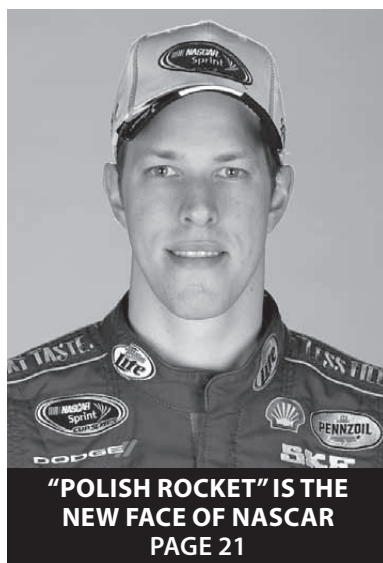


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"POLISH ROCKET" IS THE
NEW FACE OF NASCAR
PAGE 21

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AND ADDITIONAL ENTRY OFFICES

Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia

NEWSMARK

KOMOROWSKI CONGRATULATES OBAMA. President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski offered his congratulations to Barack Obama as Democrats celebrated a second term in the White House.

"Please accept my congratulations on the occasion of your victory in the elections for the office of President of the States of America," Komorowski wrote the morning after the election.

"For years, Poland and the United States have combined traditional ties of friendship with cooperation as allies," said Komorowski. "I believe that your leadership will contribute to the further intensification of the partnership between our two nations, and the strengthening of political, military, economic and cultural ties," he reflected.

Poland's president also referred to Obama's "successful visit" to Warsaw in May 2011.

WILL US DRIFT AWAY FROM EUROPE? A former Polish ambassador to the United States said Obama's victory will see Europe continue to fall down the list of priorities in United States' foreign policy.



REITER

"The American presence in Europe is not over, but its level will be significantly lower than it was in the past," Janusz Reiter, current director of Poland's Centre for International Relations told Polish Radio.

Reiter noted that Obama's foreign policy had "shifted in the direction of Asia," and that "one must expect this trend to continue."

"The willingness of Europe to participate in world politics at the side of America seems to be very small, and the willingness of Poland even smaller," he said.

Former ambassador Reiter added that, based on the evidence of Obama's first four years, Poland's importance to the United States will continue to diminish.

U.S. STAFFS BASE IN POLAND. The United States launched its first permanent military presence on Polish soil, Nov. 9, an Air Force detachment to service warplanes, in a move long sought by its NATO ally Warsaw.

From next year, the ten-resident U.S. staff will service four annual aircraft rotations, mainly of F-16 fighter jets and C-130 Hercules transport planes. Up to 200 uniformed personnel and civilian contractors will also be temporarily on the base.

"This is a very important and symbolic moment for our relations," said Polish Defense Minister Tomasz Siemoniak at an opening ceremony. "This is not just rhetoric, but a very tangible example."

The increased presence of U.S. military in Poland is certain to complicate relations with Russia.

STEP BY STEP. Donations from New York City's Polonia, an aid campaign coordinated by the Polish-language *Nowy Dziennik* newspaper, and a special weekend collection were welcomed by the residents of Far Rockaway, Queens, where some residents were without electricity weeks after Hurricane Sandy ravaged the area.

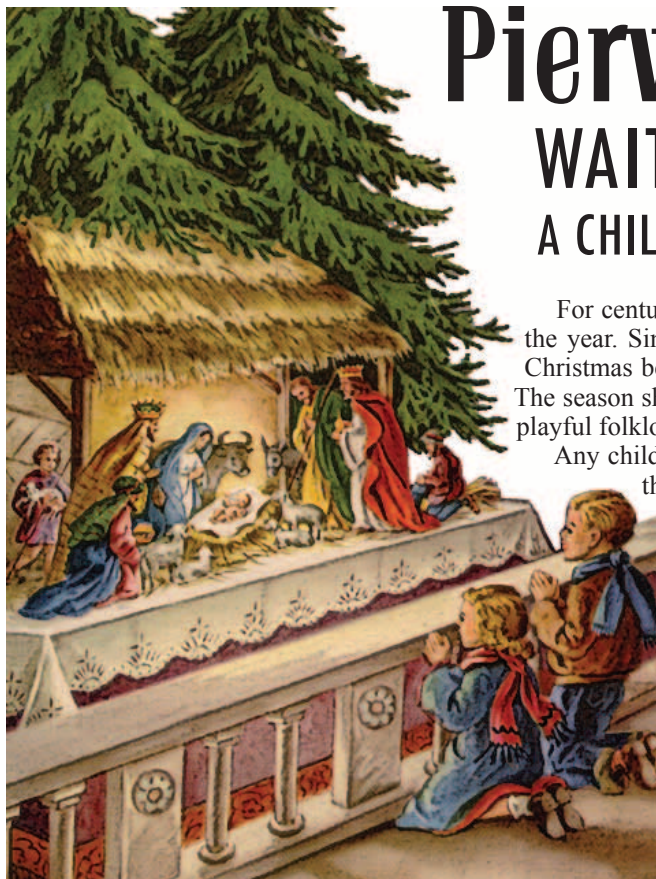
Fire broke out in the area damaging 50 buildings in the neighborhood on the Rockaway Peninsula.

"Step by step, we will try to go forward," said Fr. Wladyslaw Kubrak, parochial vicar of Far Rockaway's St. Rose of Lima R.C. Church.

Although the church sustained serious water damage and had no power, Fr. Kubrak held his post to console people coming for guidance. The church stayed opened for people who needed shelter, and the chapel was open for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Fr. Kubrak said he also was able to console people with the sacrament of reconciliation.

Half of the donations of the Nov. 10-11 special collection went to diocesan Catholic Charities agencies serving the needy affected by Sandy. The other half will go to parishes whose storm damage was not covered by insurance.



Pierwsza Gwiazdka WAITING FOR THE FIRST STAR A CHILD'S POLISH CHRISTMAS FASCINATION

by Staś Kmieć

For centuries in Poland, Christmas has been the most festive occasion of the year. Since the conversion of the Polish people to Christianity in 966, Christmas became adorned with religious ceremony and rich folk tradition. The season shines with a richness of beauty, variety, religious sentiment, and playful folklore — perfect for a child's imagination and interest.

Any child brought up in "the Polish way" knows the magical experience that is intrinsic to Poland. As a Polish-American, part of a child's ethnic identity lies in the fantasy of traditional customs, legends and superstitions, food, carols, ornaments, crafts, and activities of a Polish Christmas. Many in Polonia have revered, preserved and promoted these cherished time-honored traditions, and have passed them down to their children in a celebration that is often in greater detail than those experienced in today's Poland.

As a religious festival, Christmas is second to Easter in the hierarchy of holidays, but in a child's eyes it ranks first above all. With great anticipation Polish children are glued to the window pane gazing into the skies to spot the first star on Christmas Eve — this signifies the beginning of the *Wigilia* meal.

continued on page 8

Professor Planned to Blow up Poland's Parliament

by Robert Strybel

WARSAW—Not since 1605, when Catholic dissident Guy Fawkes stockpiled explosives beneath the House of Lords, has anyone planned to blow up parliament. That dubious distinction goes to a 45-year-old Polish chemistry professor, Brunon Kwiecień, arrested and charged in November with conspiring to launch an assault on the state authorities of the Republic of Poland. If convicted he faces a five-year prison term.

Who is Brunon Kwiecień (under Poland's privacy laws referred to in the Polish media only as Brunon K.)? A psychopath? Dangerous fanatic? Right-wing terrorist? Or maybe just another frustrated megalomaniac seeking his "several weeks of media glory" as part of today's "moment of fame" syndrome.

Neighbors in Kraków have described Mr. and Mrs. Kwiecień and their two children as a normal family that mind their own business, never cause trouble nor have ever even been heard arguing. But they remember Brunon's fascination with explosives since his teen years when he was always shooting off home-made firecrackers and even lost several fingers in the process.

As an associate professor of chemistry at Kraków's Agricultural University, Kwiecień had access to chemicals, and explosives continued to be his hobby. He actually held private training sessions for like-minded explosives buffs. At the press conference announcing his arrest, Polish TV viewers were shown footage of the test explosions he conducted in remote rural areas and the huge craters they left behind.

See "Plot ...," page 2

Green from Greene

WARSAW — Bidders and spectators packed the Desa Unicum house in Warsaw, where 238 pictures by the late American fashion and celebrity photographer Milton H. Greene were up for sale. Only one remained unsold, among some 500 bidders.

The auction house said that the 2.4 million zlotys — about \$750,000 — obtained made it the nation's biggest photo auction to date.

Although the auction offered Greene's pictures of stars like Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, Marlene Dietrich, and Liza Minnelli, earning the most attention were those of Marilyn Monroe, taken from 1953 to 1957, when Greene was her advisor and business partner. The prints included a series of refined black-and-white studio photos and shots taken in natural surroundings, sometime in provocative poses, some in color.

As the bidding began, a black-and-white photo of a reclining Monroe in black stockings sold for 50,000 zlotys (\$16,000 USD), and another of her in a

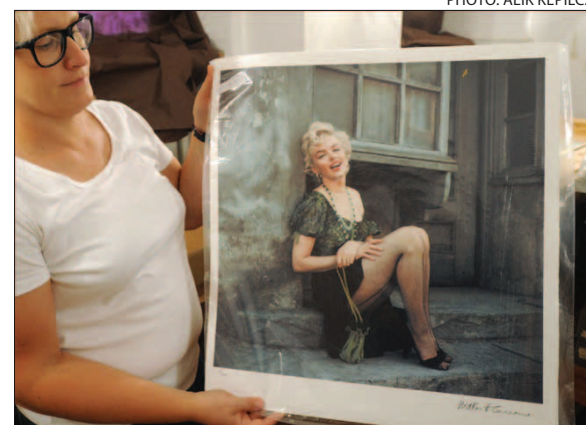


PHOTO: ALIK KEPILCZ

Gallery curator Anna Wolska presents a photo of Marilyn Monroe by the late photographer Milton H. Greene.

ballerina's dress sold for almost \$20,000.

Other greats in the vast portrait collection, which had been estimated at \$680,000, included Cary Grant, Frank Sinatra, Paul Newman, Alfred Hitchcock and Marlon Brando.

The photos come from a collection of some 4,000 Greene pictures that Poland obtained from Chicago businessman Dino Matingas in the mid-1990s as the result of a complex communist-era embezzlement scandal linked to the buy-out of Poland's state debt.

Proceeds from the auction will go to the Polish government.

Brzezinski Dismisses Smolensk Conspiracies

WARSAW — Former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski criticized conspiracy theories in Polish politics concerning the 2010 Smolensk air disaster.

"It actually looks as if there is an attempt to undermine the very foundations of and respect for the state, Poland and Polish democracy," he said.

His remarks came after Jaroslaw Kaczynski, leader of opposition party Law

and Justice described the plane crash "as an unprecedented crime" that amounted to "the murder of 96 people, including the Polish president [Kaczynski's late brother Lech Kaczynski]."

Brzezinski condemned the "constant irresponsible nonsense" propagated over the last two years regarding a supposed attack, and suggestions that the Polish government or Russia, "or maybe both" were responsible.

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December • Grudzień

Narodził się Jezus w stajni ubogi,
uniżył majestat, chociaż Pan srogi.

Christmas bells are ringing,
'tis a joyous day!

Earth with heaven joining,
in a wondrous way.

— From the carol "Narodził się Jezus," ("Jesus was Born"). English lyrics by the Felician Sisters of Buffalo, N.Y.

1 1945. Premier of **Stanisław Moniuszko** opera "Verbunm Nobile," in Warsaw.

3 1854. About 800 Polish settlers arrive in Galveston, Texas after a nine-week voyage. The walk over 200 miles from the port to **Panna Maria**, where they hold Christmas Eve Mass outdoors.

4 **ST. BARBARA**
Niechaj każdy pamięta, jaka Barbara, takie święta.

Let everyone remember: as (the weather on) St. Barbara's Day, so the holidays.

5 1925. Death of Nobel laureate **Władysław S. Reymont**.

6 **ST. NICHOLAS** (Stw. Mikolaj). Today is traditionally reserved for gift-giving in Poland.

9 1990. Shipyard electrician and Solidarity Trade Union leader **Lech Walesa** elected president of Poland.

11 1949. **Johnny Lujack** of the Chicago Bears passed for 468 yards and six touchdowns in a 52-21 rout of the Chicago Cardinals.

12 1881. Declaration of **martial law** in Poland.

15 1930. Birth of New York Yankee great **Bill "Moose" Skouron**.

18 1929. Birth of **Cardinal Jozef Glomp**.

21 **ST. THOMAS**

Winszujemy Święty Tomy, żeby nie był żaden ślepy ani chromy.

Wishing you, on St. Thomas Day, that no one be blind or ill. 1898. In Paris, **Marie**, 31, and **Pierre Curie**, Polish and French chemists, discover radium.

23 **ST. JOHN KANTY (CANTIUS)**, 1473. 1937. Birth of first Polish American astronaut, **Karol Bobko**.

1981. In response to declaration of martial law in Poland, **President Ronald Reagan** declares economic sanctions.

1925. Founding of the **Kosciuszko Foundation** in New York City.

24 **DZIEŃ WIGILIJNY**

Kto rano w Wigilje wstaje, Ten przez rok cały nie będzie ospały.

Who rises early on Christmas Eve will not be drowsy all year.

1798. Birth of **Adam Mickiewicz** ("Pan Tadeusz"), considered Poland's greatest poet.

25 **BOŻE NARODZENIE**

According to Polish tradition, the 12 days of Christmas predict the weather for next 12 months.

26 **ST. STEPHEN**

1655. Swedes withdraw from Poland.

27 **ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST**

1983. **Pope John Paul II** meets and forgives Ali Agca, who tried to assassinate the pope.

29 1966. Celebration of the Polish Millennium of Christianity.

30 1977. President **Jimmy Carter** visits Poland.

31 **ST. SYLVESTER**

Please do not drink and drive.

Czas nie zwleka, czas ucieka, nie wiadomo co nas czeka. Time flies, tarries not, what awaits us, we know not.

This paper mailed on or before **November 30**. The **January 2013** edition will be mailed on or before **December 29, 2012**.

VIEWPOINTS / The Rev. Charles Jan DiMascola

What Language Does God Speak?

There is a wonderful old Polish Christmas legend about a young man named Jacek. One day he asked his teacher, "What language does God speak?" "His teacher, a learned man, scratched his head and said... "I really don't know." So, Jacek asked the learned people of his village but they didn't know either.

Now he became really curious. He traveled around Poland and asked the learned people of other villages and cities, "What language does God speak?" "But they merely shook their heads.

Jacek was convinced that someone knew. So he began to travel to other countries. He even traveled to other continents. But the answer was always the same: no one knew. One night, exhausted by all his travels, Jacek came to a little village called Bethlehem. He tried to get a room in the inn, but all the rooms were filled up. So he decided to sleep in the stable on the outskirts of town.

When he stepped in the stable he saw that it was occupied by a couple, Mary and Joseph, and

a little baby. When the young Mary saw him, she said, "Welcome Jacek, we've been expecting you!"

Jacek was stunned. How did the woman know his name? He was even more stunned when she said, "For a long time you have been searching the world over to discover what language God speaks. Now your journey is over. Tonight you see with your own eyes, because of this Baby, what language God speaks. It is because God so loved the world that he gave His only Son to the world to save the world from sin. And because God gave us His only son we know that He speaks the language of love!"

Jacek's heart overflowed. He fell on his knees before the child and wept for joy. Now he knew what language God speaks. God speaks the language of love. God speaks the one language that every person of every nation of every time of history can understand!

As Jacek went back home to Poland he began to think, "If I'm to tell everyone about what lan-

guage God speaks, I'm going to have to speak the language of love myself. Because that's the only language everyone in the world understands."

As Jacek went along telling everyone about the language God speaks he realized that wonderful things could happen: nations could live in peace and would begin to share their resources and talents with one another, races would begin to treat one another with dignity, and families would begin to live together in harmony! The language of God's love was not only beautiful, but powerful! With the language of God's love mankind could prosper and grow! With the language of God's love mankind had hope!

On Christmas, God gives us that language ... It is the only language that Jesus speaks, and He invites us to speak that language ... Love one another as He loves us!

The Rev. Charles Jan DiMascola, a man with "an Italian name but a Polish heart," is pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in Turners Falls, Massachusetts.

JUST BETWEEN US / Mark Kohan

Time for President Obama to Make Good on His Promise

Now that the election is behind us, it is time for President Obama to make good on his promise to include Poland in the Visa Waiver Program.

To date, the program enables nationals of 37 participating countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or less without obtaining a visa. The program was established to eliminate unnecessary barriers to travel, stimulating the tourism industry, and permitting the Department of State to focus consular resources in other areas.

The fact that the Department of State says Poles do not meet the requirements for the waiver

is an injustice. We need not hash over Poland's contributions to the United States. What we need to tell the Obama administration is that there are Poles living in the United States who would like to bring relatives here on short notices for weddings, funerals, and other life-changing events. There is no reason why a 75-year-old woman from Gdynia should have to apply for a Visa to spend a weekend in Chicago visiting her sick sister.

President Obama has made his fair share of mistakes when it has come to Poland. Personally, I find his insensitivity bewildering, having

cut his political teeth in Chicago. His domestic policies go against some of the precepts of our belief system, such as imposing health insurance requirements and advancing social policies that are opposed by our Catholic teachings.

"In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide," said Noah Webster in 1823. " REGARD NOT the particular sect or denomination of the candidate — look to his character."

Let us hope Obama is a man of his word. He is in the position to pressure the Homeland Security, State, and Immigration Departments to lift this unfair judgment upon Poles.

Merry Christmas!

throw this edition away. Give your copy to someone who may be interested in our heritage. You will certainly make a new friend!

Christmas is a time for giving, so please remember to help those less fortunate, both here at home and those in Poland. Numerous charities have extended holiday greetings in this edition of the paper, so please think of them when considering your donations.

Please remember our troops stationed around the globe. We thank them for their service and send Christmas greetings their way.

Over the miles, we symbolically break *opłatek* with each of you, and wish your good luck, good health, and prosperity in the New Year.

Serdeczne życzenia radosnych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia i wszelkiej pomyślności w Nowym 2013 Roku!

Plot: Student Complaints Alerted Authorities

continued from cover

To those skills and interests were added a dangerous dose of ideological fanaticism. From the guest lectures he delivered to students and his bizarre ramblings on Internet forums emerged the allegation that nearly all government positions in Poland are being occupied by people which he described as "foreigners." According to Kwiecień, even the fluoridation of water as well as fluoride toothpaste on the market

were an attempt to make the Polish public passively accept such "foreign" rule.

