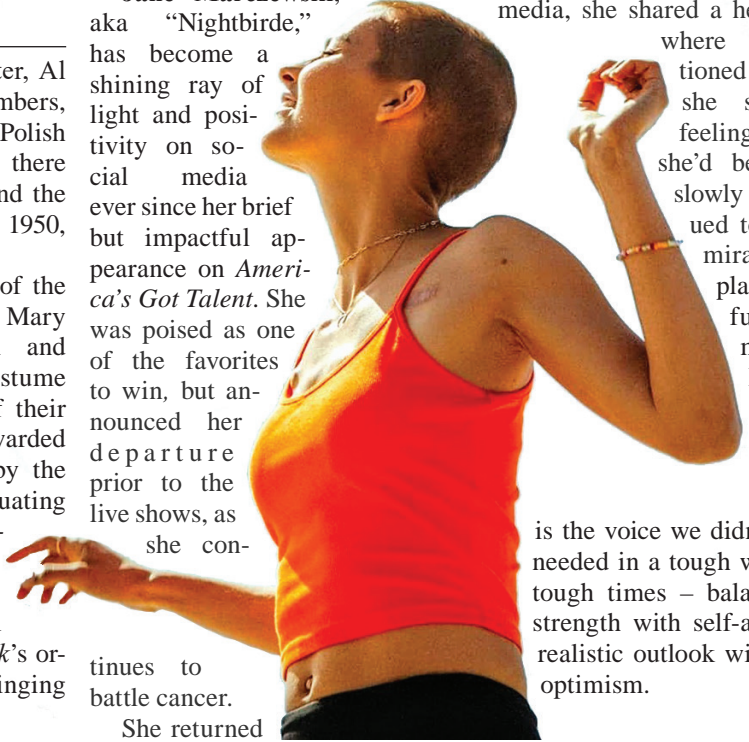
to the show via video link to talk to the judges and host, revealing her disbelief that her audition video had more than 200 million views online. Her song “It’s OK,” went to number one on iTunes with over 1.5 million listeners.

Lead judge Simon Cowell was visibly emotional as he told the singer: “You made the decision rightly so that your health is your priority right now... Even though you haven’t competed you have already won.”

Since her untimely exit from the show, she has used her fame to advocate for good and hope. On social media, she shared a health update

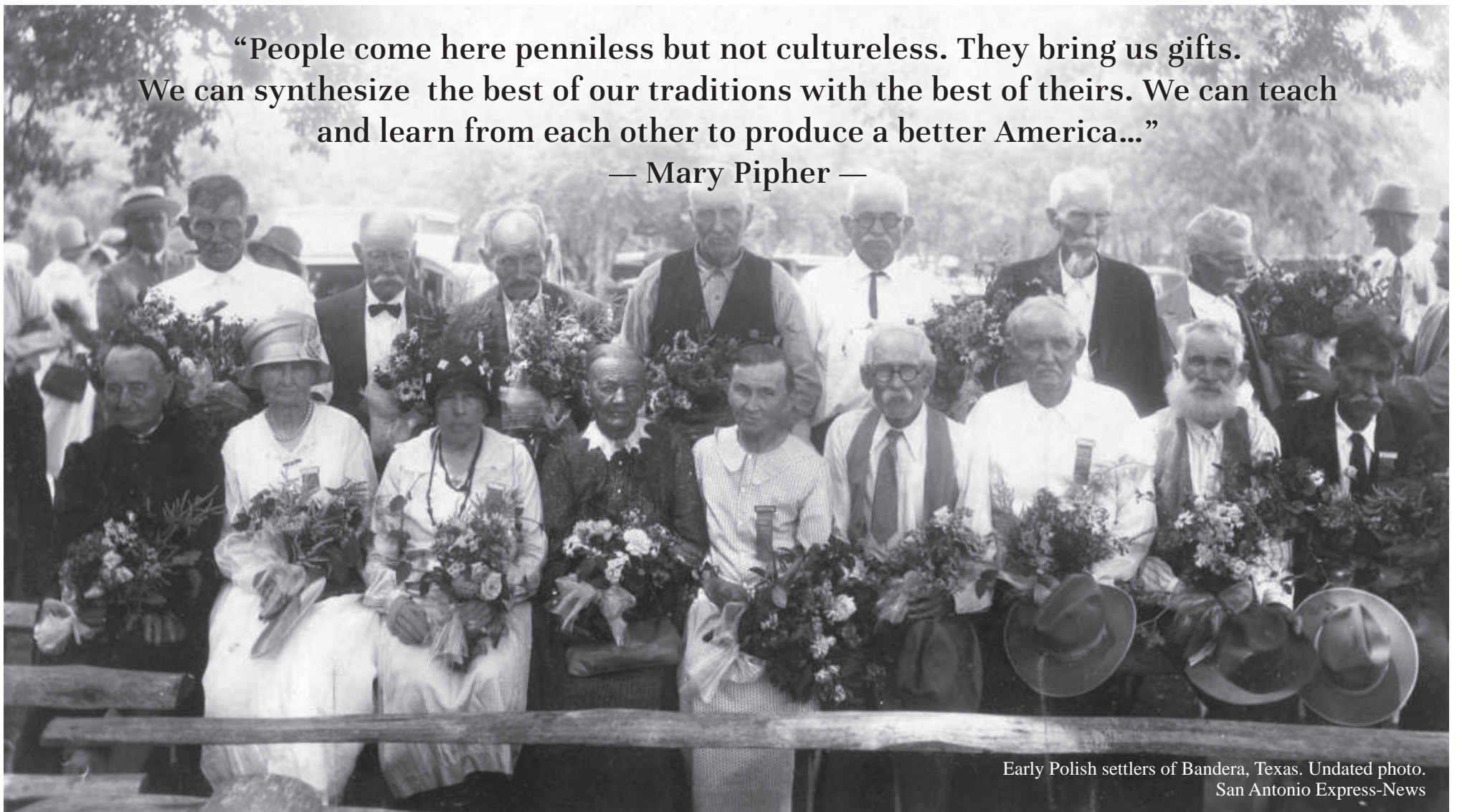
where she mentioned that, while she still wasn’t feeling her best, she’d been healing slowly and continued to believe in miracles. “I’m planning my future, not my legacy. Pretty beat up, but I’ve still got dreams.”

