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2016 CALENDAR
PRESENTS THE BEST
OF SCENIC POLAND
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AND ADDITIONAL ENTRY OFFICES

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CHRISTMAS COOKIE CLASSICS • A CHRISTMAS HOMECOMING • AN UPLIFTING OPTION: SING PO ANGIELSKU
REVISIT CHRISTMAS IN A POLISH VILLAGE • WIGILIA SUPERSTITIONS: WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Newsmark

SCHNEPF CONDEMNS TERRORIST ATTACKS.

Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf (right) with his wife Dorota, lead a moment of silence for the victims of the latest terrorist attack in Paris. Up to three hundred guests were present at the Embassy of Poland for an evening observance of Polish Independence Day on Friday, November 13 — the same day and time frame as the Paris tragedies were unfolding. *Story on page 12.*



PHOTO: RICHARD POREMSKI

POPE FRANCIS, DUDA MEET. Polish President Andrzej Duda met the Pope Francis in the Vatican. Foremost in the meeting agenda was a focus on the 2016 World Youth Day with the Pope in Krakow, and the 1,050th anniversary of the baptism of Poland. Later, Duda and the Pope were joined by Poland's first Lady, their nineteen-year-old daughter, and members of the Polish delegation.

The President presented the Pope with a copy of the image of the black Madonna of Czestochowa, expressing wishes to the Pope that the Mother of God have the Pope under her protection. Pope Francis expressed his thanks for same stating that he very much needs that protection. The Pope gave Duda a papal medal featuring the tree of peace and also the Polish-language edition of his latest encyclical *Laudato Si* devoted to ecology.

Shortly after their arrival in Rome, the President and First lady attended mass at St. Peter's Basilica at the tomb of Polish Pope Saint John Paul II. During the visit, Duda also met with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State and laid a wreath at the monument to Marshal Josef Pilsudski. The monument, built in 1937, is a tribute to that architect of Polish independence. The president also bestowed honors on Poles working at the Vatican and met with members of the Polish Embassy.

SECURITY ASSURANCES ECHOED. "Polish-U.S. ties are very strong," said Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, commanding general of the United States Army Europe, when talking to journalists after a wreath-laying ceremony at Warsaw's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"When I think of Poland," said Hodges, "I think about the people who love freedom and know how to fight for it," recalling also that two Polish patriots, Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Kazimierz Pulaski are also honored heroes of the United States.

The thrust Hodges' talks in Warsaw was Polish-U.S. military cooperation with the offer of security assurances for Poland in light of Russia's aggression. As with the historical examples of Pulaski and Kosciuszko and the United States working together, General Hodges stated, Polish and American soldiers today are "fighting together in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places."

FORMER PM NOW A HARVARD FELLOW. Former Polish foreign minister Radoslaw Sikorski will join Harvard University's Center for European Studies as a non-resident Senior Fellow.

Sikorski, who had been one of the major figures in the outgoing centrist government, did not attempt to hold onto his seat in Bydgoszcz, north central Poland, in the October 25 general election. His Civic Platform party lost the election to the socially conservative Law and Justice party.

The Oxford-educated politician served as Poland's foreign minister from 2007 to 2014, before becoming Speaker of the Sejm (lower house of parliament) until June 2015.

Sikorski will participate in CES activities, and engage in seminars and discussions with faculty and students.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Do szopy, hej pasterze,
Do Szopy, bo tam cud!
Syn Boży w żłobie leży,
by zbawić ludzki ród.

Come, shepherds to the stable,
Behold this wondrous sight!
See Jesus in the manger
in early morning light.

WESOKYCH ŚWIĄT

Conservative Law and Justice Back in Power

PiS - First Party Since 1989 to Rule Independently

Post-communists, Other Leftists Ousted from Parliament

WARSAW — The conservative Law and Justice (PiS, *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) party swept into office in Poland's October 25 parliamentary election, becoming the first political formation since the 1989 fall of communism to be able to rule independently without coalition partners. PiS won the majority needed to form the government independently by picking up 235 seats in Parliament's lower house, the Sejm. Its less decisive victory in 2005 had forced Jaroslaw Kaczyński's party to team up with two none-too-compatible smaller parties that ultimately resulted in their defeat in snap elections in 2007.

Official results showed PiS winning 37.58% of the vote ahead of its chief rival, the Civic Platform (PO, *Platforma Obywatelska*) with 24.09% support. Two small new groupings, the anti-system "Kukiz-15" party of rock musician Paweł Kukiz (8.81%) and *See "Law and Justice Party ..." page 12*



Poland's new Prime Minister, Beata Szydło.

Grateful for Grzaniec

The Winter Beverages of Poland

by Staś Kmiec

The aroma of spiced mulled wine and beer spiced with cinnamon fills the air each year at Poland's traditional Christmas markets. Poland has a history of warming throats and souls with this regional specialty drink that is the perfect remedy for a cold winter's day.

During a *Kulig* sleigh ride or when the season chills you to the bone, indulging in a hot beverage such as warmed *Krupnik* (honey vodka) or a hot toddy of sorts was a guarantee to warm you from the inside out. When the effects of winter took their toll, there was always the home therapy of *Kogel mogel/Gogl-Mog!* to ease a sore throat.

MULLED WINE OR BEER. Mulled means heated and spiced. *Grzaniec* is a warm drink made from red wine or beer, some citrus fruit, a sweetener and spices. Sometimes, it is additionally enhanced with spirits – vodka, brandy or cognac. It is kind of like mulled cider... only better!

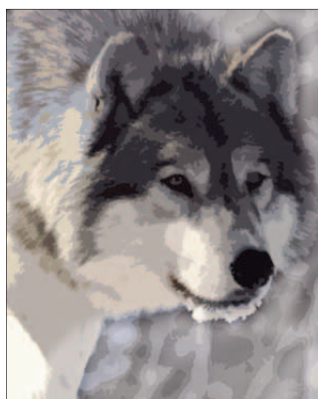
In a scene from the historical film *Potop* (The Deluge) – based on Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel about the Swedish Invasion "Grateful..." *page 10*



YULE LORE AND LEGEND

Polish Christmas – More than Gifts and Treats

by Robert Strybel



"Wilku, wilku chodź do grochu ..." Can peas keep the wolves at bay?

To many people nowadays, Christmas is largely associated with festive food, drink and presents and the high-powered shopping that goes with them. In addition to the above, Polish Yuletide celebrations have long been rooted in ritual and legend. To this day Wigilia (Christmas Eve) is the most important and symbolic day of the year with the first star of the evening, the *oplatek*-sharing ritual, the hay beneath the table-cloth and the set num-

ber of meatless dishes. And children continue to be told to be on their best behavior, because how you are on Wigilia you'll be the whole next year. Various folk beliefs once governed the entire Wigilia routine. A common notion held that good luck was in store if the first visitor entering a home on Wigilia was a male, whereas a female visitor foretold misfortune. Family members used to wash in a bucket of cold water brought from the nearby stream to which a silver coin or two

had been added, as that would ensure robust health all year long. The "the all-year-long" theme ran through many other practices. And if a child should have to be spanked for misbehaving on Christmas Eve, he/she could expect more of the same for the next 12 months. Grown-ups too refrained from arguments and settled any financial obligations in the hope of being debt-free in the year to come. Christmas Eve supper or "wieczera wigilijna" was *See "Folklore," page 9*

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December ❄️ Grudzień

*Grudzień to miesiąc zawiły,
czasem srogi, czasem miły.
December is a baffling time,
sometimes nasty, sometimes fine*

- 1 1925. Signing of the Locarno Treaties, in which the First World War Western European Allied powers and the new states of Central and Eastern Europe sought to secure the post-war territorial settlement, and return normalizing relations with defeated Germany.
- 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,
jaha Barbara, takie święta.
Let everyone remember:
as (the weather on) St. Barbara's Day, so the holidays.*
- 6 **ST. NICHOLAS**
Św. Mikołaj
Today is traditionally reserved for gift-giving in Poland.
- 7 1279. Death of Bolesław V the Chaste
- 8 1990. Shipyard electrician and Solidarity Trade Union leader Lech Wałęsa elected president of Poland.
- 9 1922. Gabriel Narutowicz elected first president of the Second Polish Republic. He was assassinated seven days later.
- 12 1586. Death of King Stefan Batory.
- 14 1970. Government price hikes in Poland spark bloody labor protests on the Coast, Gdansk, Gdynia and Szczecin.
- 15 1859. Birth of Lazarus Ludovic Zamenhof, developer of Esperanto, the International Language, in Białystok, near Lithuanian, Poland and Byelorussia borders.
- 18 1929. Birth of Cardinal Jozef Glemp.
- 19 1852. Birth of Polish Jewish scientist A.A. Michelson, 1907 Nobel Prize winner in Physics.
- 21 **ST. THOMAS**
1898. In Paris, Marie, 31, and Pierre Curie, Polish and French chemists, discover radium.
- 23 **ST. JOHN KANTY (CANTIUS)**. 1473. 2005. Lech Kaczyński becomes president of Poland.
- 24 **DZIEŃ WIGILIJNY**
*Na szczęście, na zdrowie
ze świętą Wiliją.
Health and good fortune
this Vigil!*
- 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**
1892. Death of Joseph Karge, Polish-American general in Union cavalry and later professor at Princeton.
- 30 1977. President Jimmy Carter visits Poland.
- 31 **ST. SYLVESTER**
Please do not drink and drive.
1989. The People's Republic of Poland becomes the Republic of Poland.