Extremely telling was Kwiecień's role model; Norwegian right wing-terrorist Anders Breivik, now serving a 21-year sentence for the 2011 mass murder of 77 people. He was known to have been in contact with Breivik and shared his the Norwegian's xenophobic philosophy. He also used commercial available chemical fertilizers as the basis

for his home-made explosives. The main difference is that Kwiecień was stopped before he could act on his murderous designs.

Student complaints about Kwiecień's weird views put Poland's Internal Security Agency (ABW) on his trail. The professor was shadowed and his Internet activities were monitored. His wife Inga Kwiecień, a biologist, told the authorities that her husband had begun asking her strange questions on

how to contaminate the public water supply with biological toxins.

Under interrogation Kwiecień confessed to plans to blow up the Sejm when the 460-member chamber and top government leaders were deliberating inside. The death toll of such an attack on an in-session parliament could have run into the hundreds, far exceeding that of the 2010 Smolensk air disaster which claimed 96 lives including Poland's First couple.

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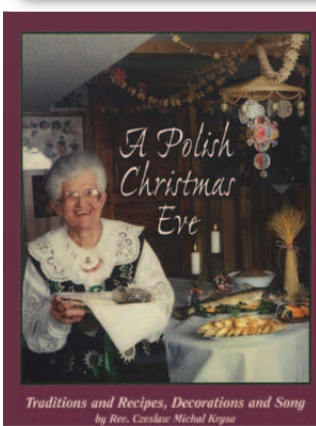
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RELIGION / Benjamin Fiore, S.J.

Philanthropists Honored for Preserving Jewish Cemeteries in Poland

Poland, once home to Europe's largest Jewish population of over three million people, has been working to recover, preserve and restore the memory of those killed in the atrocities of World War II, most notably the Holocaust. Many of those who perished at the hands of the Nazis or later the Soviets have endured injustice, even in death with their burial sites damaged, neglected or entirely ruined. A Buffalo-area couple has spent the past 11 years restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland, and along with them the dignity of those buried there. For their efforts, **Norman and Hannah Weinberg** were honored on Oct. 17 by the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies at Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo, N.Y.

MADONNA UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES POLISH CULTURE.

At the second year for "Be Polish for a Night" at the Laurel Manor in Livonia, Mich., in addition to Polish art and colorful decorations, the Chicago-based Polish Museum of America donated informative posters for display and auction. The president of Madonna University, **Sr. Rose Marie Kujawa, CSSF**, gave a short welcome and with heartfelt thanks highlighted **Robert and Eleanor Bielenda** and **Wallace and Joan Ozog** for their ambassadorial support. Sr. Kujawa also made a thanksgiving and reminded everyone that this is the 75th anniversary of Madonna University and the Felician Franciscan tradition in Livonia. The Felician Sisters of North America with their motherhouse in Buffalo, N.Y. have had a long history of ministering and educating in the greater Detroit area. The music of **Duane Malinowski Band** and visuals of the **Polanie Song and Dance Ensemble**, under choreographer **Christine Kryszko**, provided the entertainment.

FEAST OF BL. JOHN PAUL II APPROVED FOR THE UNITED STATES.

The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship has approved the optional celebration of Bl. John Paul II's feast for diocese in the United States on October 22, which is the anniversary of his inauguration as Pope in 1978.

GEORGIAN ARCHIMANDRATE AND MARTYR REMEMBERED.

Archimandrite Gregory (Peradze), son of a priest, completed theology and seminary studies in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi in 1918 at the age of 19 and the studied phi-

losophy at Tbilisi University where he also taught in 1921. Georgian church officials then sent him for further studies in Germany where he taught philosophy and then theology in Louvain, Belgium. After further study in England, he returned to teach Georgian and Armenian literature at Bonn, Germany, and became a monk and priest in 1931. From 1932 on, he taught Orthodox theology at Warsaw University. In 1942 he was arrested by the Nazi Gestapo for sheltering and aiding Jews and other victims of fascist persecution. After incarceration in Pawiak prison, he was sent to Auschwitz at the start of November 1942. After an inmate killed a German officer, all the prisoners were forced outside, naked until someone confessed. St. Gregory decided to take the blame for the murder and thus saved innocent prisoners from freezing to death. The German guards let loose their dogs on the martyr, poured gasoline over him, and lit him on fire. They then taunted the prisoners saying, "Poles, go warm yourselves around him, your intercessor." German records put his death as December 6, 1942 (or November 23 in the Julian calendar) at 4:45 in the afternoon.

WOMEN RELIGIOUS MARK JUBILEES.

Archbishop Henry J. Mansell honored 13 sisters who marked significant anniversaries of their religious life this year.

More than 125 women religious attended the Mass, which was celebrated in the chapel at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, N.H. Father James Kinnane, vicar for religious, gave the welcome. A dinner followed.

Archbishop Mansell joined in celebrating the jubilees of religious sisters in the archdiocese among whom were: **Sr. Mary Maryann Cerkanowicz** of the Daughters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception, 50 years; and Felician Sisters **Mary Bernardine Mucha**, 50 years; **Mary Antonia Popielarczyk**, 60 years; **Mary Florence Pelczynski**, 70 years.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO...

Our Lady of Loreto R.C. Parish in Falconer, N.Y., celebrating 100 years. The parish began with 70, mostly Italian Catholics. For the anniversary, the interior of the church, the second on the site, has been refurbished. The original ceiling of midnight blue with speckled stars forming the constellations was originally designed by the **Swiatek Studios**



Our Lady of Loreto

in the 1950s. The grandson of the original painter did the renovations to the artwork. In light of recent closures and mergers of parishes in the Buffalo diocese, current pastor **Father Joseph Janaczek** noted, "I think it is important that parishes, especially like ours, continue to exist as a presence in the area," even if this means that priests serve as itinerant clergy with the work of the church organization falling to the laity." He added that this might be a great salvation for the Church "because people realize how important their faith is to them when they make these commitments."

Fr. Francis A. Zielinski, 76, on his 50th anniversary. He served parishes in Hamtramck, Warren, Plymouth, Milford, Clinton Township, Clarkston, Farmington Hills, St. Clair Shores, Richmond, and Smith's Creek.

Fr. Edward Belczak, 66, on his 40th anniversary of priesthood. He served parishes in Royal Oak, Farmington Hills, and Troy, where he currently serves.

Fr. Frederick Benda, SJ, 71,

celebrating 40 years of priesthood and over 50 years as a Jesuit. He attended West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Ind.; Loyola University of Chicago; Bellarmine School of Theology, North Aurora, Ill.; St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; Regis College, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada; and the University of Texas, Austin. Fr. Benda's assignments included the University of Detroit and later University of Detroit Mercy (1985-90 and 2008-present); as well as service with the Jesuits' Detroit Province (1987-94). He was temporary administrator of Gesu Parish, Detroit (2009); and acting rector of the UDM Jesuit Community (2009-10).

Fr. Joseph Gembala, 54, celebrating 25 years of ordination. He served in Dearborn, Lincoln Park, Detroit, and Sterling Heights, where he is pastor of St. Malachy Parish.

Fr. Walter Ptak, 50, on his 25th anniversary. He served parishes in Monroe, Taylor, Wyandotte, and has been pastor of St. Stanislaus Kostka parish in Wyandotte since 2009. He was on the faculty at Ss. Cyril & Methodius Seminary (1991-1992) and was honored as the Orchard Lake Schools' Alumnus of the Year.

STO LAT TO ... Sister Mary Antonita Sikorski, CSSF, on being awarded the 2012 Catechetical Leadership Award in recognition of her "outstanding servant leadership in the administration of catechesis in her parish and within the Diocese of Buffalo. The award was present-

ed by Buffalo RC Diocese bishop Richard J. Malone at the seventh annual Catechetical Convention of the Buffalo diocese and the Office of lifelong Faith Formation. Sister Antonita, who celebrated 60 years as a Felician sister, served as a religious educator and as a director of religious education at a number of parishes, including St. Bernard Parish and St. Joachim Parish in Buffalo, and St. James Parish in Depew. Sister Antonita also was one of four Felician Sisters who served in a faith formation program at St. Joseph's Religious Education Center in Boonville. Surprised and humbled, Sister Antonita remarked that "helping children, teens, and adults learn about their faith and of Jesus' unconditional love for them has been, and continues to be, one of the greatest joys of my life as a Felician Sister."

Bishop Edward Kmiec, recently retired bishop of the diocese of Buffalo, on receiving the 2012 J.P. Gallagher Auda Award, Sept. 25 at the Diocesan Fiscal Management Conference in Houston. The honor recognizes Bishop Kmiec for his stewardship, collaboration and bold leadership during his eight years as bishop of Buffalo. "We see Bishop Kmiec as a pivotal leader whose diocese has very proactive self-insured programs and has prudently funded risk through a combination of self-insurance and ownership in reinsurance companies," said J. Patrick Gallagher Jr., chairman of Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.

Merry Christmas

*May the Infant Jesus,
the promised Messiah,
enlighten you with
His grace and love.*

*We wish you and your
loved ones a truly blessed,
peaceful and grace-filled
Christmas.*

- The Pauline Fathers -



Wesołych Świąt

*Przesyłamy Wam jak
najserdeczniejsze życzenia
z Amerykańskiej Częstochowej
- Duchowej Stolicy Polonii.*

*Niech Boże Dziecię Jezus
Chrystus błogosławi Wam
i obdarza zdrowiem.*

- Ojcowie Paulini -

2012 CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Dec. 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE: Vigil Mass at 5:00pm in English. Midnight Mass in Polish. Procession to manger. Sharing of the Christmas wafer (Oplatek) after Mass in Cafeteria.
Dec. 25 - CHRISTMAS DAY: Masses in Polish at 8am, 10am & 12:30pm; in English at 9am, 11am, 2:30pm & 5pm.
Dec. 31 - NEW YEAR'S EVE: Holy Hour after 5:00pm Vigil Mass.

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Remember Our Priests and Religious Institutions at Christmas Time

Lord, we lift up to your these on our honor roll and all the priests religious, seminarians, and those contemplating priestly or religious life. Sanctify them, heal them; guide them, mould them into the likeness and holiness of Your Son, Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. May their lives be pleasing to You, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen

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to All!
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A pokój na ziemi.

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Masses! Let us Greet Christ Our Lord!

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*A Słowo Ciałem się stałoi
mieszkało między nami!
Radujmy Sie!*

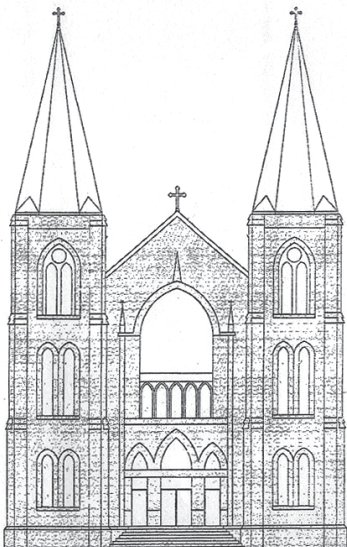


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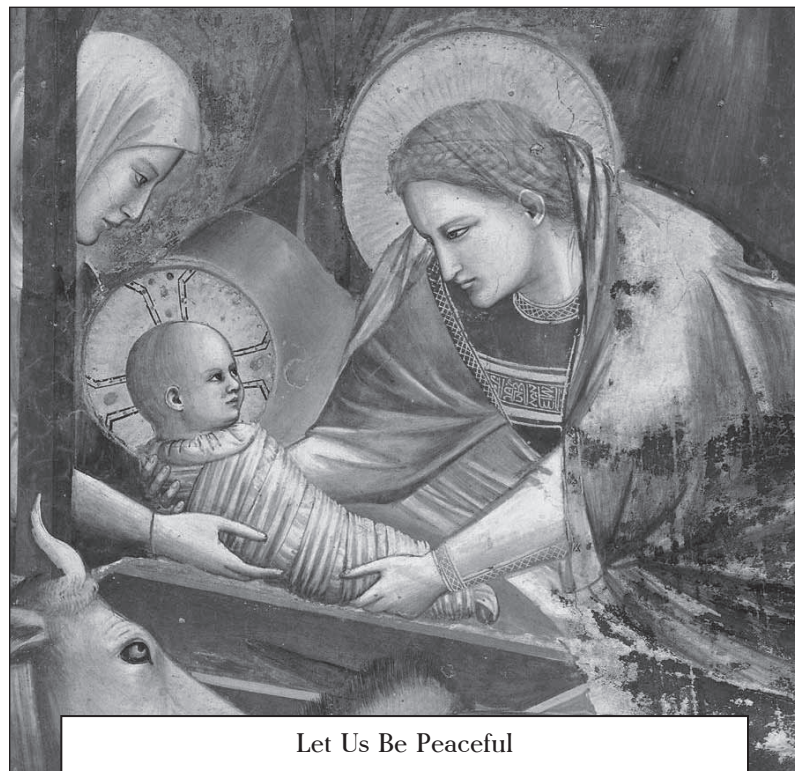
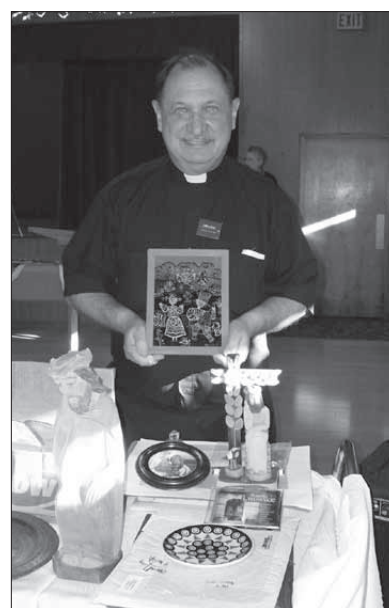
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HAMMOND, Ind. — **Fr. Steve Kosinski** displays his collection of Polish arts and crafts at the Polish Heritage Month program, at the Salvatorian Fathers Hall in Merrillville, Ind., Oct. 21.

The event organized by the Madame Curie Circle 3134 of the Polish National Alliance.

Fr. Kosinski, of All Saints Catholic Church, also discussed "Poland's Economy." Paul Odrobina, national vice president of the Polish National Alliance of Chicago, spoke on "Relations between Poland and the United States." Attendees also enjoyed a performance by the Polish choir of Chicago's St. Hyacinth Basilica; a slideshow presentation on Poland; and displays of traditional Polish costumes and arts/crafts.



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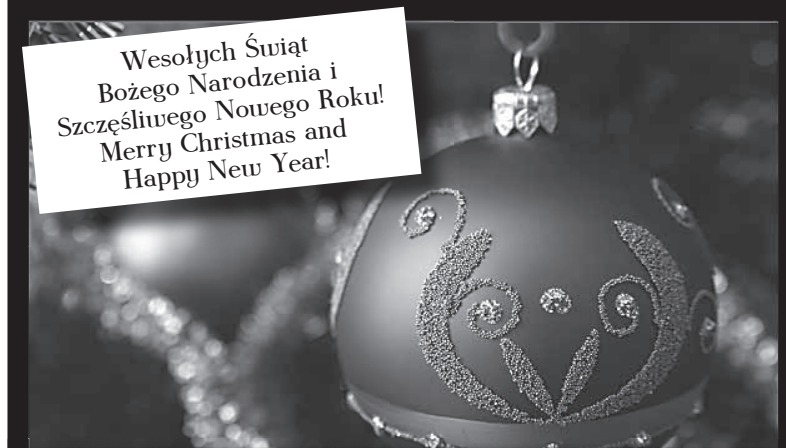
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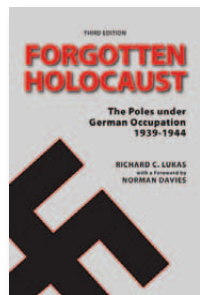
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358 pp. pb.
Hippocrene Books.

Forgotten Holocaust has become a classic of World War II literature. As Norman Davies noted, "Dr. Richard Lukas has rendered a valuable service, by showing that no one can properly analyze the fate of one ethnic community in occupied Poland without referring to the fates of others. In this sense, *The Forgotten Holocaust* is a powerful corrective." The third edition includes a new preface by the author, a new foreword by Norman Davies, a short history of ZEGOTA, the underground government organization working to save the Jews, and an annotated listing of many Poles executed by the Germans for trying to shelter and save Jews.

TREASURED POLISH CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS



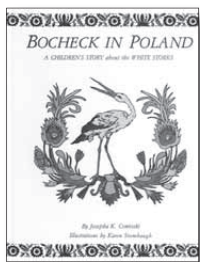
\$29.95
208 pp., hc.
Polonie Publishing

Overflowing with the customs and traditions of the Polish Christmas holiday season, as it was and still is observed in Poland. It also provides menus and recipes, carols and music, Jasełka, the Nativity Play and tree ornaments. The authentic decorations are patterns with detailed instructions for reproducing. Delightful reading throughout the whole year.



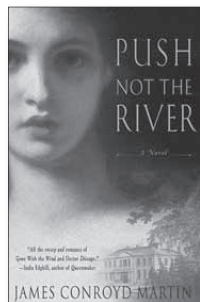
TREASURED POLISH SONGS WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS
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BOCHEK IN POLAND
\$11.95
54 pp., Polonie Publishing

A First Prize winner in a literary contest sponsored by the American Council of Polish Cultural Clubs, this is a delightful, captivating children's story about the life of storks and many of the Polish customs they encounter. Beautifully illustrated and educational, it will be thoroughly enjoyed by adults as well as children.

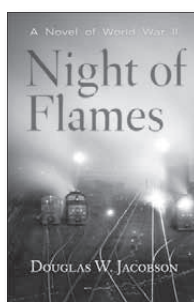


PUSH NOT THE RIVER
by James C. Martin
\$15.95
St. Martin's Press.
496 pp. pb. Maps & wycinanki illust. Reading Group Guide

AUTOGRAPHED! This book club favorite is based on the real diary of a Polish countess who lived through the rise and fall of the Third of May Constitution years, a time of great turmoil. Vivid, romantic, and thrillingly paced, the novel has been called "Poland's *Gone with the Wind*."

AGAINST A CRIMSON SKY
by James C. Martin
\$15.95
St. Martin's 369 pp. pb. Map & wycinanki illust. Reading Group Guide

AUTOGRAPHED! "You don't have to read Push Not the River to get the most from this sequel," says Suzanne Strempek Shea. The award-winning author picks up where Push Not the River leaves off, taking the characters 20 years into the fascinating Napoleonic era, highlighting the exploits of the glorious Polish lancers.