Today, she is the voice we didn’t know we needed in a tough world during tough times – balancing inner strength with self-awareness; a realistic outlook with a core of optimism.



“People come here penniless but not cultureless. They bring us gifts. We can synthesize the best of our traditions with the best of theirs. We can teach and learn from each other to produce a better America...”

— Mary Pipher —



Early Polish settlers of Bandera, Texas. Undated photo. San Antonio Express-News

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THE POLISH CHEF

Non-tomato gołąbki: different but delicious

by Robert Strybel

Are you stuck in a tomatoey rut as far as gołąbki (stuffed cabbage rolls), are concerned? It's true that most cooks drench their stuffed cabbage with pureed tomatoes, tomato concentrate, stewed tomatoes or canned condensed tomato soup, often zinged up with ketchup, but there also exist very tasty, non-tomatoey alternatives. Some of them are given below.

First core 3-4 lb cabbage, place cored-side-down in pot of hot water to cover and simmer to wilt leaves. Remove outer leaves as they wilt to rack or absorbent paper to drain. When cool enough to handle shave down the thick central vein of cabbage leaves. Place an oblong scoop of your favorite ground meat & rice filling at the base end of each leaf. Fold sides of leaf over filling and roll up. Place cabbage rolls side by side in a baking dish or roasting pan in no more than 2 layers and drench with one of the sauces/toppings given below. Bake in covered pan in pre-heated 375° oven 1 hr, then reduce heat to 325° and cook another 60-90 min. Switch off heat and let stand in oven at least 30 min for flavors to blend.

MUSHROOM SAUCE (sos grzybowy): Wash, drain and dice 8-12 oz fresh white or Portobello mushrooms and brown lightly with a minced onion in 2 T butter. Separately, dissolve 1 Knorr or Winiary mushroom bouillon cube in 3 c boiling water, combine with browned mushrooms, salt & pepper to taste and pour over gołąbki before cooking. Note: Instead of fresh mushrooms, you can use a can of condensed cream of mushroom soup.

SOUR-CREAM SAUCE (sos śmietanowy): Before cooking, drench gołąbki with 3 c home-made meat stock or made with store-bought beef or poultry bouillon (cubes, granules) and bake as usual. When they



are done, pour off any remaining pan liquid and add enough stock to make 2 c. Melt 2 T butter in skillet, sprinkle in a little flour (1 T or so) and little by little whisk in the pan liquid. When it bubbles, stir in 1 c sour cream, whisking into a uniform sauce and simmering until bubbly. Salt and pepper to taste and pour over cooked gołąbki on serving platter.

PORK NUGGETS (ze skwarkami): Dice ¼ to 1/3 lb pork fat back (słonina). It is available at Polish groceries and delis. Scrape off and discard excess salt from the salted variety. Fry up to a nice golden brown on all sides and pour the skwarki and their rendered

fat over the gołąbki before baking. You can also use ½ to 1/3 lb diced, thick-sliced bacon.

FATBACK OR BACON ROUX (zasmażka ze skwarkami): Dice pork fatback or thick-sliced bacon as above and brown lightly in skillet. Stir in 1 T or so flour and, stirring constantly, brown. Stir in 1 c meat stock and pour over gołąbki before baking.

Bonus Recipe

PLUM CAKE (placek ze śliwkami): Beat 1/2 c butter and 1 c sugar until smooth (about 2 min). Continue beating, adding 2 eggs 1 at a time. Separately, mix 2 c flour with 2 t baking powder and 1/4 t salt and sift into bowl. Gradually stir in the butter-sugar-egg mixture, 1/2 t vanilla extract and 3/4 c milk, beating the whole time until smooth. Transfer dough to greased square or rectangular baking pan. Top dough with ripe Italian plum halves (węgierki) cut-side-up. Dot with about 2 T cold butter and bake in preheated 350° oven about 40-45 min, or until inserted wooden pick comes out clean.

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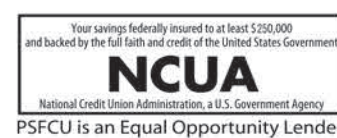


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WASHINGTON, D.C.

Poland's Resolute Defenders Celebrated: Defense Attaché

by Richard Poremski

WASHINGTON, D.C. – It was a kaleidoscope of colors that depicted the numerous Polish, American, and other national military uniforms – all adorned with their gold braid and decorations – among the ebb and flow of attendees. But an indispensable part of the uniform of the day, for both the military and civilian guests, was the obligatory face mask since all preventive COVID-19 protocols were in place and being observed.

The annual occasion being celebrated was Polish Armed Forces Day. Approximately 200 guests were in attendance at the residence of the Polish Ambassador Piotr Wilczek, the host. The guests included numerous military attachés from allied and friendly countries' embassies, every branch of the Polish and U.S. Armed Forces, U.S. government officials, honored guests, and the Polonia. Also in attendance was a large contingent of Polish Army veterans.

The World War II Polish Living History group of military reenactors from South Carolina, and another group from Pennsylvania, specialized in portraying the military campaigns and battles of the Polish II Corps. Both inside and on the back lawn of the residence there was an amazing, large, authentic display of the uniforms being worn, miscellaneous personal equipment and items, relevant documents and photo displays, including an arsenal of deactivated weapons, and most surprisingly of all – an operational tracked tankette!

After being introduced by the emcee, Lieutenant Colonel Karol Budniak, Ambassador Piotr Wilczek said in his remarks that Polish Armed Forces Day commemorates the 1920 victory of Poland over the invading Bolshevik (Russian) Red



Defense Attaché Major General Cezary Wiśniewski.

Army at the banks of the Warsaw's Vistula River. It was a monumental and historic victory that prevented the on-rushing communist Red Tide from washing over all of then-prostrated Western Europe. He also noted the critical support of the numerous American military volunteers in the pivotal battle.