This paper mailed on or before **December 1, 2015**
The January 2016 edition will be mailed on or before **December 30, 2015.**

VIEWPOINTS

“Over All These Put On Love”

by Rev. Charles Jan DiMascola

This is a season for reminiscing and I was doing just that. I was remembering when I was young how we would all gather to celebrate Christmas Eve. As you know the Polish Custom is for the family to gather on Christmas Eve to celebrate Christmas by sharing the opłatek and enjoying a very traditional family meal. Every action and every part of the meal is dictated by tradition. It's almost like a religious ceremony.

In our family it was really the only time of the year that we all came together at the same time to eat at the same table. I mean we saw each other all year. Most of my family lived next door, but it was the only occasion when we actually all sat down together. The table was extended and another table brought in to make it even larger. Every chair and even the garden bench was brought in. Everyone had to sit at the same table. There could be no separate table for the children. No one could eat in another room. It had to be at the same table.

On the rare occasion when one of the family could not be there, either because of some emergency or because they had died (even though they had died decades ago!) they were remembered first and with many tears. That Christmas Eve supper always bound our family together in a very strange and even supernatural way. The living and the departed, those there and those absent.

A Christmas Homecoming

Those of us old enough to remember “classic TV” (i.e., those of us over 50) remember that the *Waltons* originated from a 1971 movie entitled “The Homecoming: A Christmas Story.”

Christmas is the time *par excellence* for homecomings. In mobile America, Christmas is still one of the few times that families really try to come home, to be with each other, to spend time together. No matter how long they may be separated, how far apart they might live, how little contact they might otherwise have, Christmas is time for homecoming.

Nor is that homecoming just physical. Christmas is often the time that families alienated from each other try to bury the hatchet, to lay the burden of the past aside and try — if at least for a while — to begin anew, to start afresh, to reconcile. That's why Advent is such an appropriate time for homecomings — because we are all on a journey to “the home of the Father.” As one diocese's campaign to encourage people to return to the sacraments, to make a good Confession and return to Communion at Christmas, says: “Catholics can *always* come home.”

Christmas is also a time that we come home to our roots. People who don't think much about their Polish roots throughout the year discover how a memory sneaks in, a sentimental thought returns, a familiar smell sets off a whole flood of remembrances ... and that's good.

The Polish American Journal wishes each one of you a happy Christmas homecoming. Come back to your faith! Come back to Christ! And come back to your Polish roots — for your-

self, for your kids, for your grandchildren. At the sharing of the opłatek there were more tears mingled with laughter and more remembering. All the family was there, spiritually and physically. In Jesus and for Jesus and by Jesus we were all there and we were all family! It was a time when petty arguments had to be forgotten; when all disagreements had to be put aside; when we shared in the love that the Christ Child called us to share and behaved as a family in Christ!

Today the Church reminds us that we are family. And that is not just for Christmas Eve or for the feast of the Holy Family. We are family and we are most precious to each other and we must recognize the value of each other! As followers of Jesus Christ we have to understand that we are called to love and gentleness, tolerance and kindness, forgiveness and sacrifice, all because we are one family in Jesus Christ.

That is the unique quality of the Church. We are called to be family 365 days of the year day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute! Jesus, Mary and Joseph gave us the example and what a pleasant life we can have if we simply give in ... give in to His love ... A love without exceptions.

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.

self, for your kids, for your grandchildren.

Wigilia is the quintessential Polish celebration of the year. Why not resolve to have a real Polish Christmas Eve this year, to make memories for yourself and for your family? To put up your Christmas tree (*choinka*) on Christmas Eve and make some of your own Christmas ornaments? To put the favorite Christmas dishes on the table? To share the magic of watching for the first star to announce the beginning of the supper and to read the Christmas story together? To break the *opłatek* as a sign of family homecoming and unity? To sing some *kolędy* together? To go together to Midnight Mass (*Pasterka*), ideally to a Polish parish?

Our December issue gives you ideas for celebrating a Polish Christmas, and we have traditional Polish Christmas cards, ornaments, and *opłatki* ready for your order. Without sounding too commercial, we'd love if you put a subscription to the *Polish American Journal* on your Christmas list — for yourself and for somebody who might want to get in touch with his or her Polish roots.

But most of all, we wish a Christmas homecoming: to the peace of the Lord that is what gives Christmas its real meaning; to the warmth of your family, that makes the Lord's love incarnate in the world today; to your Polish roots, roots of faith and tradition that — if you try to discover them anew this season — will remain with you and your family long after Christmas 2015 is past. *Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia i szczęśliwego nowego roku!*

Revisit Christmas in a Polish Village



The Christmas of our ancestors comes back to life in a stage production based on Rev. Czesław Krysa's “A Polish Christmas Eve.”

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Join the Polish Heritage Dancers of Western New York for a treasury of nostalgia capturing echoes of the traditions carried out by generations of Polish families.

The dance group will present a “Polish Christmas in the Village” at the Lancaster Opera House on Sun., Dec. 27 at 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. The stage is set in a cottage, where the family partakes in the traditions of a Polish Christmas. It is narrated explaining the traditions and meaning behind them. Traditional Polish carols will be sung — and they hope you will join in!

This unique performance will include Polish folk dancing, song and music celebrating the wonder of the season.

The program is adapted from the book, “A Polish Christmas Eve,” written by Rev. Czesław Krysa.

Guest vocalist will be Brittany Mruczek, a soprano from Batavia, N.Y. She has earned her Masters degree in performance from NYU. The Holy Mother of the Rosary Cathedral Choir will be joining her.

For the past 18 years, members of the Polish Heritage Dancers have been delighting audiences and sharing their heritage throughout Western New York, so don't miss this special Christmas production. The popular holiday show sells out quickly.

Tickets — a great Christmas gift — are \$15.00 and available at the Box office or on line from the Lancaster Opera House.

The dancers remind you to “like” them on Facebook, which will keep you up to date with upcoming events.

For more information call (716) 983-5084.

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER. The artist of “The Adoration of the Shepherds” is not known. Historians have dated its style to 1630s Napoli. Initially, the work was attributed to Spanish artists Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) or Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664). It has also been thought to be the work of various Neapolitan painters of the early 17th century. It is first recorded in Seville in the 1770s and may be the work of a Sevillian painter influenced by Velázquez and Zurbarán.

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Editor in Chief Mark A. Kohan
editor@polamjournal.com

Senior Associate Editor Larry Wroblewski

Associate Editors Benjamin Fiore, S.J., Mary E. Lanham, Michael Pietruszka, Stas Kmiec, Steve Litwin, Walter J. Mysliwicz, Thomas Tarapacki

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VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

Some New Polish Christmas Songs

by John M. Grondelski

Polish Americans, especially those whose families arrived during the 1880-1920 *emigracja za chlebem* (the "Emigration for Bread"), are familiar with many staple traditional Christmas carols (*kolędy*). "Dzisiaj w Betlejem," "Wśród nocnej ciszy," and "Mędrcy świata" are all well-known to most Polish Americans, but carols that have since become commonplace in Poland are not necessarily so well-known in America. Here are three you might want to get to know (you can find them all on YouTube – take a listen!):

Maleńka miłość [The Little Love]: Eleni (Helena Dzoka) is a Polish-Greek singer whose parents came to Poland in the 1950s. Her carol speaks of how Jesus, the living Love of God, is asleep in the manger, a love that makes heaven and earth shine. But that Love also comes to save the world and save us from our fear, a Love before which heaven and earth tremble.