NIGHT OF FLAMES:
A Novel of World War Two
by Douglas W. Jacobson
\$16.95
384 pp. pb., McBooks Press

In 1939 the Germans invade Poland, setting off a rising storm of violence and destruction. For Anna, an assistant professor at a university in Krakow; and Jan an officer in the Polish cavalry, the loss is unimaginable. Separated by war, they must find their own way in a world where everything they ever knew is gone.

THE KATYN ORDER
by Douglas W. Jacobson
\$34.95
384 pp. hc., McBooks Press

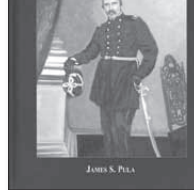
American Adam Nowak has been dropped into Poland by British intelligence as an assassin and Resistance fighter. During the Warsaw Uprising he meets Natalia, a covert operative who has lost everything. Amid the Allied power struggle left by Germany's defeat, Adam and Natalia join in a desperate hunt for the 1940 Soviet order authorizing the murders of 20,000 Polish army officers and civilians.



KATYN: Stalin's Massacre and the Triumph of Truth
by Allen Paul
\$24.95
N. Illinois University Press.
2010. 430 pp. pb. 9"x6.5"

Marking the 70th anniversary of the Katyn Forest massacre, this edition exposes the crime and its cover-up. The first post-communist account of Stalin's annihilation of Poland's officer corps and massive deportations to Siberia.

FOR LIBERTY AND JUSTICE:
A Biography of Brigadier General Włodzimierz B. Krzyzanowski, 1824-1887
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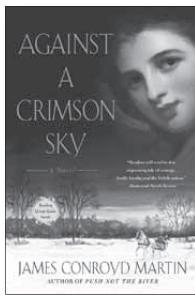


by James Pula.
335 pp. plus introduction. 112 illustrations, hc. 1978, 2010
Ethnic Heritage Studies Center at Utica College

This lavishly illustrated biography of a major Polish American figure of the 19th century, tells the story of a Polish revolutionary exiled to America where he rises from private to general during the Civil War.

POLISH FOLK LEGENDS
by Florence Waszkelewicz Clowes ill. by Daniel Haskin
\$14.95
Infinity Pub., 2010, 208 pp, pb.

Forty legends collected in Poland



or researched in many books and periodicals, including Poland's first written history by Muenster in 895 that states King Popiel reigned in Polonia 246 years before Christ.



A TRAVELLER'S HISTORY OF POLAND
by John Radzilowski
\$14.95
312 pp. ill., maps. pb.

A comprehensive historical survey guides travelers through a history of the people and places from pre-history to today. Includes a full chronology, a list of monarchs and rulers, a gazetteer and historical maps.

THE POLISH AMERICANS
from the "Major American Immigration Series"
by Donna Lock
REDUCED to \$15.95 (was) \$22.95
Full color illustrated. Ages 9-12. Mason Crest Publishers. 2008. 64 pp. hc. 9"x6"

A look at why Poles, as part of America's melting pot, have maintained a stronger hold on their traditions and customs than most other immigrant groups.

OLD SECRETS NEVER DIE
A Bashia Gordon Mystery
\$14.95

by Florence W. Clowes and Lois J. Blackburn
Infinity Publishing, 2007, 220 pp. pb.



Bashia Gordon, semi-retired interior decorator and amateur sleuth, is at it again. When she learns her friend Connecticut State Trooper Mark Jankowski is investigating the death of one of her clients, Gladys Goodell, her curiosity takes over. Soon a mummified baby is found in the old Goodell home. None of the Goodell sisters ever married. Whose baby could this be?

BONES IN THE BACKYARD
A Bashia Gordon Mystery
\$14.95

by Florence W. Clowes and Lois J. Blackburn
Infinity Publishing, 2001, 198 pp. pb.

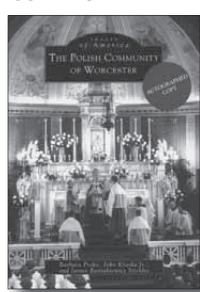


In the quiet corner of northeastern Connecticut, semi-retired interior decorator, Bashia Gordon, turns amateur sleuth when she and her Peace Corps friend, Dottie Weeks, uncover a fragmented skeleton in a septic tank. How did it get there? Who is it? Could the bones be the wealthy eccentric who disappeared years ago?

SCATTERED BLOSSOMS
by Cynthia Zavatska
\$12.95. 500 pages, softcover.

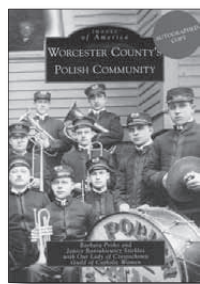
The story of a girl's journey to womanhood. A young Polish woman's efforts to weave together her life as a child of nobility, born to a great country manor in a nation whose rich culture and traditions have enveloped her throughout her early years, with her life in a new, vital, and often cruel new world — America.

WORCESTER COUNTY'S POLISH COMMUNITY



by Barbara Proko and Janice Baniukiewicz
Stickles
Was \$19.95
ON SALE \$13.95
Arcadia, 2007, 128 pp. pb.

AUTOGRAPHED! Lauded as "a welcome complement to The Polish Community of Worcester," this photo history highlights the seven Polish parish seats of the Worcester Diocese, plus other central Massachusetts towns where Poles have settled for more than a century. 225+ historic images, 700+ individuals identified by name.



THE POLISH COMMUNITY OF WORCESTER (MASS.)
by Barbara Proko, Janice Baniukiewicz
Stickles, and John Kraska, Jr.
Was \$19.95
ON SALE \$13.95
Arcadia, 2003, 128 pp. pb.

AUTOGRAPHED! Documents the history of Polonia in a large industrial New England city, 1870-1970. More than 220 vintage photos and images paint a vivid picture of immigration, family life, work, education, athletics, citizenship, military service, and Polish cultural traditions. 300+ surnames indexed.

A HISTORY OF POLISH AMERICANS IN PITTSFIELD, MASS., 1862-1945
by Florence Waszkelewicz Clowes
\$14.95 Palmetto Press 2004. 152 pp., 5.5" x 8.25," photographs, pb.

Using church records, organization brochures and oral histories, the author has compiled a valued history of the Polish community in Pittsfield, originally formed when nineteenth

and twentieth century Polish immigrants came to the area seeking work in the wool mills.

TRICK A WITCH, WED A HEDGEHOG, SAVE YOUR SOUL: An American Artist Encounters Poland
by Darlene Wesenberg
Rzezotarski
\$19.95
Wecker Press, 2012. 88 pp., pb.

After the fall of Communism, Rzezotarski's husband had an amazing first meeting with Polish cousins, introducing the couple to the rich world of Polish and familial history, so intertwined as to become a microcosm. Rzezotarski brings an outsider's appreciation and an artist's intuition through tales of family, of national identity, and of the enchanted world of fairy tale and myth. The book is profusely illustrated with color prints of her sculptures.

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RECIPE BOOKS ON PAGE 21

Pierwsza Gwiazdka. As a symbol of the miracle of birth, blown eggs are a popular decoration

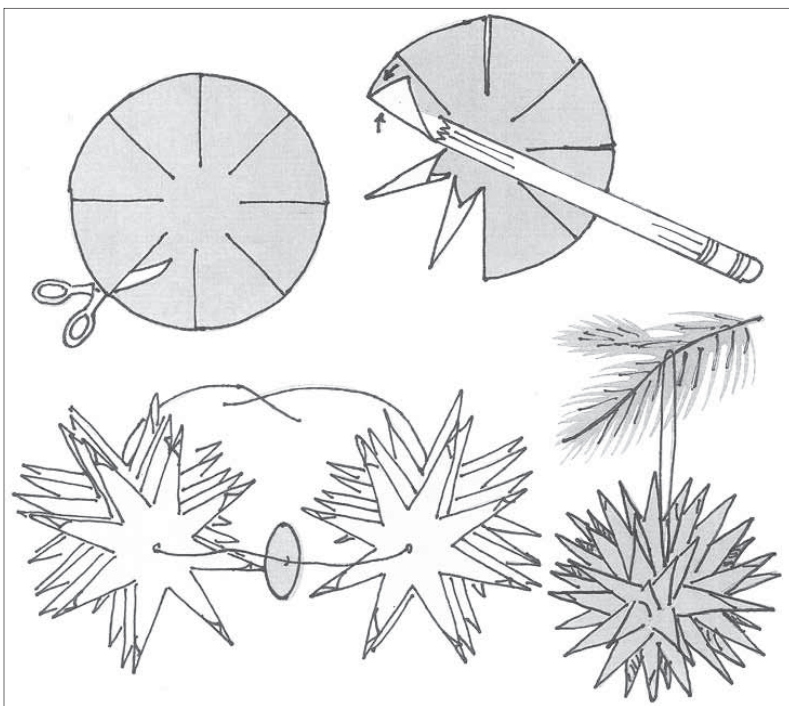
continued from cover

TREE DECORATION. Christmas has always been a family celebration — not only does the family feast and pray together, but they also work together in preparation.

Before decorated trees made an appearance, in the rural confines of the “Old Country” there were mobiles (*pajaki*) suspended from the ceiling. The word means “spiders,” as they resemble the delicate, intricate design of a web. The mobile was originally made of the best grains from the harvest; later it was made of straw reeds decorated with paper ornamentation and feathers.

Cut trees were introduced during the 19th century. Cities and towns quickly embraced this tradition, whereas the countryside was less receptive to this new innovation. In southern Poland the practice of suspending the tops of fir trees upside down from the ceiling rafters resembled *pajaki*. Called *podłaźnik*, (also *jutka*, *sad rajski*, *Boże drzewko*, or *wiecha*) in the south and *gaj* in the central regions, they were decorated with ornaments made by hand and from everyday items. Nuts, apples, little cakes, gingerbread, honey-spice *pierniki* cookies, and wrapped candies were hung, along with homemade creations of colored tissue, paper, shiny foil wrappers, holy *oplatek* wafers, ribbons, straw, and blown egg. They were often illuminated by *stoczki* (thin wax candles in the form of a ball). Strings of peas or garland chains (*łańcuchy*) of alternating straw and tissue paper fans would cascade along the edges — giving a chandelier effect.

In the 20th century the upright



Using gift wrap, tissue, or foil, individual spheres when rolled and pasted become stars. When 12 of them are strung tightly together with a bead or cardboard circle in the center, they puff out into a porcupine ball ornament.

than twenty-five years ago Radko and his family gathered around the Christmas tree in Scarsdale, New York to celebrate the holiday. Radko decided to replace the family's 50-year old Christmas tree stand with a new one. Just as the festivities were to begin, the 14-foot tree, decorated with a collection of 2,000 hand-blown and hand painted ornaments, went crashing to the ground, shattering almost all of them.

Determined to replace the priceless treasures, which had been in the family for as many as four generations, Radko enlisted artisans in Poland. Today he is the leader in

ŚWIĘTY MIKOŁAJ — SAINT NICHOLAS. Polish American children have two chances at treats for the holiday season. On December 6, Saint Nicholas arrives with candies and cookies; while his portly alter-ego Santa Claus leaves presents to be opened on Christmas Day.

A bishop of Myra in Asia Minor (present day Turkey) in the 300's A.D., Nicholas was renowned for his piety, generosity and kindness toward children, particularly orphans.

During the first half of the 18th century his feast day in Poland was observed with gifts of *pierniki*, *obwarzanki* (a bagel pretzel), holy cards, small toys or warm clothing. The gifts were intended to evoke a greater personal virtue and goodness in the memory of the saint.

In Poland, Św. Mikołaj, is a saintly, dignified figure; he comes as a bishop, wearing a high miter and carrying a gold crosier staff in his hand. Descending from Heaven with an angel helper, he travels on foot or in a sleigh pulled by a white horse as he visits homes in the countryside.

As the custom took root, a person dressed in the bishop's attire would ride in a horse-drawn sleigh through the town. Sometimes he is accompanied by a Lucifer devil character to deal with the bad children. Św. Mikołaj asks children to recite a specific prayer and when satisfied

he bestows a token — holy pictures, red apples or oranges, coins, or *pierników Świętego Mikołaja* (honey-spice cookies cut in the Saint's shape). If he doesn't visit in person, treats are left under sleeping children's pillows or in freshly cleaned and polished shoes assembled by the door.

In addition to being the patron saint of children, St. Nicholas also protects sailors, the shipwrecked, travelers and maritime navigators, as well as fishermen, rafters. In Polish folk tradition, he is the patron and protector of herders of cattle against wolves, and an overseer to ensure that the winter is absent of hunger and not too cold. At one time, priests and pastors would hang wreaths on the altars of flax and hemp, with chicken or goose eggs in the center as an offering, and would lead sheep and lambs to the rectory.

Today, most children participate in school activities during Advent. One popular event is *Mikołajki* — similar to “grab bag,” where each child brings a gift to school, and by



Święty Mikołaj

picking names out of a hat they are dispersed. Święty Mikołaj makes a special trip each year to the Polish American Cultural Center Museum in Philadelphia to disperse treats to every child at the annual Christmas Open House.

Other feast days during Advent include: Saint Barbara (December 4), Saint Lucy (December 13), and Saint Thomas (December 21). Saint Barbara, the patron saint of miners and sailors is commemorated in the Baltic coastline. According to custom, the weather on this day predicts the weather of Christmas —

Święta Barbara po lodzie, Boże Narodzenie po wodzie” (If there is ice on St. Barbara's then there will be rain on Christmas). Twelve days before Christmas on Saint Lucy's

Day, interpreting the celestial bodies will foretell the weather for each month of the coming year. An old proverb on Saint Thomas' Day — “*Od Świętego Toma siedź przy piecu doma*” (from St. Thomas on, stay at home near the stove). Christmas Eve is but three days away and the final preparations continue.

THE TABLE IS PREPARED. Christmas Eve is eagerly awaited by children; it is a day full of preparations, ceremony and family experience. “*Jakiś we Wiliją, takiś cały rok*” (the way you conduct yourself on *Wigilia* is the way you will be for the entire year). Custom dictates that on Christmas Eve: the person who rises early will be wide awake; those who are industrious will be full of energy; a cut or injury however means a concern to be watchful over one's health; a child who is spanked will need discipline through the year, while a behaved and obedient child will have no fear of punishment. Whether it is cooking, cleaning, decorating or setting the traditional elements, Polish children take an active part in assisting with the *Wigilia* — Christmas Eve vigil feast.

The customs of the setting are full of symbolism for a young impressionable child. Straw or hay, a reminder of Christ's birth in a stable, is placed under a white linen tablecloth, which symbolizes Mary's veil, which became the Babe's swaddling cloth. A lighted candle is placed in the window to welcome the Christ Child, and the blessed Communion-like wafers — *oplatki* — are set on the finest plate on top of a fine white handkerchief with straw underneath. Sheaves of grain (wheat, rye, barley and oats) are set in one or every corner of the room.

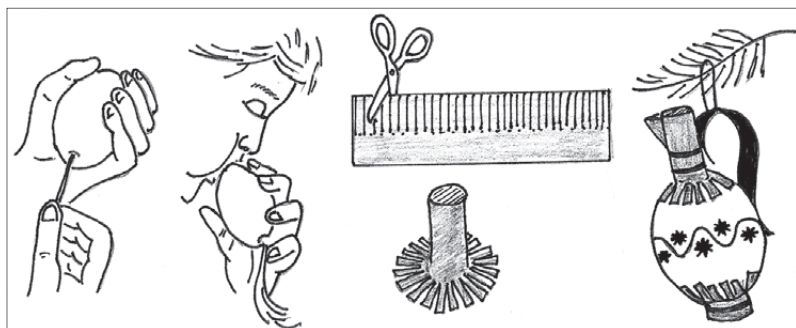
An extra place and chair are set for the Christ Child, who in the form of a weary stranger may pass by — in the same manner that Joseph wandered from home to home looking for a place for Mary to give birth.

The setting is also in memory of those who are departed.

After sunset, the youngest child is sent to watch for the first star in the Eastern skies, which signifies the start of the meal also known as “Star Supper.”

A FEAST FIT FOR A KING. Culminating in the breaking of the *oplatek* and sharing holiday wishes with

continued on page 9



Using a blown egg, paper fringe, and glue a child can create a personal heirloom *Egg Pitcher* ornament.

tree gained popularity as the display of *pajaki* and *podłaźniki* declined, but the ornamentation remained. As a symbol of the miracle of birth, blown eggs are a popular decoration. Drained of its contents, the eggs become the base for pitchers, doves, roosters, angels, soldiers, or clowns.

Stars made of paper, such as the intricately folded star from southeastern Poland's Lublin region has been popularized in the United States by Stanisław Jasiak (Haverhill, Mass.), Irene Jakubowski (Pittsburgh, Pa.), Wacława Naczyński (Rochester, N.Y.) and Monica Kochanowski (Austin, Texas). By taking gift wrapping, tissue, or aluminum foil, one can create a flower globe or porcupine ornament. This folk art was passed down to Joseph Dudziński (Allen Park, Mich.) by his father, who was born in southeastern Tarnobrzeg. Regina Laskowska (Quincy, Mass.) and Maria Bielski (Greenpoint-Brooklyn, N.Y.) have frequently given workshops in this and other homemade ornaments at museums.

Traditionally adorned with apples as a reminder of Adam and Eve's fall of grace, apples have been replaced by ornaments and Poland makes the best hand blown ornaments in the world. As a young child, artist Christopher Radko marveled at his family's collection of heirloom Polish ornaments. More

collectible glass ornaments, having recreated many of the early 20th century Polish designs (produced in Poland), along with unique creations of his own design in a dynasty devoted to ornamental glass.

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Pierwsza Gwiazdka. Christmas Eve is rich with customs and superstitions



Pierniki, spiced cookies. For recipe, see page 22.

continued from page 8
loved ones, the *Wigilia* meal begins. Prayers are said, and thoughts turn to those members of the family who are not present, and to the souls of lost ones who are believed to participate in the feast.

The central element is a twelve course dinner without meat, the number of dishes symbolizing both the months of the year and the twelve apostles. A taste of each dish will ensure good luck throughout the year. The foods are to represent the four corners of the earth -- mushrooms from the forest, grain from the fields, fruit from the orchards, and fish from the lakes and sea.

Some dishes, such as the ubiquitous carp, are not always a hit with all the family, particularly youngsters; however, there are plenty of favorites to delight. Meals vary from family to family but usually include a special soup followed by elegant fish preparations, vegetables, and every child's favorite dish -- the delicate filled dumpling, *pierogi*.

In some areas there were thirteen main dishes (representing the Apostles and Christ), but, these days, many families have replaced this tradition with a twelve-fruit compote for dessert.