Unity Underlined

Ambassador Wilczek commented on NATO's strong solidarity, and the special U.S.-Poland Transatlantic Alliance. Poland's, and NATO's, eastern flank is now bolstered by U.S. ground and air forces stationed there to deter against Russian aggression.

In regards to Afghanistan, the ambassador stated that despite the recent conclusion of NATO's military operations there, Poland dutifully fulfilled its difficult supportive military mission and obligations there. "We felt responsible for our Afghan partners there who cooperated with our NATO partners there and needed our assistance. The Polish Airforce evacuated 1,000 Afghans while 100 Polish troops secured the evacuation process on the ground. 31,000 Polish soldiers

served in Afghanistan over two decades, 44 died in the line of duty, 867 were injured. We must not forget their sacrifice."

Defense Attaché Major General Cezary Wiśniewski, the co-host of the celebration, read a letter from Poland's Minister of National Defense Mariusz Błaszczak in which he said that the number of U.S. troops (in Poland) will grow significantly, and that Poland is now purchasing advanced American military equipment. The minister said that the Polish-Bolshevik War (1920) is a very good example of American support. 20,000 Polish American volunteers formed the "Blue Army" which played a pivotal role in the victory over the Soviets, as did the 21 American aviators of

the famous Kosciuszko Squadron.

Military honors were also awarded on this celebratory day:

- U.S. Major General James Hoyer (Ret.) — The Officers Cross, Order of Merit, of the Republic of Poland by President Andrzej Duda.
- U.S. Major Andrew Underwood — The Polish Armed Forces Medal by Minister of National Defense Mariusz Błaszczak.
- Janusz Romanski presented Major General Cezary Wiśniewski with the Polish Army Veterans Association Award.
- The Illinois Military Order of Merit was presented to Major General Cezary Wiśniewski by U.S. Major General Richard Neely, adjutant general of the Il-

linois National Guard.

A citation was read for each awardee that amplified the unique circumstances associated with each medal awarded. The accomplishments and contributions cited were without rival and nothing short of spectacular in scope.

It was also time to bid farewell to Major General Wiśniewski, The Defense, Military, Naval and Air Attaché at the Embassy of Poland, on completing his four-year tour of duty. The general, with his wife Agnieszka standing at his side, thanked everyone for their support and friendship, saying he genuinely enjoyed his time here with everyone both on a professional and personal basis. He will now return to Warsaw and await his new assignment.

Belarusian Activist Kalesnikava Named Recipient Karski Award

WARSAW —The 2021 "Spirit of Jan Karski" award, presented by the Jan Karski Educational Foundation, was given to Belarusian opposition activist Maria Kalesnikava. She is currently imprisoned for demonstrating the values represented by Karski through fierce activism on defending human rights.

The recipient's sister, Tatsiana Khomich, accepted the award on her behalf at a ceremony held June

22 at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

In addition to the Spirit award, three young Poles were honored with the Karski 2020 award for fortitude, sacrifice, and courage demonstrated during the pandemic: Urszula Woźniak, a medical student, who has been taking care of COVID-19 senior patients and organized voluntary hospital work among medical students; Aleksan-

dra K. Wiśniewska, who participates in humanitarian action in war zones, including Yemen; and Tomasz Głazewski, a medical doctor who takes care of homeless people and founded the "Ambulance of the Heart" Foundation.

The Karski Foundations recognize those who defend human rights and dignity by speaking out against racism, and who guard ethnic and religious groups.

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Polish American Journal Foundation

The PAJF is a non-profit 501c3 organization established to promote Polish and Polish American culture and traditions among members of the public and other Polish and Polish American groups. It does this by organizing and supporting special events, networking, and providing consultation to individuals and groups, which seek to learn more about the Polish community in the United States.



As a national newspaper serving Polish immigrants and their descendants since 1911, the Polish American Journal has a unique perspective on the shortfalls – primarily funding – that have prevented many great projects from getting off the ground. We also have grown increasingly frustrated to see students – future leaders, who are passionate about Polonia – seek other areas of study because they could not secure something as simple as airfare to study in Poland or abroad. Likewise, we see so many talented academicians, scholars, artists, folk groups – the list goes on – whose special projects or areas of study have been dropped for lack of funds. In many cases, state or federal arts or cultural funding is available, but these groups cannot afford processing fees to meet application requirements. It is time to start helping our own.

MEMBERSHIP. Donations are accepted in any amount. All donations will be acknowledged and may be used as charitable contributions on your tax return. As a member, you can suggest any worthwhile cause: a donation to a local Polish American museum; veteran's group; scholarship fund; dance group, etc. Our board reviews these suggestions and creates a ballot of the most-requested causes/recipients, which will then be voted on by current members. (Membership is yearly, starting with the date of your most recent donation). All members reserve the right to abstain from being a voting member. Membership levels start at "Friend of the PAJF" (Any amount up to \$49.99); "Individual" (\$50.00); "Family" (\$100.00); "Sustaining" (\$250.00); "Patron" (\$500.00); "Benefactor" (\$1,000.00); and "Chairman's Circle" (\$2,500.00 or more).

Since 2014, the Polish American Journal Foundation has been providing scholarships to both undergraduate and graduate students, through its Kamylla and Czeslaw Kaszuba Scholarship.

DONATIONS OF \$50.00 OR MORE entitle the member for a courtesy subscription to the Polish American Journal. If you wish to give this as a gift, please provide recipient's name and address on a separate piece of paper.

SINCE 1911, the Polish American Journal has been an advocate for Poles and their descendants in the United States. Help us utilize over a century of the Polish American experience to support those who share our core values of strong family, faith, and community.

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In 1978, a voluntary fund-raising campaign was launched by a group of loyal readers of the Polish American Journal entitled "We Love the PAJ Press Fund" in order to help cover rising postage, material and production costs.

Donations to the PAJ Press Fund are also used to support our reader services (postage, telephone, research, etc.), provide newsclippers with stamps and envelopes, and cover extraordinary expenses in producing the paper, most recently, replacing a computer workstation. **The Polish American Journal is not a profit-making venture.** Thanks to its dedicated staff, the PAJ is published as a "public service" for American Polonia.