Maleńka miłość w żłobie śpi maleńka miłość
przy Matce Świętej
dziś cała ziemia i niebo
lśni dla tej miłości maleńkiej.

Maleńka Miłość w żłobie śpi,
Maleńką miłość chrońmy z lękiem
Dziś ziemia drży i niebo drży
dla tej Miłości maleńkiej.

*That Little Love is asleep in the manger
That Little Love beside the Blessed Mother.
Today the whole of heaven and
earth gleam for that Little Love.*

*That Little Love is asleep in the manger
That Little Love shields us against our fears
Today both heaven and earth tremble
for that Little Love.*

Kolęda dla nieobecnych [A Carol for the Absent]: Christmas is a time for family, but family is not just those physically gathered at the *Wigilia* table: we leave an empty place setting there for the unexpected guest or, more often, to recall those of our family who have passed away. Few artists can manage to combine Christmas with the reality of death. Charles Dickens was one: who is the Ghost of Christmas-Yet-to-Come but the Grim Reaper? *Kolęda dla nieobecnych* is another such achievement, combining the sense of loss with the struggle for faith to which Christmas invites us

every year. The communion of saints, after all, includes Christmas. The Preisner/Rybotycka version is classic, but there is also a *góral* (Highlander) version.

Daj nam wiarę, że to ma sens,
Że nie trzeba żałować przyjaciół.
Że gdziekolwiek są dobrze im jest,
Bo są z nami choć w innej postaci.
I przekonaj, że tak ma być,
Że po głosach tych wciąż drży powietrze,
Że odeszli po to by żyć.
I tym razem będą żyć wiecznie.

*Give us faith that it all makes sense,
That we need not mourn our friends
That wherever they are they're well
Because they are with us but in another form
And convince us that it's how it should be
that the air still trembles with their voices
And that they have gone in order to live
and, this time, to live forever.*

Jest taki dzień [There's Such a Day]: No matter how hard Ebenezer Scrooge tried to convince everybody that it was just another day, an "excuse to pick a man's pocket every December 25th), there is something special to Christmas, the "day that begins at nightfall." The long-running Polish music group *Czerwone gitary* captures this in *Jest taki dzień*, not a carol—it is not explicitly religious—as much as a Christmas song, a song celebrating the peace that day brings.

Jest taki dzień, bardzo ciepły choć grudniowy,
dzień, zwykły dzień,
w którym gasną wszelkie spory.
Jest taki dzień, w którym radość wita wszystkich,
dzień, który już każdy z nas zna od kołyski.

*There's such a day – very warm
even though it's in December
a day—an ordinary day—
that extinguishes every conflict
Theres such a day on which joy greets everyone
a day that every one of us has
known from the cradle.*

Why not add them to your Christmas music tradition?



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**We wish all of Polonia
a very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!**

**Wesołych Świąt
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i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku**

*Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.*

Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union
wishes its Members, Friends, and the
entire Polish community a peaceful and
joyful Christmas and financial success in
the New Year 2016.





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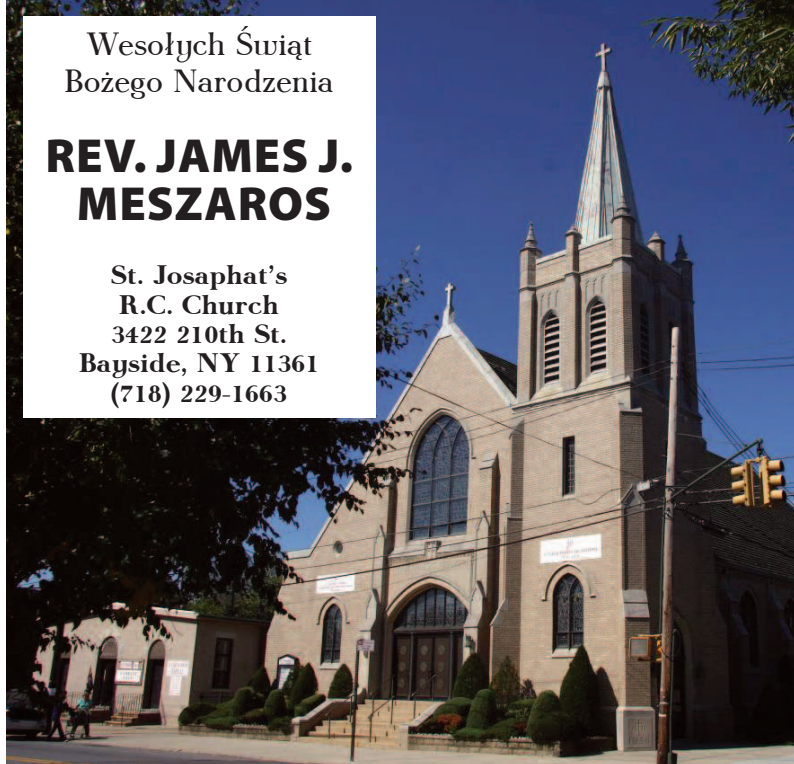
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REMEMBER OUR PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AT CHRISTMAS TIME. Lord, we lift up to your these on our honor roll and all the priests religious, seminarians, and those contemplating priestly or religious life. Sanctify them, heal them; guide them, mould them into the likeness and holiness of Your Son, Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. Amen.

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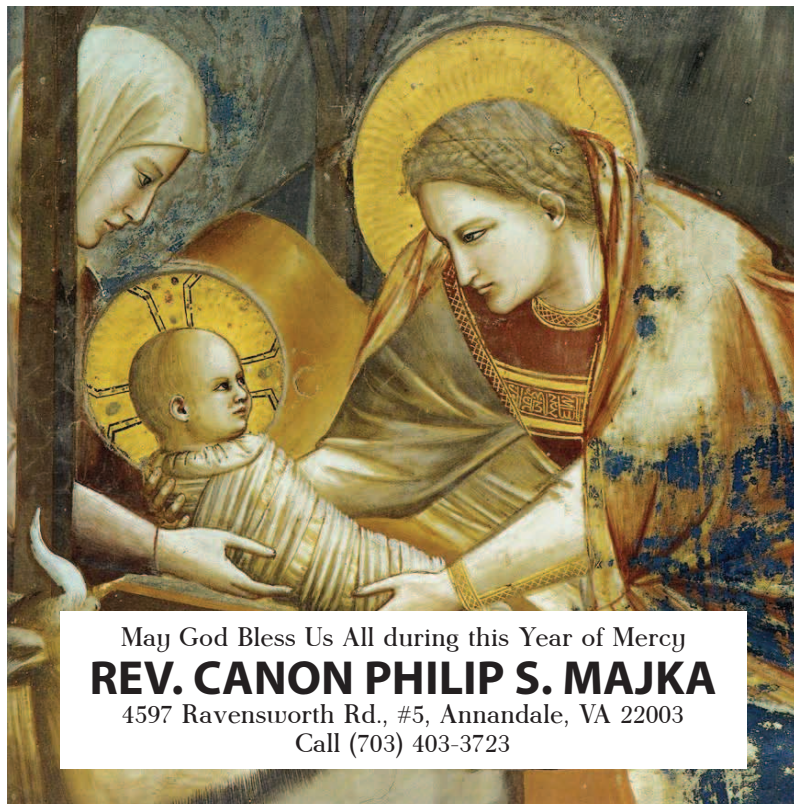
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- Ojcowie Paulini -


2015 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 at 4:00pm. Vigil Mass at 5:00pm.

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Papal Almoner Opens Homeless Shelter

Archbishop Konrad Krajewski, Pope Francis' director of charitable works (almoner), inaugurated a shelter for homeless men in a Jesuit-owned building adjacent to St. Peter's Square. The shelter has 34 beds in an open-floor, partitioned dormitory. The shelter is run by the Missionaries of Charity who briefly interview the guests before they are checked in. A structured check-in time has them arrive between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m., with lights out at a set time. At the 6:15 wake-up call, the guests are offered breakfast and have until 8:00 p.m. to tidy their respective areas and use the wash-room. After the shelter closes for the day, guests can visit the barber and showers at the facilities opened in St. Peter's Square, also set up by Archbishop Krajewski. Lunch and dinner are available at a nearby Vatican soup kitchen, the "Gift of Mary" shelter for women.