WEATHER REPORT. Christmas Eve is rich in customs and superstitions with origins found in local pre-Christian beliefs. Predictions of weather can be found on *Wi-*

gilia. My *Babcia* in Garfield, N.J. would cut a single onion and peel away the layers to represent the 12 months. Before Midnight Mass, she would sprinkle salt in the "bowl" of each -- later it was revealed which months would be wet, and which ones would be dry.

"*Jeśli w polu czarno, gdy się Chrystus rodzi, to będzie biało na lanie, kiedy Chrystus zmartwychwstanie*" (if the fields are dark when Christ is born, they will be white when he is risen), and "*Jeśli dzień wigilijny pogodny, roczek będzie urodny*" (if the weather is nice on *Wigilia*, the year will be beautiful).

PASTERKA - MIDNIGHT MASS. Not just a Mass, the service is a spirited occasion -- full of energy, heart-warming *koledy* carols, *pastoraliki* songs and decorations. Every Polish church makes its own detailed *Szopka* Nativity scene. They are huge and elaborate, and usually taking over one of the side altars. While at "Shepherd's Mass," it is believed that the goodly animals talk in human voices.

GIFTS FROM ABOVE. At one time only kings and nobles generously bestowed their courtiers and servants with Christmas gifts. They also supported the monasteries, schools and the poor with monetary donations or goods. In the mid-19th century the practice was introduced to the homes of rich burghers. In the first decades of the 20th century it was still a rarity in the countryside, and was practiced sporadically and only in the richest peasant families, and even then the gifts were modest.

In the eastern borderlands and the western Śląsk region, Poles cultivated the idea that an angel comes and leaves presents beneath the tree. To others, the Starman makes an appearance. There are more regional variations: in Pomorze and some ar-

reas of Wielkopolska it is maintained that the holy "little star" (*Gwiazdka*) magically brings presents; in Warmia and Mazury, a white horse "Szemel" has gifts; while in Central Poland and Górny Śląsk -- it is the Baby Jesus that offers his tidings.

Currently in Poland, Christmas gifts have become a common practice, especially cultivated in homes where there are children.

KOLEDNICY - CAROLERS. American children have Halloween and Polish children have *Kolednicy*. This is the time to dress up after Christmas to walk from house to house asking for donations of money or treats. That is where the similarities end; the costumes represent the nativity scene -- shepherds, angels, and Wiseman. The Star of Bethlehem in a folk-designed form is carried on a pole. Wishing best wishes for New Year and singing carols, Polish-Americans associated with folk dance groups or in high ethnic community districts still enact this tradition in the United States.

JASEŁKA - THE MYSTERY PLAY. A unique child's experience is participating in a Christmas play in school -- playing the littlest angel or a shepherd bearing gifts. In the U.S., before and after Christmas, Polish schools and folk groups often stage a century's old tradition of a Nativity that takes place in Poland. A tradition that began with Saint Francis of Assisi, these Mystery plays were made popular by Franciscan Monks. The theatrical stories about the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and King Herod originally were shown in churches. The setting for *Jasełka* is a Polish Bethlehem; the music and text saved for posterity by writers and poets of the 19th and 20th centuries by authors such as Theophilus Lenartowicz, Władysław Anczyc, Lucjan Rydel,



Jasełka at the Maksymilian Kolbe School in Gorzów Wielkopolski.

and Leon Schiller.

Polish Theatre Institute in the USA has presented *Jasełka* and *Pastoralka*, and *The Lublin Polish Song and Dance Ensemble* of Haverhill-Boston staged *Betlejem Polskie* throughout their region.

SZOPKA KRAKOWSKA -- NATIVITY SCENE. Translated as "cribs," the classic *szopka* from Kraków looks more like the kind of castle found in a fairy tale. This Christmas tradition dates back to the 19th century -- the unusual crèches feature historical structures of Kraków as backdrop for the Nativity setting. Artists draw on distinctly local motifs for their inspiration -- the towers of Kościół Mariacki Church, the Barbican and Wawel Castle. In olden days when snow stalled the construction projects, craftsmen would sell these creations to well-to-do households. In recent times, an annual competition was started as a means of keeping the tradition alive. The contest begins on the first Thursday of December when creations are brought to the Mickiewicz statue in the Rynek Market Square. At midday with the

trumpeter's *Hejnal* call, they are whisked away to the Historical Museum to be judged. The following weekend the winners are announced and the entries are put on display.

The *Krakowiaki Polish Folk Circle* of Youngstown, Ohio presented their annual winter folk art workshop this year with Lawrence Kozłowski teaching each participant how to make their very own *Szopka Krakowska*.

Polish children in the United States and Poland are blessed with the exciting prospect of a never-ending Christmas extravaganza. When cultivated and practiced these rich traditions offer an extra bonus and can spark the imagination and pride of the next generation of Polonia.



For more information on Children's activities for a Polish Christmas check: *A Polish Christmas Eve* by Rev. Czesław Michał Krysa, or *Treasured Polish Christmas Customs and Tradition* by Polanie Publishing Company. Both are available from the Polish American Journal. www.polamjournal.com; 1 (800) 422-1275.

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Celebrate Your Heritage at the Holidays

BUFFALO, N.Y. — There is no time of the year which gives people of Polish descent a greater opportunity to explore and celebrate their heritage and culture. Take this opportunity to do so with your family this year. Here are just a few of WNY's holiday events which you might consider:

On **December 1**, the Chopin Singing Society will hold its Wigilia at the Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga. Contact (716) 685-9466 for details.

Also on **December 1**, the Polka Variety Club will hold its Christmas Party with music by the Bedrock Boys at the Leonard Post in Cheektowaga. (716) 759-8194.

The Polish Singers Alliance of America District IX's Annual Festival of Christmas Song will be held at St. Stanislaus Church, the Mother Church of Buffalo's Polonia, **December 2** at 3:30.

The Polish Heritage Society of Rochester will host its annual Wigilia at St. John Fisher College on **December 8**. (585) 248-0152).

On **December 9**, the Polish Arts Club of Buffalo will hold its Annual Wigilia and Oplatek with entertainment by soprano Mary Beth Wrobel at the Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga (716) 668-1326)

Turning Stone Resort outside of Syracuse will present "A Rollicking Christmas" with Polka King Jimmy Sturr, St. Stanislaus, and the Elves on **December 13**.

Forgotten Buffalo will offer its "Polish Tavern Christmas Tours" on **December 14** and **21**. (716) 833-5211.

The Response to Love Center's 4th Annual "Koledy Night" featuring the St. John Kanty Choir, Response to Love Trio, Dave Gawronski, and the New Direction Band at the Potts Banquet Hall on South Ogden on the **15th**. More information is available from Sr. Johnice at (716) 894-7030.

St. Casimir Church in Buffalo's Kaisertown area will continue the monthly program celebrating Polish American culture it began with an evening of pierogi-making, ornament-making, Christmas caroling and krupnik-making on November 9 during December with a Wigilia at 6:00 p.m. on December 15 and Christmas caroling in the area on **December 27** and **28**. For more information, please contact (716) 824-9589.

The Msgr. Adamski Polish Saturday School will present its Jaselka at Buffalo's St. Stanislaus Church at 1:30 p.m. on **December 16**.



BRITTANY MRUCZEK. Home-town soprano will perform several Christmas concerts this year.

Treat your family and yourself to the sights, sounds and aromas of a Polish Christmas by visiting the Broadway Market during the holiday season.

The Concertina All Stars and Polka Jam will perform at a Koledy Night at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Erie Avenue in North Tonawanda on **December 23**.

Celebrate Christmas at Midnight Mass — Pasterka — at any of WNY's Polish parishes.

The Polish Heritage Dancers of WNY will host their "Polish Christmas in the Village: Wigilia Dinner and Show" at the Alden Christian Theatre Society (ACTS) on Church Street in Alden on **December 28** through **30**. (716-983-5084)

The Podhale Parents and Youth Association's New Year's Eve Ball (Sylwester), featuring music by True Colors, will be held at the St. Stanislaus Social Center in Buffalo on the **31st**. (716) 656-8081)

The Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga will be the site of "Polka New Year's Eve 2012" featuring the Polka Country Musicians and the Bedrock Boys.

BRITTANY MRUCZEK CHRISTMAS CONCERT SCHEDULE. The angelic voice of Brittany Mruczek will fill the churches throughout Western New York again this year, as the soprano from Batavia, N.Y. has released her Christmas concert schedule for the 2012-13 Christmas season.

Sun., Dec. 9. 4:00 p.m. Concert at Blessed Mary Angela parish. Dunkirk, N.Y. St. Hyacinth's Church location, 295 Lake Shore Dr. E.

Mon., Dec. 24. 11:30 p.m. Christmas Eve. Koledy beginning at

11:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Pompeii Church, 158 Laverack Ave., Lancaster, N.Y., and will also be the featured vocalist at the midnight Mass.

Sun., Dec. 30. Noon. Mass at St. Stanislaus Church, 123 Townsend St., Buffalo, followed by a Christmas concert in the church. (The Mass will be broadcast live on WLOF 101.7 FM).

Sun., Jan. 7. 9:30 a.m. Koledy before the 10:00 a.m. Mass at St. Casimir Parish, 160 Cable St., Buffalo, followed by her being the featured vocalist at the Mass.

Sun., Jan. 7. 4:00 p.m. Special guest vocalist at the Assumption Church, 435 Amherst St., Buffalo, folk group's reunion concert — the Wanderers "A Little Christmas Concert," which begins the 125th Anniversary celebration of the parish.

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HAPPENINGS: CHICAGO STYLE / Geraldine Balut Coleman

Polish American Heritage Celebration With PAC-Illinois

CHICAGO — The Polish American Congress-Illinois Division (PAC-Illinois) and its president, **Mary Sendra Anselmo**, held its 43rd Annual Polish American Heritage Banquet at the White Eagle in Niles, Ill. Well over 300 people attended this event. Held on October 19

to honor ten special individuals for their outstanding contributions to America's Polonia, family members and friends attended this event along with many politicians, as well as representatives from an array of Polonian and Polish organizations.

The purpose of this heritage banquet was to honor Polish Americans who have excelled in their personal and/or professional endeavors, but who have brought visible pride to their Polish heritage. They have in their own special way continued to promote Polish culture and history, the importance of charitable works within Polonia and beyond, and to celebrate along with the PAC-Illinois as it continues to play a crucial role in the support of local and national initiatives which are of vital importance to Polish Americans.

This year's honorees were: **Dr. Wieslaw Binienda**, Professor, The University of Akron; **George and Slawa Swiderski**, proprietors of Old World Taxiderm; **Wanda Urbanska**, director of the Jan Karski U.S. Centennial Campaign; **Michael Lachowicz**, chef proprietor of the prestigious Restaurant Michael; **Stanislaw and Halina Urbaniak**, proprietors of Montrose and Cicero Deli; **Elizabeth Link and Mirosława Link**, preservers of Polish Culture; **Magdalena Solarz**, artistic director and choreographer of the WICI Song and Dance Company (WICI); and **Dr. Geraldine Balut Coleman**, editor and reporter for the *Polish American Journal*.

It must be noted that, since 1954, Pani Elizabeth Link has been instrumental in creating handmade authentic Polish Christmas ornaments that adorn the Polish Christmas Tree at Chicago's world famous Museum of Science and Industry during its "Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Lights" exhibit.

This year's master of ceremonies was **Charles Wojciechowski**,



(l. to r.): Magda Solarz, Mira Link, Elizabeth Link, and Geraldine Balut Coleman

ki, a popular TV journalist from NBC-TV Channel 5 in Chicago. The Polish and American national anthems were sung by Dr. Christopher Kubik and Mr. Richard Gersten. Wonderful dinner entertainment was provided by the ever-popular violinist, Anthony Kawalkowski. A very special dance presentation was provided by WICI.

PMA VOLUNTEER NIGHT. On October 12, The Polish Museum of America (PMA) held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Evening. The Sabina P. Logisz Great Hall was filled with volunteers, families, and friends who congratulated those volunteers who helped the Museum and/or the PMA library. All enjoyed an evening of lively conversation and camaraderie. Each year the PMA's President, Maria Ciesla, and the PMA staff honor volunteers who have committed themselves to outstanding volunteer service to the PMA. This year, the Museum's Volunteer of the Year was **Geraldine Balut Coleman**, for her continued work as the PMA's secretary, the editing of the Museum's Summer Ball and November's Life Legacy Benefit program books, and for her support of the PMA through her *Polish American Journal* articles. The PMA Library's Volunteer of the Year was **Tom Laskowski**, who has spent six years helping the Library staff catalogue, reorganize, and store books, as well as assisting with Museum exhibits. **Jacek Niemczyk** received the 2012 Media Volunteer Award for his outstanding support of the PMA through his Monday afternoon program, *Popołudniowka*, in which members of the PMA Staff are interviewed about PMA events.

PMA PRESENTED KRYSZYNA PIÓRKOWSKA. The Polish Museum of America (PMA) presented a "Meet The Author" event with **Krystyna Piórkowska**, author



PMA volunteers.



Judge Aurelia Pucinski and Ms. Piórkowska

of *English-Speaking Witnesses to Katyn*. The presentation took place on October 13 in the Sabina P. Logisz Great Hall.

This bi-lingual book was published on July 24, 2012 through the *Muzeum Katyńskie* of the *Muzeum Wojska Polskiego*. It was the result of 2½ years of in-depth and groundbreaking research by Ms. Piórkowska. Her research included the discovery that U.S. Army POWs had been "registered code users" who sent information from the *Oflag* (POW camps for officers only) to the United States.

On Sep., 10, 2012, the U.S. National Archives announced the creation of an archival-finding aid to the various sources for Katyn materials, and the declassification of a number of files. Krystyna was allowed access to various declassified files shortly before that announcement, and it was during her work at the Archives in College Park that she located four different documents confirming her theory that the U.S. Army prisoners had, in fact, well prior to 1945, advised the U.S. government of the visit to Katyn and their assessment of guilt. Many of the documents that were in U.S. hands were not released, even during the days of the Cold War, when the United States and the USSR were in fierce global competition.



Life Legacy honorees.

PMA LIFE LEGACY MEMBERS HONORED. On November 2, the PMA hosted its 6th Bi-annual Life Legacy Benefit. Held in the Sabina P. Logisz Great Hall, this event was held to honor twenty individuals, families or organizations who, for over the past two years, generously contributed to the PMA. The Great Hall was transformed into an elegant setting fit for a black-tie reception and dinner. This year's Master of Ceremonies was **Gary Kenzer**, executive director of the Polish American Association. Seventy-five guests were greeted by **Maria Ciesla**, president of the PMA, and enjoyed an evening filled with wonderful music played by **Anthony Kawalkowski**, violinist, and **Dr. William Crowle**, pianist. Everyone was treated to an outstanding gourmet dinner catered by Kasia's Deli. **Jim Robaczewski**, secretary-treasurer of the Polish Roman Catholic Union, sang both the Polish and American national anthems. Deacon **Edmund Gronkiewicz**, a PMA board member, gave the invocation and the Benediction. This year, the PMA gave its first honorary Life Legacy membership to **Kazimiera Bober**, founder and CEO of Kasia's Deli, for her years of generosity to the PMA. Also honored posthumously as Life Legacy members were **Joan K. and I. George Kosinski** for their financial and service support to the PMA. Joan was an active volunteer for approximately 40 years.

THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG NATIONS. The Polish Teachers Association of America, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago, and The Polish Museum of America (PMA) co-hosted the opening of an exhibit: "*The Righteous Among the Nations – Help of Polish people for the Jewish population in southern Poland in the years 1939-1945.*" The unveiling of this exhibit took place on November 4 in the PMA's Great Hall. Almost 200 people co-mingled to see an exhibit that paid tribute to the rescuers, who, by saving a single life, helped save entire generations that flourish today. The exhibit tells the story of

a group of Polish gentiles living in Nazi-occupied Poland during World War II who sheltered and aided Jewish men, women, and children during the Holocaust. The exhibit also documents the risks involved in this endeavor, as Polish citizens were the only people in the German Nazi-occupied Europe who, along with their families, were summarily executed by the Nazi military if caught helping Jews.

This exhibit was made possible by the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej) (IPN), a Polish institution established to preserve the memory of the losses suffered by the Polish Nation during WWII. This exhibit was made by Paulina Kapuścińska, consul general of the Republic of Poland, Ewa Koch, president of the Polish Teachers Association of America, and Maria Ciesla, president of the PMA. Representing the IPN were Ewa Leniart, director of the IPN Rzeszów branch, Dr. Krzysztof Kaczmarek of the IPN Educational Bureau in Rzeszów, and Dr. Elżbieta Rączy, co-creator of the exhibit. This exhibit was only at the PMA until November 14.

COUNCIL OF EDUCATORS. Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) and the Council of Educators in Polonia (CEP) invited everyone to attend its 15th Annual Polish American heritage celebration, Oct. 26. The program included awarding academic college scholarships to **Anna Nasinska** of Eastern Illinois University and **Olivia Kwiecien, Aleksandra Bomba, and Malgorzata Sobolewska**, all of NEIU. Also receiving scholarships were **Natalia Sporschill** of the University of Illinois at Chicago and **Igor Lipinski**, doctoral student at Northwestern University.

Four individuals and one organization received special Polish Heritage awards for their significant contributions to the Polish American Community and to NEIU. These were **Jan Aaftink, James Kolak, Danuta Schneider, and Joanna Les**, along with the **Chicago Society of the Polish National Alliance**.



The Polish Union of America provide members and interested persons the full benefits of belonging to a fraternal organization including death benefits, camaraderie, interesting cultural events, and exciting excursions.

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POLISH AMERICAN JOURNAL

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION AND CONTINUANCE OF POLISH AMERICAN MUSIC

Polka World Loses Musician Dave Bruzdinski



Dave Bruzdinski (right), and his father, Casey, following their induction into the Concertina Congress Hall of Fame.



In addition to be a versed concertina player, Bruzdinski also excelled as a drummer. He is pictured here as a member of Lenny Gomulka's Chicago Push.

CALUMET CITY, Ill. — Dave Bruzdinski of Calumet City passed away Oct. 28, 2012 after a long illness.

He was the former drummer and concertina player with Lenny Gomulka & the Chicago Push and Gerry Tarka's Midwest Sounds.

Bruzdinski, 52, was an employee of the City of Calumet City

for many years. A skilled concertina player and drummer, he was inducted into the World Concertina Congress Hall of Fame in 2004 along with his father, Casey Bruzdinski.

He is survived by his mother Therese Bruzdinski; loving sisters: Darlene (Jerry) Kender, Jan (Bob) Zima and Laura (Dan) Mateja; cherished nieces and nephew: Jennifer

Zima, Jason Zima, Ashley Mateja, Lindsey Mateja, and several aunts and cousins. David was preceded in death by his father Casimer.