Donations to the PAJ Press Fund will be acknowledged in the paper unless otherwise directed by the contributor.

A sincere "THANK YOU" for your donation to the PAJ PRESS Press fund: Gerald V. Dajnowicz, Detroit; Dr. John A. Nizioł, Clifton, N.J.; Patricia Pac, Oil City, Pa.; Donald & Judy Palinski, Temperance, Mich.; Frances & Jane Surowiec, Chicago; Henry and Barbara Szwak, Audubon, N.J.; Uncle Tad & Davey, Wayne, Pa.; Vicki Williams, Chicago; Gary J. Zielinski, Canandaigua, N.Y.; and three Friends of the PAJ. Dziękujemy wam wszystkim! The PAJ thanks all who donated.

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PONDERING POLE

Saving all the “towns,” “hills,” and “villages”

by Ed Poniewaz

Regarding “Poletown,” the main topic for this issue of the *Polish American Journal*, let's start with a couple stories.

Back in the '80s, not long out of college, I worked for a medium-size regional airline headquartered in St. Louis and as a result was able to fly around domestically and internationally, often and cheaply. During that same period, I discovered *Perspectives*, which some of you remember was a Polish American Educational and Cultural Bi-monthly published by Polish-born Marta Korwin Rhodes out of Washington, D.C.

The mission of *Perspectives* was to heighten awareness through communication for Poles and others about overt bias and defamation aimed at Polonia in the United States. There was much of it then and I liked how Mrs. Rhodes chose to combat it. A workshop was held each year to discuss new issues, developments, and strategies. I attended several of them, met many great people, and subsequently my perspective on various things relating to Polonia changed.

While at the conference that occurred at the same time 11th hour appeals were being made to stop the destruction of Poletown, a young man from Detroit (didn't catch his name), reported with passion and pleading for those in attendance to contact company officials and politicians and join the fight to stop the destruction of the neighborhood. He was on the phone a lot and at times seemed frantic. He was amazing; I did nothing.

I'm sorry now I did not react with more interest but here is the other story with some irony. Before the Poletown tragedy, I had visited Poland and marveled at the medieval style cities and architecture. With that inspiration I created a proposal to develop, rebuild, and recreate a European village around St. Stanislaus Koska Church in St. Louis that would complement and enhance its historic architecture and presence and utilize the vacant lots bordering the church property. I floated the idea to a number of individuals but to no avail. Perhaps it was too impractical or unappealing. Whatever the reason I filed it away for another day, which never came.

The lesson? Perhaps in the '80s there were still enough of us and our neighborhoods to go around and losing one to Detroit politicians and General Motors corporate muscle didn't seem like a big deal. Perhaps



Christine Ilewski displays the first of her “Faces,” project: a 16-year-old boy named William, who lost his life during a robbery at the fast-food restaurant he worked at in Chicago.

there was just too much on our own local plates and “out with the old and in with the new” was in fashion for housing development. Now that our ethnic pie has gotten so much smaller, what happens to a Polish church in Minneapolis becomes my fight now.

While we still lose battles for individual structures and places, for comparisons sake, I am thinking about the bevy of Poletown-like cultural and historical neighborhoods and areas in Chicago that are being preserved, naturally or by gentrification, from blight, flight, and destruction. One of those especially with a Polish connection is the Avondale neighborhood in the northwest part of the city.

While much of it is mostly comprised of Hispanic residents, Avondale, along with Kosciuszko Park are at the northwestern edge of the Milwaukee Avenue “Polish Corridor,” a contiguous stretch of Polish settlement which spanned this thoroughfare all the way from Polonia Triangle at Milwaukee, Division and Ashland to Irving Park Road. Also called the “Polish Village” (or Jackowo), it is home to St. Hyacinth Basilica and St. Wenceslaus churches, as well as many Polish institutions that remain faithful to their traditions. With its offerings of sausage and Slavic pastries, Milwaukee Avenue between Central Park Avenue and Pulaski Road is the commercial heart of the neighborhood. Avondale is still there and holding.

Moving forward, it is important

to remember that historical towns, hills, or villages and buildings are valuable because, even if there is not one person living there or involved from the original group, the history and stability of the place is worth cherishing and preserving. That, at least, is my perspective on the legend of Poletown, or what could have been Avondale.

Polish or not?

Jonas Piontek is a photographer from Germany who specializes in taking pictures of spectacular lightening shows and “dramatic pictures of landscapes in exceptional weather conditions” in all parts of the world. You can see his work on YouTube, Facebook, and visit his website <http://jonaspiontek.com>. Jonas is a German national and has the Polish name, but does he have a Polish connection, or not?

There is an artist who lives in Alton, Illinois named Christine Ilewski. “She has been the Visiting Artist for Liquitex for 20 years, bringing a materials and methods workshop to university campuses around the Midwest.”

She mainly paints with acrylics, and her focus has recently shifted from human subjects to landscapes with the mighty Mississippi as an inspiration and concept. Her studio overlooks the river. A worthy and heartrending undertaking and a direct answer to anyone that questions whether art has meaning is the Faces Not Forgotten project she started in 2013, a project “which uses portraits to memorialize young victims of gun violence ... The families receive the original portrait, and a copy is used to create quilts that are exhibited nationally to raise awareness of this horrific loss.”

That is powerful stuff, Christine has accomplished a lot, and you can view her work at <https://www.chrisilewski.com>. If you want to learn more about Faces Not Forgotten or to make a donation, visit <http://facesnotforgotten.org>.

I wrote about Blue Seal kielbasa last month based in the town of Chicopee, Massachusetts. To this day I remember the name and face of Mr. Ed Dobek of Chicopee who would also show up at the *Perspectives* conferences back in the '80s. What a delightful and friendly guy and I enjoyed seeing him and talking “Polish” with him. I loved the way he said “Chicopee” as he kept reminding me that is where he was from.