GAYS' REACTION TO THE SYNOD. While former priest **Krzysztof Charamsa** — expelled from the priesthood after he "came out" as a homosexual living with a male partner — denounced the Church and the recently concluded Synod as continuing homophobic and defamatory teachings against gay and transgender people, the final document of the Synod presented to the Holy Father reiterated the Church's position that gays should be respected, avoiding any mark of unjust discrimination. Other gay activists did not share Charamsa's wholesale rejection of any compromise but found the document calling for particular care for families with members with homosexual tendencies. They went on to say that "we need to work with, and not against, the Church."

In advance of the Synod, the head of the Polish bishops, Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki spoke out strongly against the attempt at the Synod on the Family to subvert doctrine by some Synod fathers who spoke of changes in traditional

teaching and practices regarding divorced and remarried Catholics.

MARATHON RUNNING BISHOP. **Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki** of the RC diocese of Springfield, Ill., completed his 21st marathon in 21 years. Through this run he helped raise over \$20,000 for Catholic Charities Legal Services and the Chicago Legal Clinic endowment fund, both of which provide pro-bono legal services to low-income people.

CREATION CARE TEAM AT CATHOLIC PARISH. Hoping to promote greener living and to promote the message of Pope Francis' most recent encyclical on the environment, **Sandra Kucharski** of St. Peter & Paul R.C. Church in Hamburg, N.Y., founded a Creation Care team in her parish. The wife and mother of three had been inspired by the encyclical "Laudato Si" and felt concern for her two grandchildren wondering "what the world is going to be like when they're adults trying to raise their families." She began by going to the site www.catholic-climatecovenant.org which gave her information on how committed Catholics can begin Creation Care teams in their own neighborhoods. She explained that at meetings of the team they will discuss and learn from the encyclical "what our relationships are to the rest of the planet, to the rest of life on the planet." She noted, "When we hurt, waste and abuse part of God's creation, we're actually abusing ourselves and other human beings."

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO... **St. Casimir** R.C. Church in Buffalo, N.Y., celebrating 125 years. As part of the anniversary ceremonies, **Pastor Czesław Krysa** blessed and crowned an icon of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa. The icon was given to the church by **Fr. Michał Czyzewski**, pastor of Corpus Christi Church and a Pauline Father, part of the order who care for the Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa

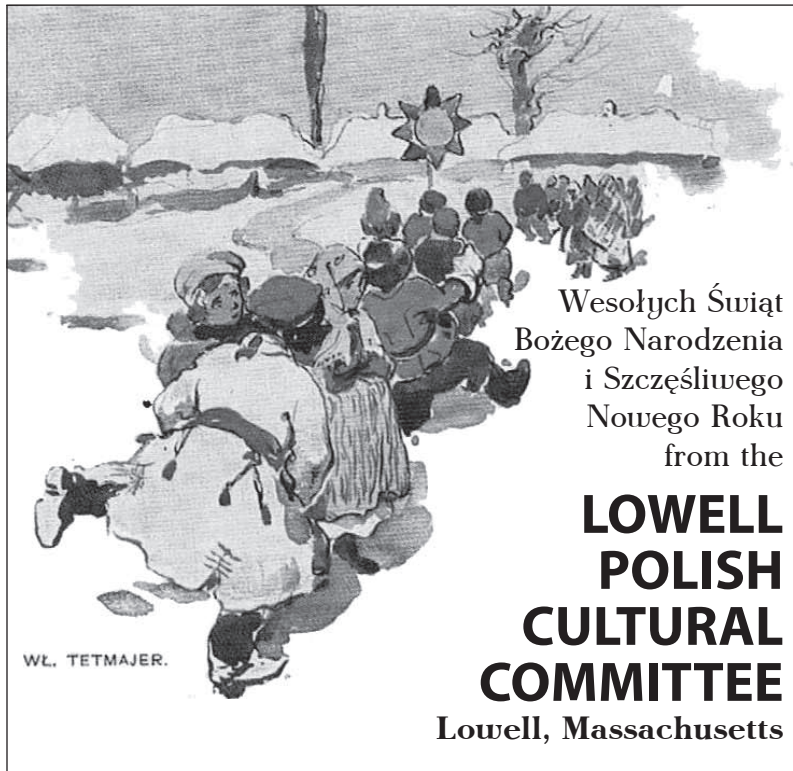
in Poland. The crown used in the ceremony was fashioned out of metal by Fr. Krysa himself. As part of the anniversary celebration, 28 families pledged to devote their home to the Blessed Mother, setting aside a place for prayer, a "little oratory," encouraging families to have a place in their home where they can pray." This puts into action the belief that God was born in to a family, wants to be intimately related to the family and be in the family's life.

POLISH FOUNDRRESS BEATIFIED. **Sr. Clara Ludmilla Szczęsna**, co-foundress of the Congregation of the handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was beatified in Kraków, Poland in September. She was recognized for her readiness to accept the will of God and to care for the needy, especially children and the sick, with special charity. Pope Francis commented on the blessed in his Wednesday audience where he said that she "taught us about giving oneself to God, humble service to neighbor, life according to the spirit of the Gospel, and sensitivity to the poor."

STO LAT TO ... **Mary Eleanor Witkowski-Flanagan** on receiving the "Pride of Polonia" Award for 2015. The presentation of the award took place at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Częstochowa in Doylestown, Pa. After a Mass celebrated by Bishop Andrzej Zglejszewski of the R.C. Diocese of Rockville Center, Long Island, N.Y. Among her accomplishments, Mrs. Flanagan received the Knight Commander of St. Sylvester from John Paul II, and the Cavalier Cross of Merit from the Polish government. She is a long-time supporter of Cyril & Methodius seminary at Orchard Lake.

Fr. Joseph Klos, pastor of Sacred Heart RC Parish in Bowmansville, N.Y., on being honored by the Buffalo Diocesan Holy Name Societies.

Dr. Brian K. Kobilka, MD, on being the 45th recipient of the Mendel Medal, awarded at Philadelphia's Villanova University to outstanding scientists who have worked to advance the cause of science and have shown that there is no intrinsic conflict between true science and true religion. Dr. Kobilka holds the Helene Irwin Fagan Chair in Cardiology and is Professor of Molecular and Cellular Physiology at Stanford University School of medicine.



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SPOTLIGHT ON LONG ISLAND / Barbara Szydłowski

Święty Mikołaj is Coming to Town

December (Grudzien) was dedicated to Saturn, god of seed sowing. The Saxons honored Thor, god of Thunder on December 21, which they called Giul, and later became Yule. When the Saxons converted to Christianity, they called the month holy month, with lots of activities.

SAINT BARBARA. On December 4 Polish Americans named Barbara observe her name day. But who was Saint Barbara? Saint Barbara is celebrated in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel among Arab Christians annually on December 4 in a feast day similar to that of North American Halloween. The general belief among Lebanese Christians is that Saint Barbara disguised herself in numerous characters to elude the Romans, who were persecuting her. Also, the United States Army Field Artillery Association and the United States Army Air Defense Artillery maintain the Order of Saint Barbara as an honorary military society.

SAINT NICHOLAS. December 6 the Feast of Święty Mikołaj / St. Nicholas. This is the day many European children receive their gifts. In Poland, Święty Mikołaj visits the homes of people in the village, dressed in his bishop's robes. When Święty Mikołaj visits the children, he gives them a gift for being good and to remind them of the gifts given to the Christ Child by the Three Kings. Święty Mikołaj is called "Father Christmas," known to children in America as Santa Claus.

TRADITION. December 24 Christmas Eve/ Wigilia is a time for the family to be together. Tradition has it that the Christmas Eve Supper starts with the appearance of the first star. If there is an absent member of the family, a place is set at the table.

The supper, lighted by candles, is set on a tablecloth under which is placed a little straw in memory of the Christ child's birth. The head of the household breaks a wafer (opłatek), which is shared with all those present at the table and wishes for happiness and peace are exchanged. Traditionally there is an uneven number of courses, including herring, barszcz made with beets, carp or other fish, cooked wheat, pierogi, noodles, sauerkraut, compote of dried fruit and Christmas cakes. In rural areas, people share food from their Christmas supper with the animals, including the Christmas wafer, which is usually dyed a different color for the pets and barn creatures.

Christmas carols are sung and the family gathers around the lighted Christmas tree. Under the tree are gifts, some of which have been left by Święty Mikołaj. Then it is time to be off to church for the Midnight Mass (Pasterka).