Funeral services were held Nov. 2, 2012 from Castle Hill Funeral Home in Calumet City with a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Andrew the Apostle Church.

Veteran Gene Mikrut Passes

CHICAGO — Gene Mikrut, musician, 77, of Manhattan Ill., former resident of Chicago, passed away Oct. 20, 2012. A life-long professional musician, Mikrut was a member of the International Polka Association, the United Polka Association and Let's Polka. He was a retired business owner and veteran of U.S. Army.

He was one of the few musicians

who has appeared on every ethnic radio station on the Chicago area, as well as other ethnic radio stations in Wisconsin and Indiana. He also appeared in an ethnic music special on the television show "Chicago Camera" and made numerous appearances on television station WCIU in Chicago. Mikrut was a major contributor to the Spuscizna Group, a group dedicated to Polish heritage.

Veteran Chicago musician Rich Cerajewski remembers, "Gene was a great accordionist and a mainstay to a lot of groups in the '60s heyday. He later did a lot of solo work and was a great guy and great musician."

Mikrut is survived by his wife Annette, children Gina Deegan and Rick (Nikki); and six grandchildren. Memorial services were private.

Korosa Honored

CHICAGO — Martin's International announced that Eddie Korosa, Jr. was selected for a special Lifetime Award for his contribution to polka music over the years. Additionally, Korosa is nominated in the Best Polka Entertainer 2012 category for the upcoming 32nd Annual Chicago Music Awards (CMA).

The Awards are scheduled for Sun., Jan. 20, 2013 at the Copernicus Center, 5216 West Lawrence Avenue. It opens with a reception at 6:15 p.m. and awards ceremony at 8:00 p.m.

Polish Heritage Tour of Poland

BOSTON — Polka Hall of Famers **Lenny Gomulka** (inset, right) and Mitch Biskup invite you to join them on an amazing Polish Heritage Tour of Poland, May 17-30, 2013. The tour will visit Poland's major cities and the beautiful countryside including Gdansk, Warsaw, Czestochowa, Sandomierz, Baranow, Zalipe, Zakopane, Krakow, and more.

Highlights will include a visit



to the Amber Factory, and a cruise of the harbor in Gdansk; a feast at a Polish wedding celebration in Olzstyn; and a Medieval dinner with Knights in Baranow Sandomiersz; rafting on the Dunajec River near Zakopane; and a Gorale bonfire dinner in the Tatra Mountains. There will be folklore performances by local entertainers, regional foods, and more.

For complete information, contact: Helga Leonard at A Dream Trip 4 U, (724) 234-2033 or email: helga@adreamtrip4u.com.

POLKA INSIDER / Steve Litwin

Once Again, Time to Oberek Around the Tree

According to the New Brass Express, "Christmas Time's a'Comin'," while John Jaworski and the Polish Village Musicians sing "Hej Koleda!" "Let's Go Caroling" in a Polish Village Christmas with *Koledy i Pastoralki*. The Pala Brothers remind us that "Christmas Bells are Ringing," and the time has come for "Christmas Lights" according to Charm City. Lenny Gomulka gives everyone "The Gift of Christmas" while Gennie O sings out that it's "Christmastime."

We all know it will be "A Honky Style Christmas" thanks to the music of the late Stas Bulanda, but John Stanky reminds us "It's Not Christ-

mas Without You." WRS presents "A Very Merry Christmas," where Jimmy Weber sings out, "All I Want for Christmas is a Concertina." Pan Franek and Zosia have "A Polish Christmas" and Jersey Polka Richie presents a "Concertina Christmas." Sunshine Recordings gathers Jerry Darlak & the Touch, John Stevens' Doubleshot, Walter Ostanek and Jan Cyman & the Musicalaires with "Polkas for the Christmas Season."

While Li'l Richard *Sings Polish Carols*, The Good Times offers us a look and listen to *The Family Christmas Album. Holiday Favorites* by Eddie Blazonczyk's Versatones include "Twinkletoes" and

"Rudolph Z Czerwonym Nosem."

Christmas has always meant music, with everything from Bing Crosby to Bobby Helms to Eddie Blazonczyk to Lenny Gomulka to Polish koledy. In an age when we all seem to never have enough time, let's make time to "Christmas oberek" around the tree, enjoy the special meaning of that old ornament and delight in the Polish lyrics we all learned as children. Make it a polka Christmas. Make it a Christmas of old.

To everyone, Adele and I send wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

TOLEDO POLONIA / Margaret Zotkiewicz-Dramczyk

Toledo Celebrates Heritage Month

TOLEDO — Polish American Heritage Month certainly didn't disappoint anyone, as several special events took place around town, among them:

Ss. Adalbert & Hedwig Parish's Polish Heritage Dinner Dance. This was a sold out success! Even those of us who didn't make it for the meal were able to get in at the door to hear the terrific sounds of Randy Krajewski and the band all afternoon. Just a

few of the organizations that were represented in the crowded hall of St. Adalbert Church included the Echoes of Poland song and dance troupe, Toledo Area Polka Society, the International Music Association, The Commodore Club, and of course the parishioners of both congregations who made it all possible. Let's hope this event becomes an annual tradition.

Fast forward to October 24, when the German Club of Bowling Green State University sponsored an **Oktoberfest** in the student union ballroom. A modest ticket price of \$3.00 got you a German buffet, two bands, and a lecture by Cleveland style polka expert Joe Valencic. It was nice to make Joe's acquaintance after his presentation, which consisted of vintage film shorts from the heyday of polkas in Cleveland, and a brief historical overview. Then it was on



Statue of Pope John Paul in the Ss. Adalbert & Hedwig garden.

to an evening of alternating bands, Randy Krajewski & the Swingin' Dittas and also Squeezebox with Mollie Busta and Ted Lange, and drummer Dave Berger. This event, a first for me, will definitely be a "repeat performance" next year.

Moving on to October 27, **Toledo Area Polka Society** hosted Len Zielinski and the D Street Band from Chicago. As usual, Mike Marek and the crew from TAPS made sure guests were treated well at the Conn Weissenberger American Legion Hall on Alexis Road.

The next day, the **Toledo Poznan Alliance**, sister city with Poznan, Poland, hosted a Polish style harvest celebration, complete with Polish dinner, entertainment, silent auction and raffle on Sunday, October 28th at the Franciscan Center at Lourdes University, Sylvania, Ohio. "The Fran-

ciscan" as it is known, is a tastefully appointed hall built, as is much of the school, in the California mission style of architecture. This is also where the Polish American Concert



Randy Krajewski (accordion) and his group, Badinov.

band holds its annual Fall-Winter Concert Thanksgiving weekend.

I will end this month by saying a very special *dziękuję* to Kevin and Judy Kwiatkowski and Stanley Pasko, Jr, who sponsored a bus trip to Seven Springs, Pa. for the **Fall Polka Fest**, November 3-4. From the moment we Toledoans boarded on Saturday in the early morning hours, until we rolled back into town late Sunday night, a good time was had by all. Guests included the



(l. to r.): Greg and Christine Pesartik Forbes, members of the Echoes of Poland Dancers, with Chris' mother and father.

Zelasko family from Riverview, Mich. including our chaperone Sara Zelasko, Dave Grzanka, Mike Grzycko, Dave Bezdziecki, and Kenny Konopka, and lots of fun Toledo folks, including Mike and Marie Marek, Karen Meyer and Tony Groch, Anne Malicki, and Dave Snyder, and from Whitmore Kale, none other than Brian Talaske, who took so many great pictures.

Band line up included Ray Jay & the Carousels, the Diddle Stick Band, Jeff Mleczo's DynaBrass, The Boys, Jimmy K & Ethnic Jazz, and Darrell Weltin's New Brass Express. Tish, Tony, Kathy, and Eddie B., Jr. were most gracious hosts. As



Ss. Adalbert & Hedwig remains a Polish American stronghold in Tolego

we ended the day on Sunday, Tish and Eddie boarded our bus to say "thanks." Finally, it was off to home through snow-covered hills courtesy of super storm Sandy. A little bird says we may repeat the fun in July for summer Springs. Let's hope so! Happy holidays everyone.

NOTES / Barb Pinkowski

What?! It Can't Be Christmas Already!

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Well, hello everyone. I cannot believe that it is already this time of the year.

My sincerest wishes to all for a very Merry Christmas. Hope the holiday season and thereafter finds everyone in the best of health and in high spirits. May all aspects of this holiday bring you peace, love and joy.

AROUND THE TOWN. The New Direction Band was at Potts on October 6, for a **Polish Heritage Month Dance**. A moderate-sized crowd attended this one and there

Roseanne Kutas were very pleased with the attendance. What I noticed right away was a new and larger dance floor, which is a big improvement. All the bands did a super job starting with the Forgotten Buffalo Band, and then the Buffalo Touch and ending with Tru Heritage. I did notice some different personnel in the Tru Heritage band — Steve Binkiewicz and Steve Hayest were the trumpet players. A fun atmosphere prevailed at the Villa at this dance.

The next afternoon on Oct. 21, direct from Chicago, **The Polka**



VENTURING FROM CANADA to hear Full Circle were: Richard Kowalski, Brian Tos, Tom Butash, and Martin Mika, members of the band Village Sound.



HORNS O'PLENTY. (l. to r.): Mike Stapinski, Lenny Gomulka, and Jim Weber of Full Circle.



THREE GENERATIONS. The Bernie Goraks: Grandfather, son, and grandson.



TRU HERITAGE at the "Halfway to Dyngus Day" dance, which was held at the Polish Villa II.

was a cozy feeling in the hall.

Danny Potts offered min-limburger cheese sandwiches to those willing and daring. The band did a great job and offered a variety of music between their sets.

The **Half Way to Dyngus Day Party** at the Polish Villa II on Oct. 20 was very successful. Ed and

Generations Band entertained at the Potts Hall. This band is unique in that there are three generations in the group and all have the same name: Grandpa Bernie Gorak, Son Bernie Gorak, and Grandson Bernie Gorak. The vocals by John Jaworski were outstanding. If you love honky polka music, this is the band you want to hear. Can't think of a better way to have spent Sunday afternoon.

Phocus also played on this same date at the Anchor Inn on William St. and also had many fans there.

Blessed Mother of Teresa Parish, the former **St. James**, held its annual Polka Mass and Polish Dinner, Nov. 3. Cityside did a fine job with the music, songs and lyrics. I belong to this parish and this is the most people I've seen at the 4:00 p.m. Mass.

CONDOLENCES. My sympathy goes out to the family and friends of **Thomas Pazderski**, who passed away Oct. 23 after a long battle with cancer. In the past, Pazderski had

attended many dances. His wife Kathy passed away a few years ago. Pazderski was a veteran of the U.S. Army as a Radio Repair Specialist, a graduate of Seneca Vocational, retiree of General Motors, and a member of the Eagles of Depew. May he rest in peace.

We were shocked by the unexpected death of **Gus Suita** (inset, right). He and his wife Julie — often accompanied by family — were regulars at most polka events in the area. Upon his retirement, he purchased a motor home and made regular trips to Polka Fireworks and other doings in the Northeast. A member of the Madonna Council of the K of C in North Tonawanda, Gus ran dances



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and other parties at the hall. He will be missed.

GET WELL SOON. Get well wishes go out to **Carolyn Trzeciak**, who recently had knee replacement surgery. Carolyn's husband, Joe, is the avid polka fan who travels all over to various dances taping for his polka show seen locally on Channel 20 at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

We hope to see **Dave "Scrubby" Seweryniak** out of the hospital soon. Despite his setback, he is in good spirits, but when isn't he?

CONGRATULATIONS TO ... Tadj and **Marcia Szymczak** on the marriage of their daughter, Karen, on Nov. 3. A carnival themed wedding reception was held at Gregor's Garden Grove. Tadj, a member of The Touch, was recently inducted into the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame.

FULL CIRCLE IN BLACKROCK. On Oct. 27, it was a different and interesting venue for a polka dance at the **Polish Cadets Hall** in the Blackrock section of town. The Full Circle band and the Buffalo Touch played here to a full house. Both bands sounded fabulous. Even though the hall was not very large,

there was a big old-time good feeling about being there. The bar area had plenty of room for standing around and watching the action. It seemed to bring back memories of long time ago when dances were held in a variety of halls. And a wooden dance floor is always a pleasure to dance on. It amazed me again to hear Full Circle have their own distinct sound playing many retro-numbers to perfection. With so many different bands represented by the musicians in the group, it's wonderful how they all come together to produce a completely different sound from their own bands.

This dance was originally organized by the late Jackie Schmid, and I'm sure she was pleased with the result. Eddie Dobosiewicz spoke kindly of Jackie and her dedication to promoting polka music.

It was nice to see some of our Canadian musician friends there — Brian Tos, Richard Kowalski, Tom Butash, Martin Mika and Eddie Guca. A good time was had by all.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS. Hope your holiday shopping, decorating, gift wrapping, card writing, baking, visiting and partying make for a safe and happy Christmas season.

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Shibilski Joins Jammer

CHICAGO (PMN) — The “Bill Shibilski Polka Party” has been added to the PolkaJammer Network’s Saturday line-up at the 6:00 p.m. ET time slot. It’s the same broadcast time where Shibilski was heard over the New York City polka music airwaves for over 35 years. This show is in addition to the popular Sunday 6:00 p.m. ET evening broadcast from Fairleigh Dickinson University in the New York City area.

Shibilski is broadcasting two different programs each weekend on the two broadcast facilities. Each show is archived and available for two weeks on their respective websites. Both programs are produced with many of the regular features that have received acclaim. PolkaJammer may be found at polkajammernetwork.org.

Gora Caribbean Style

FORT ERIE, Ont., Canada (PMN) — John Gora is leading a Caribbean Cruise, March 10-17, 2013, aboard the Norwegian Cruise Lines “Pearl.”

The trip leaves from the port of Miami to Bahamas’s Princess Cay, Ocho Rios in Jamaica, Grand Cayman Island and Cozumel. Music will be by The IPA Tribute Band with Danny and Laura Mateja, Rick Rzeszutko, John Krawisz, Tony Blazonczyk, Mike Maduzia and Lenny Zielinski, plus the Knewz and John Gora & Gorale.

The Bayway Polish Home Presents
A Benefit Concert to aid in relief from the devastation in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy

On Oct. 25, 2012, countless lives were affected by a superstorm, the likes we have not seen in 100 years. Lives were lost. Homes destroyed. Families displaced. Landscape altered forever. On January 27, 2013, we invite the polka community to come together, open their hearts, and show support.

Featuring the music and personalities of the following artists:

- Rick Anton & the Polka Stars (N.J.)
- The Ablemen (N.J.)
- Ed Goldberg’s Odessa Klezmer (N.J.)
- Streetlight (N.J.)
- Chris & Ronnie (N.Y.)
- The Golden Tones (Pa.)
- Mike Costa & The Beat (N.J.)
- Special guest Hall-of-Famer Mitch Biskup (Mass.)

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“Wish Upon a Star” Program Benefits Children with Special Needs

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Two years ago, through the generosity of supporters across the United States, the sixty “Special Children with Special Needs” living in a nursing home in Brzozow, Poland, had their rooms redecorated. The children were given the opportunity to choose their favorite color, and were also provided with some other needed bedroom items.

A great hope — a “Wish Upon a Star” — is something fundraisers are now working on. The dream of these children, who never leave the nursing home, is to go on a vacation together.

Christine Jozwiak, charitable fundraising chairperson of the Polish Heritage Festival, is working to make the children’s wish come true. For some this may be the dream of their lifetime.

“I told our children about the possibility of our going on a holiday together, there was an outbreak of great, indescribable joy, because for all of them it was something beyond

their expectations,” said Sr. Agata, director of the home. “They do not even dare to dream about it.”

Fundraisers are appealing to help these special children live their dream of a lifetime. With individual caregivers, approximately 15 to 18 children will be able to go with the approval from their physicians.

Donations may be sent to: Polish Heritage Festival Charitable Fund, PO Box 115, Springville, NY 14141-0115; Attn: Christine Jozwiak. On the memo line of the check, please write “Special Children w/ Special Needs.” The Polish Heritage Festival is a designated 501 (c) 3 charitable organization; therefore your donation is tax deductible.

If you would like to continue to support the annual “Spirit of St. Nicholas” program, in which new warm clothing is provided to the children in an orphanage/educative center in Jaroslaw, please mark the memo line with “Spirit of St. Nicholas,” and send it to the above address.

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SURNAME CORNER / Robert Strybel

GENEALOGY / Stephen M. Szabados

A Cloudy Disposition

by Robert Strybel

Every Polish last name means something and came into being for a specific reason. Here are few taken from the PAJ's subscription list:

Chmura: The Polish word for cloud; a nickname for someone with a sad and sullen disposition.

Janiga: One of numerous surnames derived from the first name Jan (John), others include Janowski, Janda, Janowiak, Jańczak, Janas, Janiczek, etc., roughly translatable as Johns, Johnson, Johnman, John-ly, Johnnton, etc.

Włodarczyk: Patronymic nickname for son of the "włodarz" (overlord, master, headman, etc.).

THIS YEAR GIVE A GIFT OF POLISH HERITAGE! You've already given your loved ones cosmetics, boxed chocolates, jewelry, books, DVDs, computer games, ties, shirts

and bottle and may be running out of ideas. If so, a unique, interesting and unusual gift for could be a custom-researched analysis of their Polish last name. They will learn what it means, how it came into being, how many people share and where they live. A full-color coat of arms is included if one accompanies a given surname. They will surely be in for a nice surprise when the completed several-page report lands at their doorstep.

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ulica Kaniowska 24
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For more information please e-mail: research60@gmail.com.

Genealogy and Polish History

An important step in your genealogy research will require a review of Polish history and specifically the changes in Polish borders. This will allow you to narrow your search for the location of the birthplace of your ancestors and also enable you to sort through the possible confusion of the country of birth on various documents that you find. The changes associated with the Polish Partitions and the changes after World War I are most important. An example of this would be a 1900 census that may list that your Polish grandmother was born in Russia but in the 1920 census it was listed as Poland.

The Polish Partitions were caused by the political movements within Poland to grant democratic reforms which led Poland's neighbors of Russia, Prussia and Austria to grab control of Polish territory in 1772, 1793, and 1795. Poland ceased to exist as a political state

after the 1795 partition.

The 1900 and 1910 U.S. Census records for the Polish immigrants listed their country of birth as Germany, Russia or Austria. However, many Polish immigrants were very proud of their Polish heritage and forced the enumerator to include Poland to the country of birth column. These census records will list the country of birth as Poland-Germany or Poland-Russia or Poland-Austria. Although these double names were not official countries, they will indicate that the person listed was born within the old borders of Poland. If the double name was not used, check the language column on the 1910 Census record to verify that the immigrant spoke Polish.