Happy Halloween and get out the sweaters. I saw one weather prediction for a very cold winter.

IN MEMORIAM

Vivian A. Walkosz, Educator and Supporter of Polish Arts Club of Chicago



Vivian A. Walkosz, Ed.D., 93, a lifelong Chicagoan, passed away on July 4, 2021. She was a long-

time resident of Chicago's South Side “Back of the Yards” neighborhood. Walkosz played an active role as a Life Member of the Polish Arts Club of Chicago (PACC), serving in many roles including that of its president and chairperson of the PACC's Art Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture. She was a tenured professor at Northeastern Illinois University's Department of Curriculum, and after her retirement, was honored with Professor Emerita status.

Walkosz was also an active Life Member of The Polish Museum of America. She was the beloved aunt of many nieces and nephews.

Gregory W. Stepanek Devoted Band Director

Gregory W. Stepanek, 67, passed away on August 28, 2021. A native of Cicero, Illinois, who lived in Berwyn, Gregory spent years as a publications representative for the Chicago Transit Authority, as well as 23 years as an elementary school band director for the Archdiocese of Chicago. He was the co-founder of the Notre Dame High School Community Youth Band Program

in Niles. Gregory was a member of the Polish National Alliance, a member and volunteer of The Polish Museum of America, and a member of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America. He was also a voting member of the Illinois Railroad Museum in Union, Illinois. He leaves behind numerous cousins and was grand uncle to many.

— Geraldine Balut Coleman

Edward J. Kutas, Sr., Owner of Polish Villas

Edward Kutas, Sr., the owner of Buffalo's Polish Villa I and Polish Villa II, passed away on Sept. 18, 2021.

The son of Edward Chester Kutas Sr. — a well-known and important promoter of polka music in Buffalo and Western New York who owned and operated of the historic Warsaw Inn in the heart of the Polish East Side — followed his father footsteps by opening and operating

two of Buffalo's most famous Polish restaurants, the Polish Villa I on Union Road in Cheektowaga, and the Polish Villa II on Harlem Road in the same township.

He is survived by his wife Irene; children Edward K. (Rosanna), Kevin, and Renee D. (Jay) Garrow; grandchildren; and brother Lawrence M. Kutas, Annmarie (Thomas) Rustowicz; and the late Robert (Nancy) Kutas.

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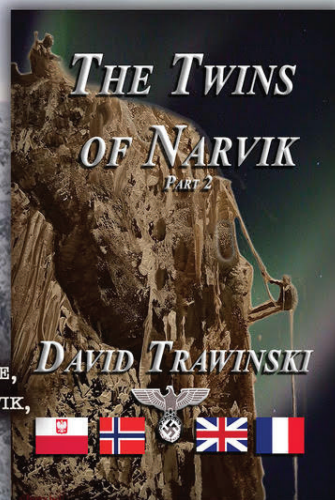
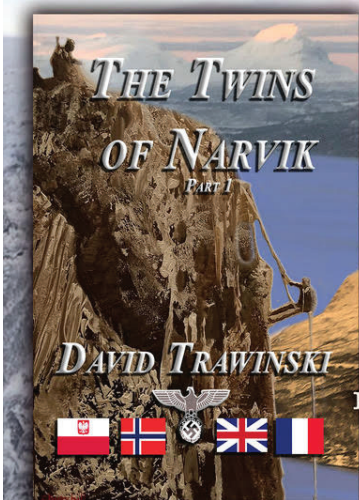
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POLKA CALENDAR

Compiled by John Ziobrowski

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

OCTOBER 1

- John Stevens — VFW, Mifflingburg, Pa. (570) 966-9254
- Live Wire — Bridge Up Brewing, Fish Creek, Wisc. (920) 743-2300
- The Burgh Boys — The Sports Grille, Cranberry Township Pa. (412) 260-9725

OCT 2

- Special Delivery — Cloverbank Country Club Oktoberfest, Rogers Rd., Hamburg, NY 6:00-10:00 p.m. (716) 648-2700
- Dennis Polisky — Aeronaut Brewing, Allston, Mass. 2:30-7:30 (617) 987-4235
- John Stevens — Liederkrantz, Reading, Pa. (610) 373-3982
- Live Wire — Grand Lake Grille, St. Cloud, Minn. 6-10 (320) 654-1811
- Kosmix / Del Sinchak — The Sports Grille, Cranberry Township, Pa. (412) 260-9725

OCTOBER 3

- Dennis Polisky — Polish Club, Uxbridge, Mass. 1-5 (413) 531-7576
- Eddie Forman — VFW, Dupont, Pa. 2-6 (570) 650-0436
- John Stevens — Sloop Brewing, Hopewell Junction, N.Y. (518) 751-9134

OCTOBER 8

- Lenny Gomulka — Oktoberfest, Owosso, Mich. 5-11:30 (989) 723-5149

OCTOBER 9

- Dennis Polisky — Ocean Mist, Wakefield, R.I. 2-6 (401) 782-3740
- John Gora — St. Stanislaus, Cleveland, Ohio. 6-10 (216) 341-9091
- Lenny Gomulka — Oktoberfest, Owosso, Mich. 2-8 (989) 723-5149
- Tony's Polka Band — The Village, Lake George, N.Y. 6-10 (518) 668-5324
- Eastern Sound — Loon Mtn., Lincoln, N.H. (603) 642-4134
- Mike Surratt — Fish Head Cantina, Halethorpe, Md. 6-10 (410) 247-2474
- John Stevens — Bethlehem, Pa. 12-4 (610) 297-7100
- John Stevens — Marty Magee's, Prospect Park, Pa. 7-11 (610) 583-9880
- IPA Tribute Band — Polish Heritage Ctr., St. Louis, Mo. (314) 488-6669
- The Main Squeeze — Star Club, Kettle River, Minn. 7-11, (218) 380-1867