After a festive Christmas Eve, December 25 Christmas Day, is spent visiting family and friends. Another feature of this season is the *szopka*, a miniature puppet theatre made of cardboard and elaborately decorated with ribbons. The *szopka* takes the form of a church includes one or more stages set with biblical scenes.

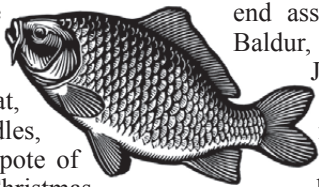
ST. STEPHEN. In Poland, the day after Christmas, St. Stephen's Day, is known as "Drugie Święto," the second holiday. Throughout Poland on this day, the peasants throw grain at one another to bring a good harvest. Members of the family also throw grain at each other, at friends, and at the animals. Also another im-

portant custom associated with this day is when all work agreements are concluded and the farm hand is either hired for another year by his employer or leaves to seek other employment.

LEGEND. The origin of kissing under the mistletoe is attributed to the ancient Scandinavians. One legend associates the mistletoe with Baldur, god of the Sun and god of Justice. His mother, Frigga, after whom Friday was named, was the goddess of the Sky and presided over love, marriage and domestic affairs. She undertook to get all living creatures as well as inanimate things to swear that they would not harm Baldur. However, by mistake, she overlooked the mistletoe, which took no oath. Loki, god of Evil and Jealousy, found this out and made an arrow of mistletoe, which he ordered Hodur, the blind god of Darkness and reputedly Baldur's twin brother, to shoot at the sun god. It pierced Baldur's heart and killed him. Frigga wept bitterly at the tragedy and when her tears turned into pearls as they fell on the mistletoe, Baldur came back to life. In this legend, the kiss under the mistletoe symbolizes the assurance that the goddess of love and marriage will never permit lovers to be harmed.

NEW YEARS EVE. December 31 marks the end of the year and in Poland, Wrocław's Market Square is a favorite destination for New Year's Eve, for both native Poles and visitors. It hosts light shows, brilliant fireworks, and lively music. The live shows performed by eminent musicians and performers of the country keep New Year's Eve festive.

Wishing one all A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



FOLKLORE

Wigilia Superstitions: What Do They Mean?

by Tony Bara

Polish Christmas Eve, or Wigilia, has some very warm traditions. Breaking the *opłatek* wafer, caroling, opening gifts, the midnight Mass—these are practices beloved by every Pole and person of Polish descent.

Equally interesting, however, are the various superstitions that dominate the evening, some of which date back to pagan times. Largely ceremonial today, these superstitions once reflected the lives and times of those who observed them. Here are three major Wigilia superstitions and their origins.

WIGILIA PREDICTS THE REST OF THE YEAR. An old Polish belief claims that whatever you do on Christmas Eve will affect your entire year. If you fight with your loved ones, it's a sign that the upcoming year will be filled with strife. If you stay clean and healthy, you will remain so all year. Lending out money or objects to others was once avoided for fear that the upcoming year would find you lacking food or other necessities.

When you consider how perilous life was centuries ago in a Polish village — harsh winters, the chance of crop failures, etc. — you can begin to understand why such beliefs existed. Any form of reassurance that one would survive to the next Christmas was embraced. Acting properly on Wigilia gave one a feeling of greater control over life's unpredictable nature.

TAKING YOUR SEAT AT TABLE. Seating arrangements carried a host of superstitions during Wigilia in olden days. Poles used to believe that there must be an even number of people seated around the table at supper time to prevent bad luck in the next year. It was also believed that people would die in the same order as they sat down, and anyone leaving the table before the meal ended would have ill fortune.

Superstitions associated with numbers go back to ancient times and present themselves in cultures around the world. In the case of Christian Europe, of which Poland was naturally a part, odd numbers may have received a bad stigma

from the fact that Judas, Christ's betrayer, was the thirteenth apostle.

The superstitions involving getting into and out of one's seat may have resulted from a desire to respect and appreciate the gift of being able to dine with your family on Wigilia. As mentioned, these practices arose during a time when life was much more difficult and uncertain. Surviving to celebrate another Wigilia was a God-given gift that should not begin or end in a hurry, but rather with a gravity befitting the occasion.

WANDERING SPIRITS. Poles used to believe that spirits walk among the living on Christmas Eve. These ghostly wanderers would enter a home in the form of animals, mysterious strangers or invisible entities. As a result, Poles would be careful not to sweep the floor or dust a chair during Wigilia for fear of disturbing their guests. At supper time, an extra place would be set at the table for a wandering spirit. Food and drink would be served to this "person" like anyone else.

The belief in spirits is a remnant from pagan days, intertwined with the Roman Catholic concept of purgatory. In general, spirits were believed to be on a journey to the afterlife and, as with any other journey, the travelers needed accommodations and nourishment. Furthermore, Polish villagers in past centuries believed that appeasing the dead would ensure that they "moved on" and didn't bring ill fortune to the living.

In recent times, the practice of leaving an open place at the Wigilia table has taken on a different meaning. During Poland's tumultuous nineteenth and twentieth centuries, at least one family member was often away at a war. The extra spot was reserved just in case that loved one might miraculously reappear. It thus became a sign of hope that the family might reunite.

Though observed only ceremoniously today, if at all, these Polish Christmas Eve superstitions are a fascinating part of our heritage. Understanding them and their origins helps us better understand our common past and what it means to be Polish.

How to Begin Your Wigilia Supper

Like the celebration of Easter, the Christmas Eve supper or *Wigilia* (Vigil) properly begins with nightfall. The youngest child should be out watching for the appearance of the first star, the signal that the fast (in Poland, December 24 is a fast day) is over and Wigilia begins.

Gathered around the table, covered with a white tablecloth beneath which some straw is placed, the family should begin with prayer: the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary," the "Glory Be," and the "Apostles' Creed." Afterwards, someone should read the account of the birth of Jesus found in Luke 2:1-20.

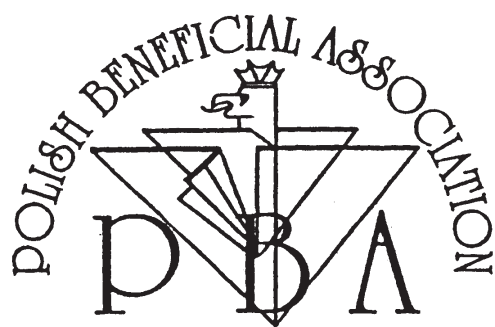
Now is the time to break the *opłatek*, the Christmas wafer. Each family member has a piece of the wafer, which he or she offers to every other member of the family, who breaks a piece off and consumes it, extending Christmas wishes and words of peace and reconciliation, as appropriate. Once everyone has shared the wafer with each other, it's time to sit down to the supper.

There should be one place setting that stands empty: tradition reserves a place for the stranger or wayfarer that might stumble our way on Christmas Eve (no one should be alone this night) or the memory of those family members who used to be at the Christmas Eve table but now celebrate Christmas in the heavenly Bethlehem.

Afterwards is time for exchanging presents and singing carols. (There are various collections on YouTube). Polish tradition has the family going to midnight Mass (Pasterka) together: if there is a Polish American parish you can reach, consider going there.



The *Polish American Journal* offers *opłatki*, *kolędy* CDs, ornaments, books (like Fr. Krysa's *A Polish Christmas Eve*) and other items to help you celebrate Christmas: check out our webpage at www.polamjournal.com.



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POLONIA OF THE EASTERN GREAT LAKES / Michael Pietruszka

Festival of Polish Carols at St. Stanislaus

St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, the Mother Church of Rochester's Polonia, marked its 125th anniversary with a special Mass celebrated by Rochester Bishop Salvatore Matano, Nov. 1st and a St. Stanislaus Feast Day Dinner Dance on the 14th ... The winners of the Polish American Congress, WNY Division's 2nd "Zupalooza" **Polish Soup Festival** were: Harmony Polish Folk Ensemble (Golden Ladle - Polish Army Pea Soup), United Cultural Society (Silver Ladle - Tomato Soup with Handmade Noodles), Msgr. Adamski Polish Saturday School (Bronze Ladle - Sauerkraut Soup). There was a tie between the Msgr. Adamski Polish Saturday School's Sauerkraut Soup and the Polish American Congress, WNY Division's Dill Pickle Soup for the Peoples' Choice Award. The Polish Heritage Dancers of WNY won for best decorated table ... The **Polish Legacy Project of Buffalo and Polish Genealogical Society** of NYS sponsored a Mass for All Souls and Polish Ancestors' Day at the St. Stanislaus Cemetery Resurrection Mausoleum in Cheektowaga, Nov. 1st ... The **Polish Arts Club of Buffalo** moved its offices to the Northwest Buffalo Community Center in the Riverside neighborhood of Buffalo. The group's new contact information is 155 Lawn Avenue, Suite 312, Buffalo, NY 14207; Telephone: (716) 876-8108 Ext. 33.