THE END OF WORLD WAR I enabled the nationalist movements in many countries to gain legal support to break down the borders of the German Empire, the Austro-Hun-

garian Empire and Russia. The new Republic of Poland was one of these new countries formed from the treaties signed at the end of the Great War.

In summary, reviewing the 1910 and 1920 U.S. census records for Polish immigrants should show different countries of birth and these differences will be clues in your search for your ancestor's birthplace because the differences will help narrow your search area. The 1910 census will point to the partition area where you should look for the birthplace of your ancestor. Although this will not give the exact location, knowing the partition area will shorten your search.

❖ ❖ ❖

Stephen M. Szabados, a regular contributor to the Polish American Journal, is the author of *Finding Grandma's European Ancestors* and *Find Your Family History*.

BRUSH UP

Polish Christmas Things

Here are some concepts and ritual artifacts associated with Polish-style Christmas. For the benefit of beginners, the pronunciation is being provided:

- żłóbek (ZHWOO-beck)..... manger scene, Christmas crib, nativity set
szopka (SHAWP-kah)same żłóbek (above), or Christmas/
New Year's puppet play
Święty Mikołaj (SHFYEN-tih mee-KAW-why)..... Saint Nicholas
aniołek (ah-NYOW-weck) little angel (St. Nick's helper)
choinka (haw-EEN-kah) Christmas tree
gwiazda betlejemaska (GVYAHZ-dah bet-lay-EM-skah)
star of Bethlehem
siano (SHAH-naw) hay
Wigilia (vee-GHEE-lyah) Christmas Eve
opłatek (awp-WAH-tek) Christmas wafer
dzielenie się opłatkiem (jeh-LEH-nyeh sheh awp-WAHT-kemm)
sharing Christmas wafer
kołęda (kaw-LEN-dah) Christmas carol
jasełka (yah-SEH-wkah) nativity play

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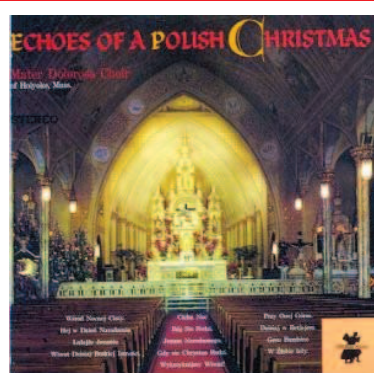


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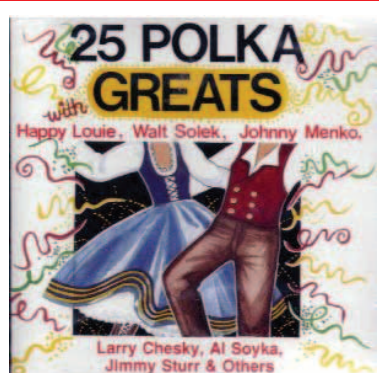


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AMERICAN POLONIA AT A GLANCE

FLORIDA

SARASOTA — The Polish American Association of Sarasota observed its 35th anniversary with a celebration, Oct. 28.

The event opened with a salute to the Siberian Society of Florida and the Polish Center of John Paul II.

Following dinner, Col. Andrzej Dylong, chief representative of the Polish Liaison Team with U.S. Central Command, talked about the partnership between Polish and American armed forces.

A few examples defining the association's accomplishments in public service, he said, include numerous fundraising campaigns aiding people in need in the Sarasota area as well as in Poland, countless participation in various ethnic festivals, Chopin piano competitions in the '80s, continuation of the annual musical concerts for past ten years, student scholarships and the Wigilia Christmas dinners.

The next Polish American Association events include a traditional "Oplatek," or "Wigilia" Christmas Eve dinner, Dec. 2 and a scholarship gala Dec. 15. For more information, call (941) 756-5155 or email polish-sarasota@gmail.com.

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO — The Chicago Chapter of the Kościuszko Foundation and the Department of World Languages and Cultures of Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) held its annual Tadeusz Kościuszko's *Imieniny*, Name Day, on October 23 at NEIU. Each year, the Chicago Chapter honors an individual for his/her leadership and dedication within Chicago's Polonia.

This year, **Anna Szpindor, M.D.**, an allergist and Polish community advocate, was honored. **Tom Rusnak** was the guest speaker and presented information on the Kościuszko Foundation Art Enrichment English Camp in Poland. This was followed by a piano performance by **Igor Lipinski**, a young concert pianist from Poland.

Igor earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in piano performance, literature, and musical arts at the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester. In 1998, at the age of 12, Igor received the Grand Prix for Young Pianists at the Paderewski Competition in Kasna Dolna, Poland. In 2008, he made his American orchestra debut with the Buffalo Philharmonic, where he played Paderewski's Piano Concerto under the baton of JoAnn Falletta. He is a recipient of a 2012 Kościuszko Foundation

Scholarship. This fall, he began his doctoral studies at Northwestern University. In the upcoming season, he will appear at concerts in California, Florida, and Massachusetts and will perform at a special New Year's Day concert with the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra. (G.B.C.)

CHICAGO — To celebrate Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Polish American Breast Cancer Awareness Program and the Amber Coalition (AC) began a series of educational forums on breast cancer awareness on October 14 with a solemn Mass at St. Hyacinth Basilica. Then they held a Breast Educational Forum, Oct. 28 at Dom Highlanders on Chicago's southside.

Another full-day educational conference was held at Illinois Masonic Hospital on November 10. Free mammograms were available to eligible individuals who had participated in either of these Breast Cancer Forums. These informative programs were organized by **Marek Rudnicki, M.D.**, a well-known Chicago area surgeon and a Polish community activist.

The Amber Coalition is very popular among Polish women in the Chicago area. It offers help to those Polish women struggling with cancer, and for those who do not have medical insurance. It is through the generosity of AC sponsors that hundreds of women can take advantage of free mammograms.

It is worth noting that Dr. Marek Rudnicki also serves as president of the World Federation of Doctors Polonia. (G.B.C.)

MICHIGAN

ORCHARD LAKE — The Polish Mission is pleased to present *What Can Dead Prisoners Do*, Tues., Dec. 4, in the lower level of the Adam Cardinal Maida Alumni Library, at 7:00 p.m., in cooperation with the Consul-General of Poland in Chicago, and *Tygodnik Polski*. The event is free and open to the public.

This documentary by Director Anna Ferens details the fate of the Soviet POWs captured by Poles during the Polish-Soviet War of 1919.

Utilizing never-before-accessed files from the International Red Cross, the documentary investigates the fate of those POWs and documents how their experience shaped Polish-Soviet relations for the future.

Ferens is an award-winning film director and journalist, who directed *Where God Understands Polish* (2003), *Man seeking Woman* (2005), and *Where do the Wild Strawberries Grow* (2006). She will be present to

introduce the film and answer questions, both at a private screening during the day for the students St. Mary's Preparatory Academy, and also for the general public showing at 7:00.

The Polish Consulate has put its support behind Polish Mission, and Vice Consul Konrad Zieliński will journey to Orchard Lake for the occasion. General Consul Paulina Kapuścińska stated: "This film takes on the important and challenging task of unearthing a shrouded past to create a transparent future." Vice Consul Zielinski continued: "Ferens' work is a great way to introduce Polish-Americans to issues in the Polish dialogue."

According to Polish Mission Director Marcin Chumiecki, "this is an important film, which raises important questions, and shows how modern Poland is engaged with its rich history."

The Polish Mission of the Orchard Lake Schools, which were founded in 1885 by Polish immigrants, is to preserve and promote Polish and Polish American culture, tradition, and history for present and future generations. The Polish Mission organizes programs, courses and events that highlight Polish and Polish American culture and accomplishments, and ensures a repository for artifacts, archival materials, works of art, and publications. For more information, please visit www.polishmission.com.

MINNESOTA

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS — The Columbia Heights / Lomianki, Poland Sister Cities International sponsored a very successful fundraiser, Oct. 21 at Murzyn Hall. A delicious Italian dinner was donated, prepared, and served by Sister City member Jeff Bahe of Bobby & Steve's AutoWorld to almost 300 attendees. Bahe, his family, and employees of AutoWorld have again provided complete meals to assist with funding of humanitarian projects sponsored by the all-volunteer Sister Cities' organization.

Entertainment was provided by St. Mary's Orthodox Church's Balaika Musicians and accordionist John Kujda.

Other attractions included a Silent Auction, International Bazaar, Vintage Boutique, and Book Store. Donations were also collected for the Children's Hospital near Lomianki, Poland (near Warsaw). Lion's Club members volunteered to staff the cash bar. Boy Scouts of Troop 119, with parents, assisted with bussing tables, assisting with the dishwasher, and clean-up. Sister Cities'

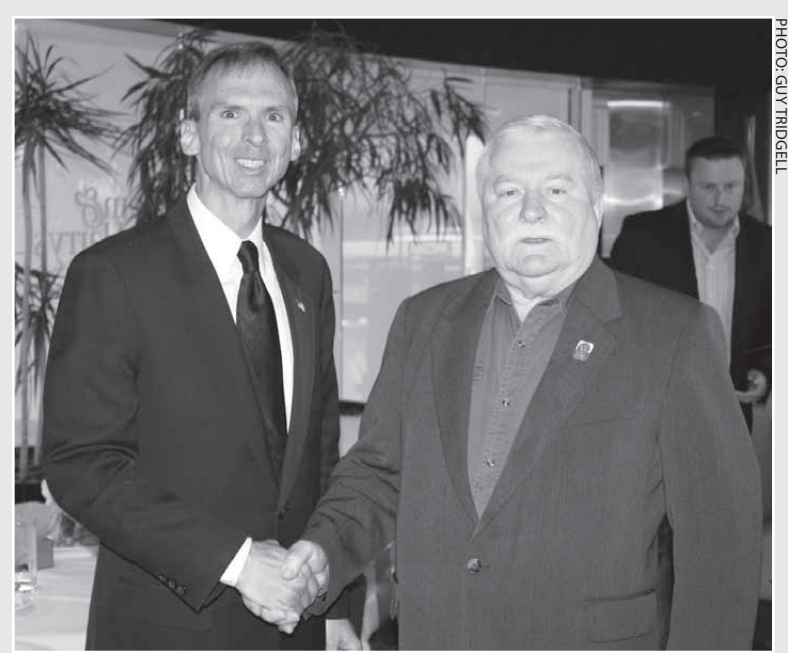


PHOTO: GUY TRIDGELL

LIPINSKI MEETS WITH WAŁĘSA. Lech Wałęsa was recently in the Chicago area to speak at a conference sponsored by FreedomWorks, held October 26 at Schaumburg Convention Center. Established in 1984 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., Freedomworks has hundreds of thousands of grassroots volunteers nationwide. "FreedomWorks recruits, educates, trains and mobilizes millions of volunteer activists to fight for less government, lower taxes, and more freedom." It was during Wałęsa's visit to the Chicago area that he met with U.S. Rep. Dan Lipinski (R-3rd). — Geraldine Coleman

members thank all who made the event successful and enjoyable.

The relationship between Columbia Heights and Lomianki was established over 20 years ago. This group focuses on humanitarian, educational, cultural, civic, and social projects. All funding is raised by this volunteer group of dedicated, hardworking members.

For further information, contact Co-Chairs: Gloria Bergstrom (651) 633-0506 or Dolores Puente Strand (763) 571-1709.

MINNEAPOLIS — PACIM Wigilia Benefit Dinner. December 9, 2012. A fundraiser for needy Polish orphanages, the traditional Polish Christmas Eve meal will be held at the Gasthof Restaurant, 2300 University Avenue NE, Minneapolis from 6:00 until 8:00 PM. This community celebration features breaking of oplatek, traditional foods, the singing of koledy, and the same wonderful menu as last year.

Tickets are \$40.00; \$35/00 for PACIM members. They can be purchased by mail by sending your check made out to PACIM to Paul Rog, 1213 Monroe Street NE, Minneapolis 55413. Be sure to include the names of the people attending and any special seating require-

ments you may have. For more information, contact Paul at (612) 789-5972.

NEW YORK

BUFFALO — The First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association, (FCSLA), a fraternal benefit association based in Beachwood, Ohio, established a Buffalo Branch on October 30. Local members and officers from Cleveland met at the Polish Villa II to discuss its visions of the future. The FCSLA has been in business since 1892, helping its 83,000 members with quality life insurance and annuity products.

PENNSYLVANIA

UNIONTOWN — The Polish Heritage Club will host its annual "Wigilia" (Christmas Eve Super) on Fri., Dec. 14, at 6:00 p.m. in the Polish Club Hall on South Mt. Vernon Ave.

Reservations are needed. Call Barbara Novsek at (724) 438-1036 by Dec. 12.

Come and enjoy the meatless meal, share oplatek, sing beloved koledy, and receive specially-baked perniczki.

In 2011, 167 participants came from near and far to promote this tradition.



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KUTURA / Staś Kmieć

Review: Śląsk Delivers!

Reviewed November 1 at St. Hubert's High School, Philadelphia, PA; presented by Polski Express.

It was 1959 when the cultural impresario Sol Hurok brought the *Śląsk Song and Dance Ensemble of Poland* (then called the *Śląsk, The Polish State Folk Ballet*) to America for the first time. It was the middle of the Cold War, and cultural exchange was one of the few international successes of the time. The company's sensational debut, followed by a lengthy sold-out US tour, symbolized a separation of art and culture from the politics of the day.

Śląsk returned to the United States delivering a non-stop show — full of movement, color and style. Celebrating their 60th anniversary, the first-class professional folkloric troupe shows no signs of creeping middle age here; the company's legacy glittered for an action-packed two hours that possibly left observers more exhausted than the participants. Skillful and dazzlingly energetic, the presentation was much enhanced by brilliantly colorful costumes and a compliment of 14 musicians.

Much of the appeal of *Śląsk* relies on its immense unison, impressive patterning, and stylistic traits. The meticulously dispatched footwork and the exuberant dances excite and engage an audience. The performers display a pedigreed training and present a version of "folk" that never was. Even though the repertoire is drawn from Poland's many ethnographic regions, the numbers are a distillation produced for theatrical effect.

The company, founded by composer Stanisław Hadynda with choreographer extraordinaire Elwira Kamińska, is made up of professional singers and dancers with a great deal of ballet training. Hadynda's compositions are symphonic and neo-classical in structure. In the dancing the emphasis is on the legs, with a generous, expansive upper body and involves acrobatic tricks, jumping and partnered lifts.

Due to the effects of Hurricane Sandy, which caused a lack of power at the scheduled venue, the presentation I attended was moved to a smaller, less-equipped location with limited theatrical effects. The first act of the program in particular was "spot-on" — moving quickly with clean, precise dancing and a display of fine performance technique.

Programs were not handed



Śląsk returned to the United States delivering a non-stop show — full of movement, color and style.

out, but having seen many performances of this company over the years, I knew each selection. The performance included Kamińska favorites like the opening *Trojak* in Rozbar-Bytom costumes, the thrilling Cieszyński *Taniec Chustkowy*, *Czardasz-Szot Madziar*, and the Beskid Mountain *Kolomajki*.

Beata Pyda sang in a clean and clear open-throat vocal tone, while emphasizing the words, in the signature "Karolinka," and later in "Słoneczko Wyszło." Piotr Nikiel was engaging and charming in a beautifully sung "Do Krakowa Jadą" sequence "Moja Marysiu, Kochaj mnie."

Not necessarily one of my personal favorites in the past — *Polka Szturchana*, a series of Slovak-styled swing dance lifts choreographed by Juraj Kubanka — was wonderfully executed and changed my previous perspective of this newer work.

Over the years, I have seen Kamińska's stellar *Kujawiak z Oberkiem* — choreographed with depth and subtle nuance, morph in its interpretation and accent. Having less effect in its transitions, the dance is less personal and overly exaggerated. Once performed by the women in light-weight green pleated skirts with a Łowicz apron, the costumes are now fully realized and are duly heavy, which makes the turns less effective. The fiery acrobatics still entertain and the culminating partnered lift-jump (known as "pistolety") performed by Adam Czechlewski supported by Joanna Mokwa was spectacular. Usually executed by a compact dancer, Czechlewski's long line allows the eye to continue further.

The entertaining *Krakowiak* has a change of storyline with regards to the Trumpeter of Kraków/invasion of Tatars sequence, which is less dramatic and historical than what the choreographer originally created.

The gem and centerpiece of the program is still the *Góralskie Podhale Mountain Dances* by Kamińska. The suite begins authentically in form with couplets sung in *biały głos* (white voice) style accompanied by dance. In this opening sequence, soloist Marcin Kędziora — who has an appropriate solid build, dances the steps in the manner that they were intended — with tightness and a weighted association to the earth rarely found in stylized troupes. From this true base, what follows is a vivid display of true inventiveness and imagination closely related to Hadynda's music — full of dazzling precision at super-speed. Closing the first act, this resulted in the first standing ovation by the enthusiastic Philadelphia audience.

Śląsk's artistic performance galvanized the audience with its brand of folk spectacle and pure entertainment. With vigor, power, and amazing lightness they ignited bravura fireworks with consummate ease.

UPDATE: *Śląsk* returns with a North American tour in March 2013 produced by Canada's Starvox Entertainment. At presstime the schedule is as follows: 16-Toronto Canada (2 performances); 17-Hamilton Canada; 19-Pittsburgh, Pa.; 21-Princeton, N.J.; 23-Bronx, N.Y. (2 performances); 24-Schenectady, N.Y. Look for further information on www.PAJtoday.blogspot.com or www.starvoxent.com.

EMBASSY ROW / Richard Poremski

Welcome Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Poland's Ambassador to the United States — Ryszard Schnepf — made his first official appearance here, Sept. 29, 2012, at the American-Polish Advisory Council (APAC) Conference during its extensive and politically non-partisan program.

The highlights of Ambassador Schnepf's well received speech included: the strong, historical Poland-U.S. friendship and cooperation; our critical military/security alliances; being brothers in the fight for freedom and establishment of democracy; mutually engaging in beneficial economic and trade matters; joint military participation in NATO and Afghanistan; Poland's stable economy and steady economic growth; praise for our shared patriots Jan Karski, Casimir Pulaski and Tadeusz Kosciuszko; the vital importance of educating future generations of Polish-Americans to be proud of Poland and to promote its image in the United States; and the necessary inclusion of Poland in the United States Visa Waiver Program.

Schnepf concluded by emphasizing the importance of person-to-person dialog and promised that the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Washington will be an open forum of discussion for the American Polonia.