OCTOBER 10

- Special Delivery — McCarthy's Old Ward Brewing Co., Buffalo, N.Y. Parade at noon, and music at McCarthy's to follow. (716) 855-8948
- Dennis Polisky — Revel 32, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 1-5 (845) 244-8880
- Polka Country Musicians — Polish Cultural Foundation Clark, N.J. 2-6 (201) 694-2330
- Lenny Gomulka — PRCUA Hall, Wyandotte, Mich. 2-6 (734) 281-7036
- Swingmasters — VFW, DuPont, Pa. 2-6 (570) 650-0436
- Eastern Sound — Loon Mtn., Lincoln, N.H. (603) 642-4134
- John Stevens — Steelstacks, Bethlehem, Pa. 12-4 (610) 297-7100
- Honky Chicago — Glendora House, Chicago Ridge, Ill. 1-5 (708) 425-3686
- Duane Malinowski — Czech Club, Dayton, Ohio. 3-7 (937) 287-4275
- The Beat — PACC, Ludlow, Mass. 2:30-6:30 (413) 23-4596

OCTOBER 11

- Special Delivery — Polish Falcons, Depew, N.Y. 1:30-5:30 (716) 684-2373

OCTOBER 15

- Livewire — Back Water, Prairie Due Chein, Wisc. 6-10(608) 389-1021

OCTOBER 16

- Special Delivery — The Nite-Cappe, Lackawanna, N.Y. 6-9 (716) 892-9488
- Dennis Polisky — PLAV, Pine Island, N.Y. 7-11 (845) 258-4168
- Lenny Gomulka — St. John Cantius, Cleveland, Ohio. 6-10 (216) 781-9095
- Tony's Polka Band — Adirondack

Brewing, Lake George, N.Y. 1-5 (518) 668-0002

- Jimmy Sturr — Elks Pavilion, Greenwood Lake, N.Y. 5pm
- John Stevens — Hoover Country House, Camp Hill, Pa. 12:30-3:30 (717) 710-3726
- Livewire — Back Water, Prairie Due Chein, Wisc. 11-5 (608) 380-1021

OCTOBER 17

- Special Delivery — St. Andrew's, Sloan, N.Y. Polka Mass 11 a.m. (716) 892-0425
- John Stevens — VFW, Dupont, Pa. 2-6 (570) 650-0436
- Eddie Forman — PACC, Ludlow, Mass. 2-6 (413) 283-4596
- DynaBrass — PACUA Misiuda Hall, Toledo, Ohio. 2-6 (419) 351-5031
- The Main Squeeze — Lockport Moose Lodge, Lockport, Ill., 2-6, Keith Stras (877) 904-4646

OCTOBER 22-24

- Jimmy Sturr / Joe Stanky / John Stanky / Squeezebox / Polka Quads / Walt Ostanek — Villa Roma Callicoon, N.Y. (800) 724-0727

OCTOBER 22

- Polka Country Musicians — Murzyn Hall, Columbia Hts., Minn. 7-11

OCTOBER 23

- John Stevens — Wild Eagle Saloon, Broadview Heights, Ohio. 7-11 (440) 736-7707
- Tony's Polka Band — Silo Rest., Greene, N.Y. 1-5 (607) 656-4377

OCTOBER 24

- Dennis Polisky — Polish Home, Philadelphia, Pa. 2-6 (215) 906-1825
- John Gora — Slovenian Hall, Yukon, Pa. 3-7 (724) 722-9700
- Polka Country Musicians — Moose Lodge, River Grove, Ill. 2-6 (708) 456-1560
- George Tarasek — VFW, Dupont, Pa. 2-6 (570) 650-0436

OCTOBER 30

- Concertina All Stars — Kinloch Fire Hall, New Kensington, Pa. 6-10 (412) 260-9725

OCTOBER 31

- Joe Stanky — VFW, Dupont, Pa. 2-6 (570) 650-0436
- Tony's Polka Band — Polish Community Club, Utica, N.Y. 1-5 (315) 732-0089

NOV. 5

- DynaVersaStickToneAires / Energy — Holiday Inn, Independence, Ohio. 7-1 (440) 886-6157

NOV. 6

- Polka Family / Polka Country Musicians / Lenny Gomulka — Holiday Inn, Independence, Ohio. 4-1 (440) 886-6157

NOV. 7

- Dennis Polisky — PACC, Ludlow, Mass. 2:30-6:30 (413) 283-4596
- John Stanky — VFW, Dupont, Pa. 2-6 (570) 650-0436
- Eddie Forman — Roselawn Rest., New York Mills, N.Y. 2- (315) 735-5030
- Tony's Polka Band — Fire Hall, Glenfield, N.Y. (315) 376-2511
- Randy Krajewski & Badinov — PRCUA Misiuda Hall, Toledo, Ohio. 2-6 (419) 351-5031

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NAME	BORN	DIED	KNOWN FOR	CITY, STATE
2 Eddie Benbenek	1932	1997	Musician / Vocalist (Original Marion Lush Band)	Chicago
2 Jimmy Killian	1942		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Chicago
4 Frank Wojnarowski	1907	8/24/94	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Connecticut
5 Bruno Mikos	1946		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Ohio
6 Casey Homel	1942	12/15/07	Bandleader / Musician	Chicago
6 Eddie Ogrodny	1951		Musician / Vocalist (Li'l Ronnie & Carousels)	Pa.
7 John Jeski	1953	8/19/07	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Conn.
8 Joe Stolarz	1950		Musician / Vocalist	Pa.
9 Andy Fenus	1944		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist (Tel/Tones)	Pa.
9 Dave Morris			Musician / Vocalist	Pa.
9 Dave Zychowski			Musician / Vocalist	Pa.
9 Craig Ebel	1963		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist / DJ	Minn.
9 Keith Stras	1961		Promoter / DJ / Vocalist	Ill.
10 Al Kania	1946		Musician / Vocalist	N.Y.
10 Michalene Korosa			Manager (Eddie Korosa & Boys From Illinois)	Ill.
11 Zennon (Zeke) Esula			Accordianist	Ill.
11 Jimmy K. Krzeszewski	1959		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist / Distributor	Mich.
12 Polish Bill Morano	1938		Polka DJ / Promoter	Johnstown, Pa.
12 Hank Marzuchowski	1949		Musician (Drummer)	N.J.
14 Chuck Pendrak	1954		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	N.J.
15 Larry Olson	1951		Musician	N.C.
15 Mike Ziemski			Musician	Md.
17 Eddie (Mack) McKrisky	1921	6/23/06	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Pa.
17 Fran Fierst			Polka Promoter (Fran's Polka Weekends)	N.J.
20 Tommy Kostek			Accordianist (Golden Brass, New Brass)	Mass.
23 Alvin Styczynski	1935		Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist / DJ	Wisc.
25 Paul Romanowski	1965		Musician / Vocalist / DJ	N.C.
25 Randy Koslosky			Musician / Vocalist / Arranger	Pa.
27 Sam Pugliano	1935	6/13/13	Bandleader / Musician / DJ	Pa.
28 Larry Szabo	1954	3/10/09	Bandleader / Musician / Vocalist	Toledo
29 Dave Walter	1969		Bandleader / Vocalist (Old School, TBC)	Ohio
31 Frank Powaski			Polka D. J. / Promoter	Pa.