The historic home of **Dr. Francis Fronczak** at 806 Fillmore Avenue in Buffalo's Historic Polonia District, which once hosted Ignacy Paderewski, was saved from the Buffalo Tax Foreclosure Auction and is now under renovation by a group of local Polonia activists. For more, see this month's "Polonian Places." ... Buffalo attorney **Benjamin Dwyer** spoke on the cooperative relationship between the Bar Association of Erie County and the Rzeszow District Bar Council during the "It's a Sister Act: Cultivating Bar Association Relationships in a Globalized World" session at the recent American Bar Association Section of International Law Fall meeting in Montreal ..., Nov. 7th, **St. Adalbert Basilica** celebrated a Mass of Remembrance to honor deceased loved ones. The Villa Maria Chorale, under the direction of Dr. Ireneusz Lukaszewski, performed at the Mass. On Nov. 7th, **St. Casimir Parish** in Buffalo's Kaisertown neighborhood hosted an "Autumn Polka Dinner Dance" featuring Rare Vintage as part of its 125th anniversary celebration. The

anniversary festivities will continue with an "International Polka Koledy Kick-Off" with the New Direction Band and K-Town Kids Caroling at Potts Banquet Hall in Cheektowaga on Dec. 19th ... Polish veterans organizations from across the area marked **Polish Independence Day**, Nov. 11th.

On the 15th, the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Toronto and the Toronto Branch of the Canadian Polish Congress hosted a concert of patriotic songs and music of the 1920s, "**Duma I Radosc - Pride and Joy**," featuring Bialy Orzel Troupe, Novi Singers, Toronto Sinfonietta under the direction of Maciej Jaskiewicz, soprano Kasia Konstancy and clarinetist Kornel Wolak at Humber College ... The **Chopin Singing Society** performed at the **Holy Mother of the Rosary** Polish National Cathedral in Lancaster on the 15th ... Alfred Karney spoke on "**Polish Classical Music and Krzysztof Penderecki**" at the Niagara Polish Cultural and Historical Society meeting at the Niagara Falls Library, Nov. 17th ... The **Polish Arts Club of Buffalo** presented Dr. Richard Merritt of Niagara Falls, Ontario speaking on "Training for Armageddon: Niagara Camp in the Great War (1914-1919) - The Polish Connection" at the Harlem Road Community Center in Amherst, Nov. 18th ... Damian Maliszewski, Friar Alessandro, Kinga Mitrowska and Krzysztof Jedrysik headlined the 26th Annual **International Festival of Religious Song** at the John Paul II Polish Cultural Centre in Mississauga, Nov. 21st and 22nd ... The **Permanent Chair of Polish Culture** at Canisius College exhibited "1989: The End of the System", prepared by the KARTA Center, Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in New York and Polish Cultural Institute, in Alumni Hall during November

UPCOMING. On Dec. 1st, the **Professional and Businessmen's Association** will hold its Christmas Party, Elections and Man-of-the-Year Presentation at Shea's Performing Art Center in Downtown Buffalo ... The **Chopin Singing Society** will host its "Wigilia: Traditional Polish Christmas Celebration" at the Millennium Hotel on Dec. 5th ... The **Pulaski Police Association of Buffalo and WNY** will hold its Annual Christmas Party and Installation Dinner at the Polish Falcons Hall in Depew on Dec. 5th. The organization's 2016 officers will be Fred Ziemecki (pres.), Marty Bo-

chinski (v.p.), David Gorski (2nd v.p.), Mike Stack (3rd v.p.), Daryl Borawski (sec.), Andrew Kozakiewicz (treas.), Paul Manno (fin. sec.) and Jerry Imiola (sgt.-at-arms) ... The **Polka Variety Social Club** will hold its Christmas Party with the Buffalo Concertina All Stars on Dec. 5th ... District IX of the **Polish Singers Alliance of America** will present its "Annual Festival of Polish Carols" at St. Stanislaus Church in Buffalo's Historic Polonia District on Dec. 6th ... Ascension Parish in Batavia will host a "**Wigilia**" Dinner in Slomba Hall on Dec. 6th.

The **General Pulaski Association** will hold its Christmas Party at the Grapevines Banquet Hall in Depew on Dec. 7th. Members are reminded to bring a stuffed animal for the annual donation to the Child Advocacy Center ... Special Delivery will provide the music for the **Buffalo Polka Boosters** Christmas Party on the 12th ... The **Polish Heritage Society of Rochester** will host its traditional "Wigilia" Dinner in the Cleary Auditorium on the St. John Fisher College Campus on Dec. 12th ... The **Polish Arts Club of Buffalo** will celebrate its Annual "Wigilia" and 70th Anniversary Dinner at the Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga, and the Niagara Polish Cultural and Historical Society will hold its "Wigilia" at Koban's Restaurant in Niagara Falls on Dec. 13th ... Also on the 13th, the University of Rochester **Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies** will present a concert, "Masterpieces of Chamber Music" featuring violinist Oriana Masternak and pianist Kristina Raczynska at the Strong Auditorium on the university's River Campus ... The **Msgr. Adamski Polish Saturday School** will perform their "Jaselka" at St. Stanislaus Church in Buffalo on Dec. 20th ... The **John Paul II Polish Cultural Centre** in Mississauga will host a Traditional Polish Wigilia, Dec. 24.

❖ ❖ ❖
Wesołych świąt Bożego narodzenia i szczęśliwego nowego roku 2016! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all my friends and readers.

❖ ❖ ❖
If you have an item for this column, please send the information by the 6th day of the month preceding publication month (i.e. Dec. 6 for the January 2016 issue) to pietruszka@verizon.net.

Former Cigar Store Goes Up In Smoke

BUFFALO, N.Y. — A landmark building that once housed a cigar and confectionery store was destroyed by fire, Nov. 9, 2015, 13 days after it was purchased from the city for redevelopment.

Stephen Karnath bought 585 Fillmore Ave. in the city's historic Polonia district at auction Oct. 27, and had just made the final payment. "We just bought it from the city for \$4,500, but we would have spent a million," said the executive director of Broadway-Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services.

"The board had committed for the first \$130,000 to stabilize it. Then we would gut it, reframe the sections and put a whole new roof on it," said Karnath. "We were planning to apply to the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal for a major capital grant. We wanted five apartments and a commercial storefront, maybe a coffeehouse, in front. We were going to do the walk-through today." The house was built in 1875 by a Swiss immigrant, according to volunteer historian Monica Rzepka. "It was the first house built on Fillmore that was a not a farmhouse," she said. "But after that, it was a cigar-manufacturing factory of Joseph Jankowski. The tobacco leaves were dried in the attic." Rzepka said the building served as a store for Jankowski's cigar factory, and it had a candy area — possibly into the 1950s before it was sold to another Polish family who operated a corner deli.

In the 1930s, the second floor of



BETTER DAYS. Employees gather outside the tobacconist Joseph Jankowski's store, circa 1907. According to Buffalo's *Am-PolEagle*, the key to Jankowski's success was the variety of products he offered. For those who preferred national brands, Jankowski had Yellow Kid from New York and Pulaski cigars from Chicago. He also offered his own brands, which included Moniuszko and Sobieski. "If you could afford to spend more than a dime on your cigars, Jankowski had his two premium brands, Yaritha and JJ's Best. Many of Jankowski's cigars were sold in high-end tobacconists throughout the city," said the newspaper.

the building was been converted to a rooming house and apartments for men who worked at the New York Central Terminal, a few blocks away.

Common Council Member David A. Franczyk of the Fillmore District said he could remember as a kid shopping at the deli. "In more recent years, it was a rooming house in fairly good shape," he said, "but it required a lot of work because a huge pipe had flooded the building. The building was on the city's demolition list three years ago, but several groups of preservationists came forward and they asked that we try and save it."

Franczyk blamed "negligent owners who don't take care of their properties," for the ramshackle state of the city's aging structures.

He lobbied James W. Comerford, commissioner of Permit and Inspection Services, to spare from demolition the two structures on the parcel that incurred little fire damage.