Schnepf was born, Sept., 22, 1951 in Warsaw. He is married with three children. Being multi-lingual, he speaks English, Spanish, Russian, and Italian.

He holds a M.A. Degree from Warsaw University (1974) and a Ph.D. from the Polish Academy of Sciences (1979), both in the discipline of History. He began his political career in 1991 as Poland's Ambassador to Uruguay and Paraguay, and then later to Costa Rica in 2001 (accredited also to six other Central America countries). After holding various high level posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, he served as Ambassador to Spain 2008-2012.

Schnepf was installed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States of America on Sept. 22.

U.S. Ambassador to Poland — Stephen Mull



PHOTO: RICHARD P. POREMSKI

favorite professor Georgetown University — "who taught me quite a bit about Poland."

After concluding the early light formalities, Ambassador Mull eagerly engaged in much one-on-one conversations with those present, having said that he was "pleased to meet with the Polonia on such a friendly basis." Many important topics were talked about, including Poland's inclusion in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program.

"I really value your (Polonia's) friendship, support and criticism," said Mull in his concluding remarks. "And don't hesitate to tell me what we are doing right or wrong ... you will not be taken for granted."

Mull, 54, joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1982. He has served as a diplomat in Washington, Warsaw (twice), Indonesia, South Africa, and the Bahamas. He was U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania 2003-2006.

Along the way, he has now earned eighteen prestigious Presidential and State Department awards. He and his wife, Cheryl M. Stephan, have a 17-years-old son, Ryan.

President Obama appointed Mull as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Poland, with Senate confirmation following, Sept. 22, 2012.

He presented his ambassadorial credentials to President Komorowski in Warsaw, Nov. 8, 2012.

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PONDERING POLE / Edward Poniewaz

Heartthrobs and Puppy Dogs

Question for our readers: how do you say “heartthrob” or “hottie” in Polish? Two popular young actors in Hollywood are **Paul Wesley** and **Josh Lucas**. Both are of Polish descent. I found them on the EthniCelebs website ethnicelebs.com. Here is a brief bio of each from Wikipedia:

Wesley was born in New Brunswick, N.J. to Polish parents Agnieszka and Thomas Wasilewski, and grew up in Marlboro Township, N.J. He has one older sister, Monika, and two younger sisters, Julia and Leah. In addition to English, he also knows Polish, having spent four months every year in Poland until the age of 16.

When asked why he changed to his “professional” name, he said, “My birth name is too hard to pronounce! I asked my family’s permission to change it, and it really helped my career.”

I’m going to bet this super good looking dude’s girlfriend(s) call him “Va-shi-lev-ski” or whatever he wants, but — along those same lines — Schwarzenegger’s name didn’t hurt his chances for success.

Josh Lucas was born Joshua Lucas Easy Dent Maurer in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1971, the son of Michele (née LeFevre), a nurse midwife, and Don Maurer, an Emergency Room physician. His paternal grandparents were Polish and according to EthniCelebs, his mother is half Polish.

The filmography of both these young stars is truly impressive. I wish them continued success and happiness.

POLSKI OWCZAREK NIZINNY. I received a wonderful eMail from Benigna Pajackowska Dohms, inspired by the story about Celeste Bonwich wearing her Polish costume (PAJ, August 2012), told how she was able to integrate Polish ethnicity in dress and other accessories at a show featuring a Polish dog breed. Here is part of her letter:

“Last November I was the co-chair for the 2011 National Specialty of the American Polish Lowland Sheepdog, Polski Owczarek Nizinny (PON). That particular show was held in Philadelphia. The entire planning committee put Polish themes into as much of the event as we could. Last year’s show was the 10th anniversary of our dog breed’s inclusion by AKC, so there

was plenty of reason to showcase the Polish aspect of the dog’s ancestry. Our Meet the Breed booth was a replica of a Polish cottage, made by a committee member who was born in Poland. She included her grandmother’s old broom and made headpieces of typical Polish flowers for all of the women on the committee. We were encouraged to wear red and white colors, unless we had a costume. Maggie, who made the cottage, and her daughter wore a Krakowski stroj. I have two custom made costumes from Poland and chose to wear the one from my father’s region, Piotrkow Trybunalski. The heavy wool was a whimsical touch for our sheepdogs and all of the sheep figures in our area of the arena. In addition, I carried a shepherd’s crook, complete with sheep bell from Poland, as we paraded into the ring. Our awards for the winning dogs were all different pieces of Boleslawiec. We were a very colorful group, not only receiving a lot of attention from attendees, but also won first prize for our booth, as being the most representative of the breed. And, I am proud to say that both of my dogs have Polish names. I even have the men’s peacock “hat” from the Krakowski stroj, which I put on my boy dog for a Christmas photo, and yes, I had it in Philadelphia.

KOLĘDY. We know that the kolędy are the beautiful and traditional Polish carols written many years ago and beloved by the Polish people to this day.

Most we know today were first compiled in 1838 by Rev. Hioduszewski in a book called *Pastoralki i Kolędy z Melodiami* (Pastorals and Carols with Melodies). Since we are coming up on the season, here is a Polish Christmas question: has there been one significant and popular Polish Christmas carol written in modern times? I’m looking for the Polish version of “Jingle Bell Rock.”

Dziękuję Benigna for her eloquently written story about presenting Polish culture in a number of different aspects. The joy she expresses in carrying out the project is evident and for some of us, we now know about those loveable PONs.

A heartfelt *Wesołych Świąt* to all of the PAJ readers and supporters. I hope you have a warm and loving wigilia and Pasterka. Our prayers go out to those still trying to recover from Hurricane Sandy.

If you have a thought about this month’s topic, an answer to the question, a question of your own, or have interesting facts to share, contact me at: Edward Poniewaz, 6432 Marmaduke Ave, St. Louis, MO 63139; eMail alinabrig@yahoo.com.

BOOKS IN BRIEF / Florence Waszkelewicz Clowes, MLIS

The Secret of the Village Fool

THE SECRET OF THE VILLAGE FOOL
by Rebecca Upjohn
ill. by René Benoit
Second Story Press, 2012, 32 pp.
\$18.95. Ages 7-9.

This oversized colorful book is set in pre-war Zborow, Poland. Milek and his brother Munio have an odd neighbor, Anton, whom villagers call the village fool. He lives alone, never eats meat, talks to the plants and animals, thanking God for the sunshine and rain. The boy’s mother sends food to Anton, concerned about his welfare, while other villagers make fun of him.

A neighbor warns Anton not to associate with the Zeigers, who are Jewish, warning him about Hitler and the war to come. When war does reach the village, the Nazis began arresting Jews.

One neighboring family has already been taken away, leaving only a child, Eva. Anton comes to the rescue, keeping Eva in the attic, disguising the boys in girls’ clothing and leading the group to his house. Anton has prepared a hiding place for all—they find themselves deep in a cramped underground room for many months while Anton roams the village freely, considered a fool by the Nazis. He brings the little group food and news of outside events until the end of the war.

A special section at the end of the book provides photographs and a history of what happened to people in Zborow after the war ended. A true story, showing courage and kindness during a time of war.

SPEAK THE CULTURE: POLAND Be Fluent in Polish Life and Culture
by Andrew Whittaker
Thorogood publishing, Co.
United Kingdom, 265 pp., \$24.95
Stylus Publishing distributors.

This is the fifth in the series of Thorogood’s series of Cultural Guides. It provides a fast track in understanding key events, customs and culture of the nation. It has the stamp of approval from the Adam Mickiewicz Institute of Culture in Poland.

Illustrations abound in the eight sections, which include Identity and Foundations of Polish Culture, Literature and Philosophy, Art, Music, Cinema, Media, Food and drink, and Living Culture: the state of modern Poland. These are broken into sub-sections, including the past and present, the good and the bad of Poland. In Media, for example, the press, propaganda, TV, internet services are surprisingly thorough. In Literature, known and unknown names are discussed, as are many current events.

The book is fascinating, with the amount of information provided,

although the sidebars are in very small print. It is a book for Polish Americans as well as those unfamiliar with Poland. Highly recommended.

VERA GRAN
The Accused: The Celebrated Singer of the Warsaw Ghetto, Her Piano Accompanist, Wladyslaw Szpilman and a Meditation of the Nature of Collaboration
by Agata Tuszynska
tr. by Charles Ruas
Alfred A. Knopf, 2013, 320 pp., \$28.95.

Tuszynska began interviewing Vera Gran in 2003 in Paris, where she had been a recluse in her apartment for many years. Fifty years earlier she had been a prisoner in the Ghetto. The author takes license with this biography by including herself in the story and the process of obtaining information.

Born Wiera Gryberg, a Jewess, in 1918, to a Russian father and Polish mother, she grew up in the outskirts of Warsaw, supported partially by a wealthy aunt. At age 15, Vera’s

life took a turn, when she sang at a nightclub. Beautiful, with a dusky sensual voice, she soon became a hit, singing in nightclubs and cabarets. She became accustomed to the public adoration, improving her appearance, obtaining contracts, making records (some of which can be heard on iTunes!).

When the Nazis invaded Poland and created the Warsaw Ghetto, she entered it, with promises of being able to sing in the cabarets. It was here that problems developed. With survival uppermost on everyone’s mind, there are conflicting reports of who did what. Vera accuses Wladyslaw Szpilman, a one-time colleague, of becoming a turncoat. The rumors that Vera collaborated with the Nazis as a “Gestapo whore,” hounded her for the rest of her life; she was never proven guilty by official tribunals in Poland. She spent the last years of her life alone, tortured by shadows, memories and doubt.

An interesting study of the perception of truth and fabrication in order to survive in a hostile world.

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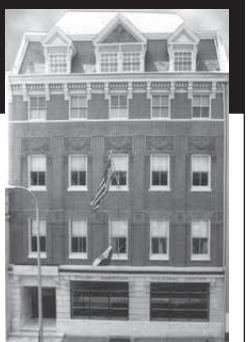
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CHRISTMAS KITCHEN / Staś Kmieć

Pierniki Mikołajkowe — St. Nicholas Honey-Spice Cookies

Pierniki Mikołajkowe are Polish Christmas classics. Of course, the dough can be cut into any one of a thousand shapes, but the St. Nicholas design is one of the most popular, and most fitting.

These are flavorful cookies. If you don't like one of the spices used, simply omit or put less.

4 ½ - 5 cups flour
2 cups sugar or dark brown sugar
3½ tablespoons to 1 cup honey
(depending on your taste)
½ cup butter
2 eggs
¼ cup of water
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
½ teaspoon cloves
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ginger (optional)
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla

Melt one tablespoon sugar in large skillet and allow to caramelize.



Pour in one fourth cup water, heating to boil. Add rest of sugar. When sugar has dissolved, add honey and spices. Allow to come to boil. Let cool. Sift flour. Put aside one cup with which to flour the board. Add to the caramelized sugar, butter, the eggs, flour, baking soda, powder and cream of tartar. Knead very well, adding more flour to make elastic dough. Refrigerate dough in plastic food wrap at least an hour (preferably overnight). Roll out on floured board and make favorite cut

outs. Bake at 350° for 5 to 8 minutes in length. These cook fast so keep an eye on them.

For a gloss that becomes something of a sealant to help keep in moisture so they don't get too hard you can brush with egg whites immediately after they've come out of the oven before they cool.

For icing designs:

egg white
1 ½ cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Wisk the three ingredients together; spoon icing into a sandwich bag; twist the bag tightly until the icing wedges into one corner; and then poke or cut a tiny hole into the corner.

To make St. Nicholas honey cakes, cut the pattern out of poster-board. Put it on the dough and press into place. Carefully cut out the shape with a sharp knife, or use a cutter available from: stnicholas-center.org or neebep.com.

ANSWERMEN / Robert Strybel

Questions and Answers on Polish Christmas Customs

Q: Some people that just came from Poland told me Christmas Eve is more important than Christmas Day. How could the day before be more important than the main event?

*Donna Walsh
North Andover, Mass.*

A: It depends how you define the "main event." Since Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth, the main event is Midnight Mass, symbolizing the moment Christ as born, and Christmas Eve provides the spiritual and dramatic build-up. In Polish tradition, everything important happens on Dec. 24th. Wigilia focuses on one's immediate family circle, includes the all-important oplatek-sharing tradition, features other once-a-year customs, beliefs and foods as well as "koledy" (carol) singing and culminates in family Midnight Mass. Everything that happens afterwards is less important and actually anticlimactic.

Q: I heard Polish people put hay on their tables at Christmas time. What is the significance of that custom?

*Alice Lewandowski
Troy, Mich.*

A: A handful of hay is usually strewn over the bare table-top before being covered with a pure-white table-cloth. That is a memento

of Baby Jesus' humble bed of hay in the stable of Bethlehem. That is but one example of how much more Nativity-related the Polish Wigilia is compared with Christmas celebrations in many other countries.

Q: Our neighbor claims the Polish word for Santa Claus is "Gwiazdor." I thought it was "Święty Mikołaj."

*Thersa Banasiewicz
St. Clair Shores, Mich.*

A: You are both right. "Gwiazdor" (from "Gwiazdka", another name for Christmas in Polish) was the Polish translation of the German "Weihnachtsmann" (Christmas Man or Father Christmas). In the 19th century, this secularized version of Saint Nicholas was strongly promoted by the Prussian Protestant regime in an attempt to de-Catholicize Christmas and de-Polonize the Polish lands under Prussian occupation. Most of America's earliest Polish pioneers came from such Prussian-occupied areas as Wielkopolska, Silesia and Pomerania and brought the name with them. But Święty Mikołaj is the proper Polish name for Saint Nicholas, a kindly old bishop who visits kids on his feast day, December 6th.

Q: I got into a good-natured argument with a member of our Pol-

ish-American club who said there should be 12 dishes at "Wigilia." I contend there should be an odd number: 5, 7, 9 or 11. Who is right?

*Edward Koziol
Pittsburgh, Pa.*

A: You both are. Some areas uphold the tradition of a dozen different dishes in honor of the Twelve Apostles or the Twelve Days of Christmas. Elsewhere, the odd-number tradition is practiced. I was informed by the prominent Polish ethnographer, Professor Barbara Ogradowska, that sometimes different homes in the same village adhere to opposing customs. One reason is that outsiders often marry into a family and bring their customs with them.

Q: What is the purpose of the large square communion wafer Polish people eat on Christmas?

*Elizabeth Miller
Cleveland*

A: The white Christmas wafer bearing imprinted Nativity motifs is known as "oplatek." Poles share symbolic bits of this before sitting down to the "Wigilia" as a gesture of love, reconciliation and spiritual inter-communion towards their nearest of kin. This custom was already known in the 18th century and now has become all but universal in Polish homes.



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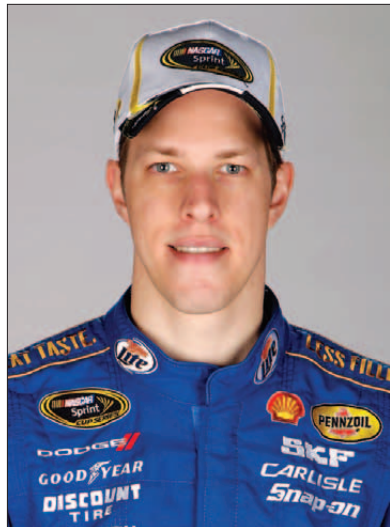


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SPORTS / Tom Tarapacki

“Polish Rocket” is the New Face of NASCAR



Brad Keselowski captured his first NASCAR championship, completing an amazing ascent through the ranks of NASCAR in fewer than four full-time seasons. The 28-year-old Michigan native clinched the Sprint Cup title in the season finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway. Keselowski entered the race with a commanding 20-point advantage over five-time champ Jimmie Johnson and, despite some late-race drama, pulled off the victory.

Often called the ultimate underdog, Keselowski represents a new era in the sport. From tweeting in his car during red-flag stops to aggressively challenging other more established drivers, his unique style is drawing more fans to the sport.

The “Polish Rocket” not only became one of the younger Cup champions, but he also he gave legendary team owner Roger Penske with his first Cup championship after nearly 30 years of stock car racing.

HE GOT THE BOOT. San Jose Earthquakes striker **Chris Wondolowski** won the 2012 Golden Boot for his MLS-leading 27 goals during the regular season, tying the all-time MLS single-season goal record set in 1996, the League's first season. It was Chris' third consecutive Golden Boot, making him the only player in MLS history to score the most goals in three consecutive seasons. Wondolowski's closest runner-up in 2012 had 18 goals.

This year “Wondo” also became the first player in league history to capture the MLS Player of the Month award four times in one season.

WHERE THEY ARE NOW? In July, *Sports Illustrated* told the story of **John Paciorek** in its “Where are they now?” issue. Paciorek, you may recall, had what is considered the greatest one-game career in baseball history. A multi-sport star at St. Ladislaus HS in Hamtramck, Paciorek signed with the Houston Colt .45s for a large bonus. The 18-year-old started in the final game of the 1963 season against the Mets as right fielder. John stepped up to the plate five times, hitting three singles and drawing two walks. He never played in the big leagues again, but boasted a perfect career batting average and on-base percentage of 1.000, scoring four runs and driving in three during the game. Of the 20 players in major league history with career batting averages of 1.000, Paciorek was the only one to have as many as three at-bats.

Unfortunately, Paciorek had back problems. He made the team's roster the following season, but the pain forced him to the minors and then to spinal fusion surgery. He missed the entire 1965 season, and then toiled in the minors until 1969 before giving up his playing career.

Paciorek's brother **Tom** played for six major league teams during the 1970s and 1980s, and enjoyed a terrific career. Another brother, **Jim**, played 48 games for the 1987 Brewers. However, John's one game of perfection gives him a unique place in baseball history. Now 67, Paciorek teaches at Clairbourn School in San Gabriel, California, and has four sons and four daughters.

Also featured in that issue was **Ben Helfgott**. Born in Pabianice, Poland, in 1929, Helfgott survived the Bugaj and Hortensia labor camps and Buchenwald, Schlieben and Theresienstadt concentration camps. His mother and youngest sister were murdered in December 1942.

Following the war, Helfgott came to England with a group of Jewish orphans known as ‘The Boys,’ from concentration camps, and was later reunited with his other sister, Mala.

Helfgott made the transformation from a concentration camp survivor to a champion weight lifter. In 1956 and 1960 he captained the British Olympic weight lifting teams – the only known concentration camp survivor to have participated in the Olympics. He was British light-weight champion for seven years and gold medalist at the 1950, 1953 and 1957 World Maccabiah Games.

In addition to being a successful businessman, Helfgott helped launch the ‘45 Aid Society for Holocaust Survivors and has been involved in community activities that have earned him many honors, including the Polish Knights Cross, Order of Merit, and Commanders Cross, Order of Merit of the from Republic of Poland for his work of reconciliation between Poles and Jews.