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DANCE TIME

Talent Abounds at IPA Festival

by Jennifer Pijanowski

After cancelling the 2020 convention in Buffalo, International Polka Association outdid itself planning this year's convention. Hundreds of polka fans filled the beautifully appointed Hilton Doubletree Cranberry located just outside of Pittsburgh to celebrate the festival's return. Many arrived early on Thursday for the kickoff party featuring **The Burgh Boys** at the Cranberry Elks Lodge # 2249. The band featured Chris and Eric Bogdon, Rich Zebrowski, Rich Kois, Randy Koslosky, and RJ Bogdon. The dance proceeds benefitted the Elks Lodge and gave festival attendees an evening of warm up dancing and mingling before the big event began off on Friday.

A welcome party with the **Kosmix** filled the afternoon before music moved into the large hall at 6:00 with music by **Steve Meisner**. His unique blending of traditional polkas — done in the Slovenian style — brought a professional intensity,



Keith Stras and Rick Rzeszutko — IPA Awards Banquet

making it easy to see why Meisner has received so many awards and accolades.

In 2019, Steve joined his father Verne as an IPA Hall of Famer with a vast list of accomplishments. The crowd welcomed and genuinely enjoyed experiencing the Slovenian style of polka music.

The stellar lineup continued with two of my favorites: **Energy** and **Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push**. Smiling is contagious while catching Energy on stage with their heartfelt lyrics and originality. There are “shots” of śledzie, rollerblades, whistling, and so much crowd participation that it is impossible to explain unless you witness this group in person. Watching polka fans, it appears that Energy will be highly requested for many events and festivals in the future.

After not seeing Lenny perform for almost two years, I made certain to make it to the festival on Friday to hear one of my all-time favorites. Time off has not kept this band from continuing to wow the crowd with hit after hit. Beautiful lyrics with a star-studded band of musicians, a festival just isn't the same without Lenny and his band front and center. It's easily understood how Lenny Gomulka has been named Male Vocalist of the year 22 times and has received over 50 music awards. His ensemble of musicians gives the heartbeat to one of the most loved bands performing on polka stages around the country today.

Saturday's award ceremony cel-

ebrated inductees and award winners for 2020 and 2021. New Hall of Fame Inductees included **Rick Rzeszutko**, **Bill Shibilski**, **Dave Zychowski**, as well as the late **Tony “Krew” Krupski**, and **Ellsworth “Babe” Wagner** for 2020. Mi-



Ann and Szymanski at the IPA Convention.

chael Costa, **Walter Procanyn**, **Richard “Jersey Polka Richie” Drongoski**, and **Dr. William Lausche** joined this distinguished group for 2021. Congratulations to all of the Hall of Famers as well as the many musicians, vocalists, and bands who won the prestigious IPA music awards for the year 2020. It is your dedication and commitment to polka music that got us through the year of cancelled festivals and events.

Gorgeous sunny weather furnished a perfect setting for the afternoon pool party showcasing **Mon Valley Push**. The indoor/outdoor pool area gave plenty of space for enjoying the band, dancing, and swimming, as many fans took the opportunity to enjoy the weather and great music. **Mon Valley Push** hails from the Western Pennsylvania area and has been performing since 2003. This group boasts some young talent that is pushing the envelope on very unique compilations and arrangements on the polka scene. A wonderful choice to keep the polka weekend intensity in full force.

Saturday evening's lineup included **IPA Tribute Band**, **Klancik & Friends**, and **Polka Family**. IPA Tribute Band is always a joy to watch as there is a surplus of talent among these musicians. I personally love hearing Melvin's vocals from the back reminding me of those great songs from **Downtown Sound**. A highlight of the IPA festival is witnessing IPA Hall of Famers join the band on stage for a song showcasing their talents. This year was no exception as Kevin Adams, Dave Zychowski, Billy Belina, Jimmy Weber, Mitch Biskup, Randy Koslosky, and Lenny Gomulka were some of those to join the band.

I find myself in awe every year as the band flawlessly adapts to each song and performs without missing a beat. Another Slovenian style band took to the bandstand Saturday giving another opportunity to appreciate the outstanding musicianship in other styles of polka music. **Klancik & Friends** took

no time stunning the audience with their energy, stamina, and ability to conjure up an immediate fan following. The accordion players and drummer played at such an exuberant pace that polka musicians and fans became quickly mesmerized by their talent and musicianship. Overall, I have to admit that this band took me by surprise and I look forward to catching them at another show very soon. Of course, it is no surprise that Polka Family Band corralled a huge crowd in front of the stage. Always upbeat and filled with great polka hits Hank is always ready for the show. Hank's nephew Alex keeps the beat on the drums. At one point Hank joined Alex on the drums just blowing the roof off the place. Alex and Hank also took turns switching spots to give Alex the opportunity to sing and flaunt his talents on the trumpet.

You cannot be a polka fan without admiring the music and vocals of **Stas Golonka**. During Saturday's festivities, the Golonka Family made a presentation of a beautiful shadow box remembering Stas, to be placed in the IPA Hall of Fame. The shadow box included pictures of his recording covers, graphics reading the “King of Honky,” and his iconic gold crown pendant necklace.