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HAPPENINGS: CHICAGO STYLE / Geraldine Balut Coleman

From the Land of the Winged Horsemen – "The Polish Prince" Wins in Chicago



PHOTO: BOXINGLINKIE.COM

Polish Prince Fonfara (right) wins after a brutal twelve rounds.

CHICAGO — Could this have been one of the fights of the year, the World Boxing Council (WBC) International Light Heavyweight Championship? Held at the UIC Pavilion (University of Illinois at Chicago) on October 16, a crowd of over 4,000 boxing enthusiasts watched **Andrzej Fonfara** and **Nathan Cleverly** battle through a brutal 12-rounds. Throughout the match, Fonfara, (28-3, 16 KOs), a native of Poland, who fights out of Chicago, and Cleverly, (29-3, 15 KOs), a native of Wales, exchanged punches, with neither man yielding an inch of ground. Cleverly threw punches from unsuspecting angles but Fonfara never seemed to be fazed by the Welshman's power.



PHOTO: GERALDINE BALUT COLEMAN

Fonfara entering the ring in his Winged Hussar outfit.

The fight kept up a hectic pace with each boxer taking turns challenging the other. Neither hit the canvas and neither man committing any penalties.

In the sixth round, Cleverly landed several thumping upper-body shots to Fonfara. But in the seventh Fonfara landed a series of uppercuts that caused Cleverly's nose and ear to bleed. A broken nose slowed down Cleverly's pace and created some extra points on the judges' score cards. Cleverly mockingly stuck his tongue out at Fonfara after the bell rang.

During the eighth round, Cleverly gained some momentum and pinned Fonfara against the ropes. However, the twelfth round was Fonfara's show, pummeling Cleverly into a corner, before the bell rang.

Cleverly won a few rounds by throwing punches from awkward angles and by countering effectively. At one point, the fight was stopped momentarily by the ringside doctor

in order to examine Cleverly's broken nose.

According to CompuBox, the computerized punch scoring system, this fight set a record for most punches landed (936) and punches thrown (2524) in the light heavyweight division. CompuBox is used by HBO, NBC, and ESPN and elsewhere throughout the world.

With the crowd wearing red and white, waving Polish flags and scarves, the judges gave a unanimous decision to Fonfara with scores of 115-113, 116-112, and 116-112.



Nikifor's "Rotunda with Chandelier" and "Office with Flags and Three White Eagles."

THE ART OF NIKIFOR KRYNICKI AT PMA. The Polish Museum of America (PMA), its staff, and volunteers welcomed over 100 guests to view the **Art of Nikifor Krynicki: Watercolors from the Collection of Alfons Karny** Exhibit on October 23. The ongoing exhibition features 50 original watercolors owned by the **Jacek Fraczak Family** is held on deposit at the Alfons Karny Museum of Sculpture in Bialystok, Poland. At the opening, Jacek M. Fraczak, associate professor of art at Missouri State University, led a walking lecture-tour of the paintings. This exhibit will appear at the PMA until January 17, 2016, as the second of a limited three-city tour in the United States.

Nikifor, also known as **Nikifor Krynicki** and **Epifaniusz Drowniak**, was born in Krynica, Poland. He is considered one of the most outstanding naïve artists of his time. It is believed that he painted over 40,000 pictures on sheets of paper, pages in notebooks, cigarette

cartons, and even on scraps of paper glued together. His art includes self-portraits, landscapes, and cityscapes of Krynica, its spas and churches.

It appears as though Nikifor lived a hermitic life in poverty in Krynica and was considered by some as mentally challenged. He spoke with difficulty and was almost illiterate.

In 1960, knowing Nikifor's work had been underappreciated, **Marian Włosiński**, a painter also living in Krynica, met Nikifor. From then, Włosiński spent time and a portion of his professional career helping Nikifor promote his work. After the artist's death, Włosiński donated Nikifor's works to various museums. Today, the most complete collections are housed at the Nikifor Museum in Krynica and the Regional Museum of Nowy Sącz.

Nikifor's last years were the topic of the 2004 film *My Nikifor* by Krzysztof Krauze and featured actress Krystyna Feldman in the role of the artist. For this role, she was presented with the Best Actress

Award at the 2004 Polish Film Festival. It is interesting to note that during Nikifor's early life, he received care at a Krynica hospital and paid for his hospital care with his paintings. Because he mixed his paints with spit, the hospital, fearing that he might have tuberculosis, destroyed many of the paintings it received for his treatment.

OCTAVA ENSEMBLE PREMIERES IN CHICAGO. The Octava Ensemble composed of eight voices singing a cappella and in vocal harmony performed for the first time in United States at the Polish Museum of America on October 9. Afterward, the ensemble spent the next couple of days performing at Chicago's St. Helen, St. Ferdinand, and St. Constance churches.

The vocal octet has established itself as one of the leading ensembles among Polish chamber groups. It performs every type of music from 16th and 17th Cen-



PHOTO: GERALDINE BALUT COLEMAN

Octava Ensemble at St. Constance.

tury Renaissance and Baroque to Bruckner, Szymanowski, Kodály, and Górecki. They have recorded albums of works from the Renaissance and the Baroque periods.

The Octava Ensemble Chamber Choir, based out of Kraków, was founded in 2004 by students and graduates of the Academy of Music in Kraków (*Akademia Muzyczna w Krakowie*). Its Artistic Director **Zygmunt Magiera**, is laureate of the 12th Nation Competition for Choral Conductors in Poznan. He is also the artistic director of the Kraków Opera Choir. Presently the members of the ensemble include: sopranos, **Anna Magiera** and **Agnieszka Drabent**; altos, **Malgorzata Langer-Król** and **Zuzanna Kowalówka**; tenors, **Zygmunt Magiera** and **Mateusz Prendota**; and basses, **Bartłomiej Pollak** and **Marcin Wróbel**.

Octava has performed at numerous Polish festivals as well as concerts in Europe, Turkey, and China.

A TADEUSZ KOŚCIUSZKO IMIENINY CELEBRATION. The Sabina P. Logisz Great Hall of the Polish Museum of America provided a perfect setting to celebrate Tadeusz Kościuszko's *Imieniny*, Name's Day. On October 28, members of the Chicago Chapter of the Kościuszko Foundation and their guests participated in this cherished Polish tradition.

Russia had just crushed the Polish army, outlawed Poland's May 3 Constitution, and banned the awarding of *Virtuti Militari* medals to Polish heroes. The Polish officers who received these medals sent them to their wives or sweethearts.

On October 28, 1792, the Name's Day of Kościuszko, Prince Adam Czartoryski, an English-educated Polish statesman and patron of the arts, held a party at his Sieniawa Palace in Southeastern Poland for Tadeusz. Women wore white dresses with black and azure blue sashes. Intertwined in their hair were the *Virtuti Militari* medals. The women fashioned a garland crown of oak leaves that was placed on Kościuszko's head.

Each year, Kościuszko Foundation (KF) chapters reenact this event by honoring individuals who have supported the KF and the Polish community. This year, the Chicago Chapter honored **Dr. Joanna Rudnicki**, a former neurologist, for playing a vital role in breast cancer prevention as an active member of the Amber Coalition, a Polish

American breast cancer awareness program. She was also active in the Solidarity movement, both politically and medically. Additionally, she is an active member of both the Polish American Medical Society and the Chicago Chapter of the Kościuszko Foundation.

Guests at the event were treated



PHOTO: GERALDINE BALUT COLEMAN

Joanna Rudnicki

to a concert by the 16-year-old pianist, **Daniel Szefer**, who played Chopin's *Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise Brillante in E-Flat major*; *Opus 22*, Tchaikovsky's *Nocturne, Opus 9, No. 1*, and Franz Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 12*.

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Polish Christmas – More than Gifts and Treats

continued from cover

no ordinary supper. Everything about it was special, unique and highly symbolic. Traditionally meatless, it featured the gifts of farm, field, forest and river: pasta, grains, dairy products, fish, vegetables, fruits, nuts and poppy seeds. Well into the 20th century, many poor peasants ate the food from common serving bowls with wooden spoons. Until the meal was over, nobody was allowed to set their spoon on the table – it had to be held the whole time. Except for the housewife serving the food, no-one was allowed to leave table until the meal was over. Everybody was expected to taste at least a small sample of everything on the table and not to leave anything uneaten on their plate. To do so foretold missing out on various good things in the year ahead.