Now 82, Helfgott still starts every day with a weight lifting routine.

NEW ATTITUDE. Strong safety **Tom Zbikowski** has brought the attitude that helped make the Baltimore Ravens an AFC power to his new team, the Indianapolis Colts.

Colts head coach Chuck Pagano had Zbikowski for four years in Baltimore, so when he had a chance to run his own team in Indianapolis, one of his first moves was to sign Zbikowski. “He's another voice. He reinforces everything. Players take to other players. Here is what they are talking about. Sometimes they can put it into terms they understand better. They pound the message home. If there is any doubt, trust the system, play the technique, it will work out.”

In four years with the Ravens, Zbikowski played mostly on special teams and in defensive packages. He came into training camp last year with the inside track to start, but lost out to veteran Bernard Pollard. In the previous offseason during the NFL lockout, Zbikowski had returned to boxing. (Tommy Z had been a tremendous Golden Gloves boxer, going 75-15). Though he

had three wins victories in Madison Square Garden, the MGM Hotel in Las Vegas and the Boardwalk Hotel in Atlantic City, Zbikowski is now more focused on football. “But this offseason when I spent every waking minute thinking about this season, I understand I wasn't as focused then as I am now.”

Still, Zbikowski has no regrets about his time in Baltimore. “As much as I didn't enjoy being in a backup role, it was an apprenticeship well served,” he said. “And it was four years of not taking too much physical abuse.”

YOUNG TALENT. Orchard Lake St. Mary's (Mich.) surprised many at the Speakmon Memorial Regatta by placing two of its novice boats in the top four for their fourth consecutive regatta.

The Orchard Lake HS Novice 8+ won bronze with a time of (20:18.59) out of a field of 12. It was a strong follow-up to their first place finish the previous week at the fall regatta hosted by Orchard Lake St. Mary's. on home turf. The Men's HS Novice 4+ beat out 23 other entries to bring home the novice's second bronze medal with a time of (21:20.08). “Our novice team is consistently proving they are top-notch competition in every event they enter. We're building the foundation for a strong team in the spring,” said coach Chris Czarnecki.

The Men's Varsity 8+ (A) brought home the team's third bronze medal for the day with a time of (17:44.96), followed directly by St. Mary's HS 8+ (B) entry taking fourth place in a field of 11.

KEEP COMING BACK. Although his amazing comeback season ended in disappointment, the Baltimore Orioles have a lot of faith in **Brian Matusz**. The 25-year-old lefty will apparently will begin spring training as a starting pitcher in an effort to get him innings, though he could eventually be shifted back to the bullpen for regular-season play.

The 2008 fourth overall draft pick started his major league career well, going a combined 15-14 with a respectable 4.37 ERA in his first 40 major league starts in 2009-10. Last season, however, Matusz went just 1-9 with an awful 10.69 ERA. In 16 starts to open this season, he was 5-10 with a 5.42 ERA. The Orioles demoted him to Class AAA Norfolk in July and moved him to the bullpen, a role he thrived in at the end of the regular season.

Out of the bullpen, Matusz had been one of Manager Buck Showalter's most reliable pitchers until the 12th inning of Game 3 of the AL Divisional playoff against New York. The Yankees Raul Ibanez hit a high fastball out of the park for the game-winning run. The Yankees went on to win the series.

The Ibanez homer was the first run Matusz had allowed in over a month. It was just the third run he had allowed since moving to the bullpen and returning to the team in August.

“I just left the pitch up,” Matusz said, refusing to make excuses. “Ibanez obviously has been swinging the bat well, and I just missed my location. He made it hurt.”

A HUGE GET. **Przemek Karnowski**, a 7-foot Polish center unknown to all but serious hoops fans, has joined the Gonzaga basketball team.

ESPN analyst Fran Fraschilla called Karnowski a “huge get” for the Zags and compared him to Memphis Grizzlies center Marc Gasol. Christophe Ney of EuropeanProspects.com said: “Karnowski is a technically skilled and physical left-handed big.” Karnowski, 19, averaged 13.2 points and 6.2 rebounds for Poland in nine games at the U-19 World Championships last summer in Latvia, scoring 29 against Croatia in the tournament's seventh-place game.

Gonzaga worked quickly to sign Karnowski, as serious interest was expressed by Cal and, of course, Duke.

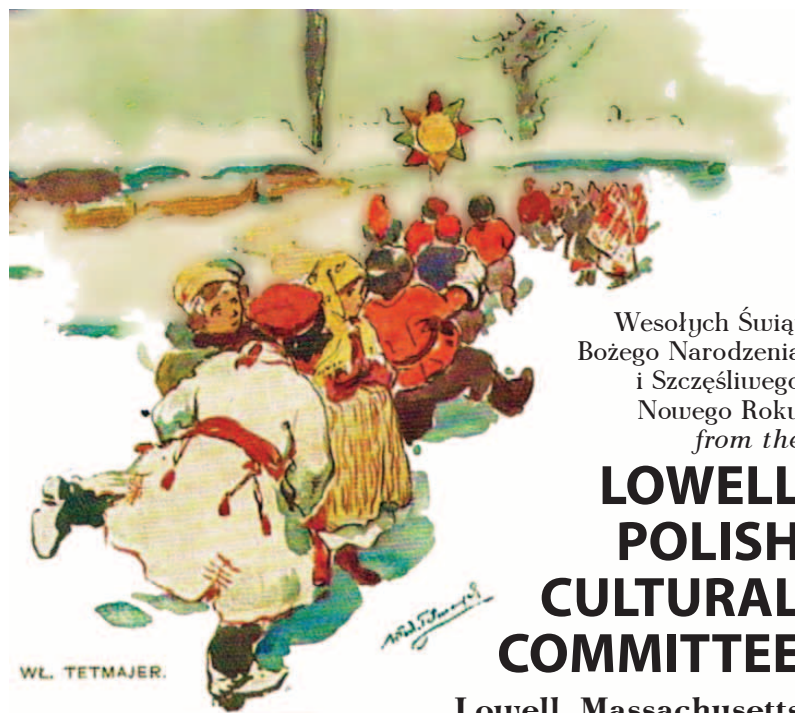
THEY SAID IT

“If I'd kept playing, I never would have gotten married or had kids. If I didn't have a bad back, I might have gone to Vietnam. I might [have died there]. If I'd become a good player and gotten a lot of money, I probably would not have been wise with it. Because of everything that happened, I was forced to go searching for better things, higher things, which I found in a spiritual inclination.”

— **John Paciorek** in *Sports Illustrated*, reflecting on his injury-shortened baseball career.

“The sport needs hard racing, it needs people that go for broke, try to win races and put it all out there on the line ... It doesn't need a bunch of people that have anger issues.”

— *Auto racing driver and team owner Brad Keselowski.*



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Ronald Syslo, President

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POLISH CHEF / Robert Strybel

Wigilia – A Magic Polish Night

Of all existing Polish customs, none are richer, more beautiful, solemn and inspiring than those surrounding Wigilia or Christmas Eve. In fact, it can easily be referred to as a magic Polish night, because most everything about it is distinctive and special.

Over the years, that conviction has been shared not only by Polish Americans rediscovering the Christmas legacy of their immigrant forebears. It has also been widely reaffirmed by many Americans of Irish, Italian, English, German, Scandinavian and other ethnic backgrounds that have married into Polonian families.

The reason: few other nationalities have Christmas celebrations that are so special and out of the ordinary. Wigilia is more than just another festive family meet-up. It is a certain spirit, a frame of mind, and to Poles and Polish-minded people everywhere – the single most important day of the year. That is probably because it brings together the things our compatriots have always held most dear: God, country and family. Here are some of its high-points and sidelines:

According to tradition "how you are on Christmas Eve, you will be the whole year". If a child should

have to be spanked on Christmas Eve for misbehaving, that's what he/she can expect all year long. Grown-ups are also on their best behavior, refrain from arguments go out of their way to be nice to one another.

The house should be "spick and span," decorated with evergreen branches, garlands and a (preferably real) Christmas tree. Family members are decked out in their holiday best and the family's best company crockery, crystalware and cutlery should be used to accentuate the special nature of Christmas Eve.

The opłatek (Christmas wafer) should be placed on an heirloom crystal, silver or china dish or tray, flanked by an evergreen sprig and (optional) a little bundle of hay tied with a ribbon.

A handful of hay is strewn on the bare table top (in memory of Jesus' humble manger bed) and then covered with a preferably pure-white table-cloth. An extra empty place-setting is customarily provided in memory of some dearly departed family member, but it may be offered to some lonely traveler who happens by or a neighbor who would otherwise have to spend this special evening in solitude.

The appearance of the evening's first star in the sky is the

signal for the festivities to begin. The job of standing in a window and watching for it was usually assigned to young children – a great way to keep them from under foot when so many last-minute tasks had to be performed.

The head of the household leads grace, then takes the opłatek, makes the Sign of the Cross over it and shares it with the next in line, wishing them good health and God's abundant blessings. It is a time of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, when all past grudges are forgotten. Only after all have shared bits of opłatek, exchanged wishes and made their peace with everyone else, does the festive supper begin.

The fact that Wieczerza Wigilijna (Christmas Eve supper) is totally meatless and includes many once-a-year dishes, of which there are either an odd number or 12 (traditions vary!), also sets this meal apart. Typical foods include fish, mushrooms, vegetable, grain and pasta dishes and various cakes and desserts incorporating nuts, raisins, poppy seeds and honey.

According to tradition, everyone must sample at least a bit of all the different foods laid out on the table, otherwise they may experience poverty in the year ahead. After the meal, it is customary to sing kolędy



The head of the household leads grace, then takes the opłatek, makes the Sign of the Cross over it and shares it with the next in line, wishing them good health and God's abundant blessings.

(carols). In a Polish-American setting it may be advisable to have song sheets available and sing along with a recording or a live accompaniment.

Gifts are exchanged. Someone may play the kindly bishop Święty Mikołaj (St. Nick). Polish-American youngsters are fortunate to get their presents on the December 24th. Their non-Polish playmates have to wait till the following morning.

Pasterka (Shepherds Mass at midnight), especially at a parish where Polish kolędy are sung, is a fitting culmination to the most beautiful night of the year.

If your family has drifted away from the Wigilia heritage, now is

the time to read up about it. Worth recommending are Father Czesław Krysa's "A Polish Christmas Eve," the Polanie Club's classic "Treasured Polish Customs and Traditions," or World Books's "Christmas in Poland." Or type "Polish Christmas" in the Google search box.

It should be remembered that in order to preserve our customs and pass them down to the next generation it is important to "start 'em young." Whether they help set the table or only watch for the evening's first star – the sign for the festivities to begin – chances are the Wigilia traditional will remain a part of their life-long childhood memories.

J OY

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HOMEMADE HOLIDAY SPIRITS. For Christmas and other special occasions nothing creates a festive glow the way home-blended spirits do. The “domowa nalewka” has long been the tradition of the male head of the household, and some are so easy to prepare its hard to believe. When you serve them to your guests out of a sparkling crystal decanter, you will enjoy the satisfaction of being able to say: “I

made it myself!”

HONEY CORDIAL (miódówka). In saucepan combine 1 cup honey and 1/2 cup water, gently bring to boil, switch off heat, cover and let stand until cooled to room temperature. Stir in the freshly squeezed juice of 1 large lemon. Transfer mixture to sterilized quart jar and fill up with 100 proof vodka. Seal and store in dark place, shaking

every few days. This will be ready in a few weeks. Filter into decanter through cotton-filled funnel.

HONEY-SPICE CORDIAL (krupnik). In saucepan simmer 1 cup honey with 1 teaspoon piernik seasoning (przyprawa do pierników) or pumpkin-pie seasoning until lightly browned. Cover and set aside until cooled to room temperature. Add 1 teaspoon va-

nilla extract 1/2 teaspoon each of lemon and orange zest and transfer to sterilized quart jar. Fill it up with 100 proof vodka, Seal and store in dark place. Shake every few days. Filter through cotton-filled funnel into pint bottles and tighten cap. Serve as is or hot (warmed up) for Christmas Eve supper.

CHERRY CORDIAL. (wiśniówka). For this treat, it's best to pay a lit-

tle extra for pure cherry syrup at a gourmet or import shop rather than the imitation or cherry-flavored stuff they sell in supermarkets. Pour 1-1/2 c cherry syrup into a sterilized quart jar and fill up with 100 proof vodka. Seal, shake and store in dark place, shaking every week or so. It should be good in time for Christmas. As above, filter through cotton-filled funnel.

— Robert Strybel

THE POLISH KITCHEN STORE

COOKBOOKS

POLISH CHICAGO: OUR HISTORY, OUR RECIPES
\$29.95

by Joseph W. Zurawski

240 pp., hc., 720 photographs
G. Bradley Publishing

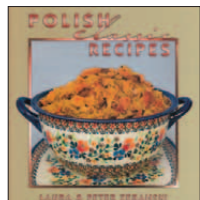


Since the 1830s millions of Poles, often overcoming oppression and hardship, have come to Chicago with a dream of freedom, a willingness to work and a love of country, both old and new. This new groundbreaking work recounts by vivid prose, rare photographs and poignant anecdote the amazing story of these indomitable people.

To many, food is nourishment. To Polish Americans, food is a cause for sharing, celebration and for honoring tradition. This volume turns a spotlight on 36 Polish American restaurants and families who opened up their kitchens to share time-tested, delectable Polish recipes.

POLISH CLASSIC RECIPES
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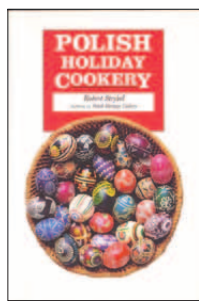
by Laura and Peter Zeranski
2011, 96 pp., h.c., index, 100 color photographs by Matthew Aron Roth



Designed for the modern kitchen yet retaining traditional roots, each heritage recipe in *Polish Classic Recipes* has been tested to perfection. Accompanied by notes on Polish holiday customs, history, and menu pairing suggestions, these dishes offer a flavorful sample of the Polish dining experience, as passed down from generation to generation.

POLISH HOLIDAY COOKERY
\$24.95

by Robert Strybel
248 pp., hc.
Hippocrene Books

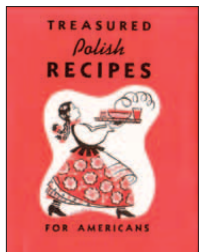


Polish Holiday Cookery acquaints readers with traditional Polish foods associated with various occasions and furnishes countless cooking tips and serving suggestions. This “instruction manual for the culturally aware Polish American” offers more than 400 recipes, along with a lexicon of basic foods and culinary concepts, ingredients and procedures, and sample menus. The clearly-written recipes facilitate the preparation of the dishes and their incorporation in the Polish-American mainstream culture.

Polish Holiday Cookery covers holidays such as Christmas and Easter, as well as celebrations year-round. Ideas for banquets, picnics, dinners, and family favorites abound throughout, ensuring that cooks have a selection of dishes for any occasion.

TREASURED POLISH RECIPES FOR AMERICANS
\$14.95

Polonie Publishing
170 pp., h.c.



The first complete, hard cover collection of Polish cookery in the Eng-

lish language published in the United States. Researched from old Polish cookbooks and recipes collected from the best Polish American cooks, it also contains stories of Polish festivities and customs such as Christmas Eve wigilia, Harvest Festival dożynki and the foods to celebrate them. Perfect for home cooks or to give as a special gift.

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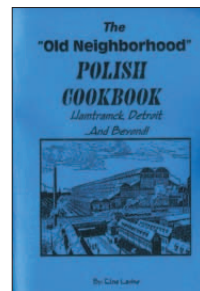
MY HOME-MADE POLISH RECIPES
\$17.95
by Anna Zaremba
160 pp., hc, spiral bound



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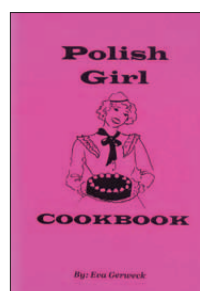
color dividers for individual sections, hardcover bounded by plastic spirals for ease of use while cooking. Two indexes for recipes - one in English and one in Polish will make it easy to find your favorite dish.

NEW! THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD POLISH COOKBOOK: Hamtramck, Detroit and Beyond — \$10.00
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44 pp., sc.



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POLISH GIRL COOKBOOK
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by Eva Gerweck
44 pp., sc.



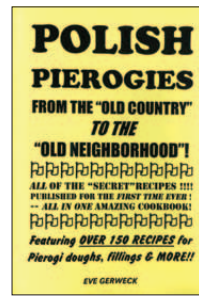
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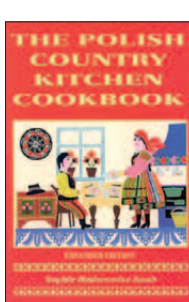
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by Sophie Knab
337 pp., pb., ill.
Hippocrene Books

This popular cookbook by beloved Polish American author Sophie Hodorowicz Knab is now updated with a new section on Polish Feasts and Festivals! Knab combines recipes for favorite Polish foods with the history and cultural traditions that created them. Arranged according to the cycle of seasons, this cookbook explores life in the Polish countryside through the year, giving readers priceless historical information to common questions asked by descendants of Polish immigrants. Lovely illustrations by Elliott Hutten and pearls of practical wisdom from the old Polish kitchen marvelously complement this book. This title includes over 100 easy-to-follow recipes, and a detailed bibliography and resource guide.

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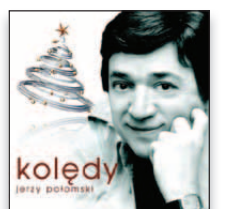
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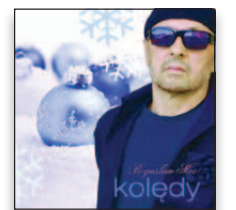
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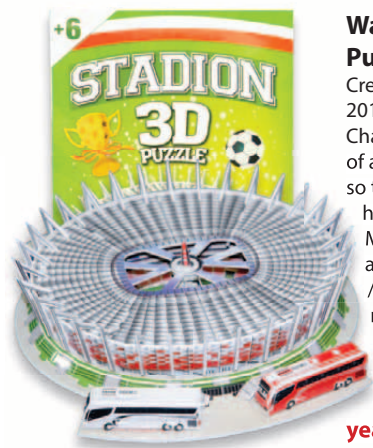
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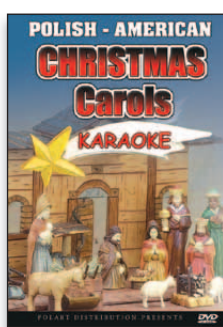
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