Sunday started off right with a Polka Mass highlighting music by **The Kosmix**. The Annual Election of Offices and Convention Meeting were held and two of my favorite polka gals were elected to the IPA board. Congratulations to **Annie Stec** and **Christy Nowakowski** on their appointments — I know they have the heart and energy to compliment this stellar group of hard-working polka advocates.

Five bands rounded out the final day of festivities with **Ray J & Carousels** taking the stage first. Ray J continues to provide fantastic entertainment even after 50 years of leading his band. He welcomed **Mary Lou Czerniak** to do some guest vocals with him. The harmony of their voices was spectacular and it was wonderful to hear some of those favorite traditional polka songs. Next, polka veterans **The Boys** took the stage and quickly

kicked the fans into party mode. It is easy to see how this group, which has been on and off the scene since 1980, keeps blazing polka stages around the country. These gentlemen are all revered in the polka world and show no signs of stopping. **John Gora** could not make the trip across the border

so **Tony Blazonczyk & New Phaze** graciously filled the spot and did a fantastic job. Tony has magnetic stage presence and enthusiasm that invigorates any crowd.

Energetic is the first word that comes to mind when I want to de-



Stas Golonka presentation by Michelle Jones (Stas' daughter), Sue Golonka (wife), and granddaughter.

scribe **Michael Costa & The Beat**. With the latest addition of several young musicians, this band has a whole new grip on both prospective fans and loyal followers. While



Annie Stec and Christy Nowakowski — accepting their positions as directors for IPA

Mike Costa and **Steve Hayest** have incredible chemistry and have performed at many venues, watching the elation of this band with huge crowds in front of them is inspiring. You can clearly see how excited they are to get such positive feedback from the crowd. **Polka Country Musicians** took the stage with a surprising addition of Hank Guzevich filling in for **Richie Dombrowski**. An unusual mix for the band but they brought their best to round out the night. Rocking their greatest hits and entertaining their loyal followers continues to be a successful formula for Polka Country! I look forward to seeing them again at the USPA mini festival in November.

UPCOMING. St. Stanislaus Parish, 6601 Baxter Ave. in Cleveland is holding its parish festival October 8-10, 2021. Free admission with live polka music by **Rewind**, **John Gora & Gorale**, and **Uptown Sounds**. Polish imports, food, dancing, church tours, and more are highlights of this festival in the heart of Slavic Village. You can call (216) 341-9091 or visit www.ststanislaus.org for more information.

Buffalo Concertina All Stars will be performing at Kinloch Fire Hall on 10/30/21 from 6:00-10:00 p.m. Admission is just \$15.00 and awards will be given for the best Halloween costume. You can email chris@bogdonfamily.com for more information about upcoming events.

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POLONIA PLACES

Lackawanna's Holy Trinity PNCC



by Gregory L. Witul

HOLY TRINITY POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH
 39 Pulaski Place
 Lackawanna, New York
 Status: Moved

hall was rented to serve as a church, while property of what would become Pulaski Place was purchased. In time Reverend Joseph Jakobsche was installed as the first pastor.

In 1930, the cornerstone of the church was blessed and from it was raised a small red brick building that could serve as both a worship site and community center. Father Adam Walichiewicz would take over the parish around this time and shepherd it through its early growth. From this growth the Chopin Choir was formed, the Liberty Club was established, and two branches of the Polish National Union organized. As the church entered its steady state phase in the early 1950s Reverend Matthew J. Kubik was placed in charge of Holy Trinity. This motorcycle-riding priest became well known and loved in not only in his parish, but Western New York's Polonia as a whole. Father Kubik would guide the parish for the rest of the century and into the dawn of the new millennium.

The western part of New York State has been the birthplace of a number of Polish National churches. Of the nine parishes, Holy Mother of the Rosary in Buffalo, All Saints in Black Rock, St. Casimir in Rochester, St. Michael the Archangel in Niagara Falls, Our Savior in North Tonawanda, St. John in Jamestown, St. Joseph in Depew, and the Mission Church of Dunkirk, all started out as breakaway factions of Roman Catholic parishes. Leaving one parish, Holy Trinity in Lackawanna, with a unique origin story all its own.

Poles began moving into the area that would become the City of Lackawanna in the late 1800s, and the Roman Catholics among them would start St. Barbara's church in the early 1900s. As these Poles were moving in, the Lackawanna Iron & Steel Company of Scranton, Pa. was looking for a more labor friendly, centrally located, region to serve as their new home. In 1900, they settled on the town of West Seneca on shores of Lake Erie and were soon setting up shop. With the company came a large influx of workers from the old Scranton plant, and many of the Poles among them were Polish National parishioners. Some new New Yorkers attended St. Stanislaus Cathedral, the birthplace of the Polish National movement, in Scranton while others went to the PNCC parishes in Wilkes-Barre or other surrounding communities.

In 1905, the first effort to organize a parish on Holland Street in Lackawanna was undertaken, but poor economic conditions and small numbers stalled out the project. By 1929, about 200 members were living in Lackawanna and they banded together to start a PNCC church in their new home. Under the leadership of Bishop Jasinski and community member Paul Sawicki, a

In the summer of 2008 lightning struck the Pulaski Place church, causing considerable damage. As the congregation considered rebuilding, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo was closing a number of churches around the region, including Our Lady of Grace in Woodlawn. Finding the Woodlawn to be suitable for their needs, the members of Holy Trinity parish decided to purchase the church in March of 2009. On November 14, 2009, Bishop Thaddeus Peplowski of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church dedicated and consecrated the new church home of Holy Trinity, keeping the 70 years of Polish National history alive and well in Lackawanna.

Today, Father Gary Spencer holds 10:30 a.m. Masses every Sunday at the 3319 Lake Shore Rd. church. The Pulaski Place location was taken over by the River of WNY, a community church, but the building was sold in early 2021 and it is unknown what use it will have in the future.

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