Various incantations and practices during the meal were meant to attract good fortune and keep harm away. When pasta or grain dishes were served, someone might exhort: “Mnóż się zboże!” (Multiply, o grain!). “Składaj się kapusto!” (Fold into heads, cabbage!) was uttered when sauerkraut and cabbage dishes made their appearance, and the words ‘Rodzcie się ziemniaki!’ (Grow, potatoes, grow!) were heard when boiled potatoes were brought to table. “Wiąż się groszku!” (Form into pods!) was

said to the peas. Those peas were also believed to keep wolves at bay: “Wilku, wilku chodź do grochu, a jak nie przyjdiesz do grochu, nie przychodź do końca nowego roku!” (If you want peas, wolf, do come here, if you don’t, stay away all year!)

In some areas, the head of the household would fling a spoonful of cooked yellow peas at the ceiling. The more that stuck, the better a harvest could be expected the following year. In eastern Poland

the same was done with kucja or kutia, a thick pudding made of cooked grain and honey. In the mountain areas of the south a handful of straw from the sheaves standing in the corners was thrown at the ceiling to ensure a good harvest. Since only rarely did a strand or two of straw get caught on a sliver or rough spot, that practice seemed to have been a kind of self-fulfilling prophesy: a bountiful harvest was a rarity in the poor soil of the hard-scrabble mountain areas.

WEDDING BELLS? Wigilia fortune-telling usually centered on the martial prospects of eligible maidens. They would draw strands of hay from under the table-cloth

of the Vigil Supper table. A green strand meant marriage before the end of Zapusty (Mardi Gras), while a yellow one signified that the girl would still to wait before someone popped the question. But a dark, withered strand condemned the girl who had pulled it out to a life of spinsterhood. Sometimes the girl who chose the longest strand was said to be the first to go to the altar.

Another practice was to go into the front yard and listen for a barking dog. Wherever the first bark was heard, that is the direction from which a suitor would come courting. Girls would also count the pickets in the fence saying “kawaler, wdowiec, kawaler, wdowiec...” (bachelor, widower, bachelor, widower...), the last picket determining whom they would marry.

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

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

After the above rituals had been re-enacted, families would return home and sing carols from their “kantyczka” (hymnal) until it was time to leave for Pasterka. But gift-giving was not practiced on Christmas Eve in the Polish countryside until well into the 20th century. Now kids in Poland get their presents already on Christmas Eve.



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Grateful for Grzaniec

continued from cover
sion of Poland, the custom of this drink is enacted. *Grzaniec* is not necessarily a traditional Polish drink, but one that is popular throughout Europe in one form or another — especially in the countries with a colder climate.



In a scene from the historical film *Potop (The Deluge)*, Sienkiewicz's beloved character Jan Onufry Zagloba is about to enjoy some spiced wine (*grzane wino*).

MULLED OR SPICED WINE HAS BEEN AROUND for centuries. These drinks were thought to be healthy and served as tonics in the Roman Empire; in the 12th century, a spiced wine named *Pimen* or *Piment* was mentioned; and during the 13th century, the French city of Montpellier traded spiced wines with England.

Called *Ypocras* or *Hypocris* after the Greek physician Hippocrates, it was commonly drunk during medieval times. The drink became extremely popular and was regarded as having various medicinal or even aphrodisiac properties. Antioxidants in red wine have been linked to a reduction in heart disease, diabetes and dementia, and adding slices of orange or lemon have Vitamin C. Doctors even prescribed it to aid digestion. As time passed this "medicinal" drink become popular around many countries that developed their own recipes. It was served at most banquets all over Europe.

In Czech it is called *Svařák*, *Glühwein* is the name in Austria and Germany, Глинтвейн (*Glintvein*) in Russian, Swedes serve *Glogg*, French sip *Vin Chaud*, Hungarians brew up *Forralt Bor*, Italians hand around *Vin Brule*, and the Poles polish off *Grzane wino*.

The drink eventually inspired the Spaniards in their creation of

Sangria, and Mexicans will find it vaguely reminiscent of *Ponche Navideño*.

While the basis of mulled wine is nearly the same everywhere, regional differences give each one a special taste. Many recipes will suggest using a cheap red wine. Cheap wine can taste bitter, so it would become bitterer after being heated.

Traditional spices used in mulling are cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, anise, allspice, and vanilla. Oranges and lemons add a bright and zesty flavor. A dry, fruit forward wine such as Zinfandel or Syrah is suggested although you may use whatever wine is your favorite. It is important not to boil it as not only will the alcohol burn off, but the wine can separate and it won't be as tasty. When you combine all your ingredients, allow them to warm and leave it long and slow, this will give the herbs time to flavor the wine.

Grzaniec is the Polish word for "mulled" and is usually associated with wine, but a better experience comes from mulling beer — *grzane piwo*. The tradition of drinking warm beer has its origins in the Middle Ages, with one of the first recipes appearing in Poland in 1595. The combination of honey and spices along with the beer had a very therapeutic effect and Doctors recommended it for medicinal purposes during the long winters, to help fight colds, strengthen the body, and improve one's general mood. Often times, the beer was homemade and blended with a variety of ingredients such as dried fruit, honey and spices which were mixed and sealed into clay pots.

The recipe for mulling beer is basically the same as wine. The best beer tends to be a solid lager with a light crisp flavor. You want one that will provide a great foundation once you warm it and add in the additional ingredients. Avoid light beers since they do not have much flavor.

GRZANE WINO MULLED WINE RECIPE

Ready to serve in about 60 minutes, and easy to make on the stove, or mull it in the slow cooker. Any or all of the herbs and spices will be fine; ground spices are an option.

- 1 bottle of red wine
- 1 cup water
- 1 large orange, peeled then juiced
- 1 lemon, peeled
- 1/2 cup honey, sugar or raspberry syrup
- 5-6 whole cloves
- 1 nutmeg, about 10 gratings
- 2 cinnamon sticks, broken

- 2 cardamom pods, slightly bruised
- 1 vanilla bean, halved
- 2 star anise

Slice the orange and lemon along its cross-section.

Put all ingredients, except the wine, into a large non-reactive pan and warm over medium heat, until all the sugar is dissolved.

The liquid will reduce, so after around 30 minutes, add in about a half cup of wine. This allows the flavors to infuse and will create a syrup.

When your syrup is ready turn the heat down to low and pour in the bottle of wine; additional alcohol is optional.

Heat the mixture on low to a gentle simmer for 15-20 minutes, making sure it does not ever boil.

Stir from time to time.

Strain, then ladle into glasses and serve warm.

GRZANE PIWO MULLED BEER RECIPE (FORTWO)

- 20 oz. beer
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 2 Tbsp honey (or more, if you like it sweet)
- 3 cloves
- cinnamon stick (or 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon)
- pinch of ginger
- * honey can be replaced with raspberry syrup

In a medium saucepan heat beer with sugar, honey and spices. Stir from time to time. Heat until beer reaches boiling temperature. Strain and serve in hot beer mugs.

GRZANE PIWO (EGG OPTION)

Beat 2 egg yolks together in a mug, with 4 Tbsp of sugar; Set it aside.

Heat a bottle of beer (preferably Polish beer) with a cinnamon stick or ground cinnamon, and whole cloves or 1/4 tsp of ground cloves.

Bring it to a boil and let it boil for a couple of minutes.

Remove it from the heat. Slowly, start drizzling in the egg yolk/sugar mixture, whisking the entire time. Keep whisking as it foams up.

*If you've used whole cloves and a cinnamon stick, use a strainer to pour your hot beer into your glass.

Na zdrowie! Cheers!

To be continued

JUST A TASTE. According to tradition, everyone seated at the Wigilia table must sample at least a bit of all the different foods laid out, otherwise they may experience poverty in the year ahead. After the meal, it is customary to sing kolędy (carols).

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CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS

Two Christmas Eve Memories

For Polish Americans, especially those who are observant Christians, Christmas Eve — or Wigilja — is, along with Easter, one of the great events of the year. Not only is it a time for decorating the Christmas tree and the giving of gifts, the Vigil of Christmas has some very special and meaningful features and traditions for us. Some Polish Americans, following closely the traditions passed onto them from their Polish born parents and grandparents, observe Wigilja in one way. Others mix in various “American” practices — which have crept in, almost imperceptibly, over time. Here are some recollections of two Christmas vigil gatherings going back to the 1950s and how they have been combined nowadays. They are based on the recollections of Angela and Don Pienkos, both originally from Chicago.

ANGELA MISCHKE PIENKOS. Back in the late 1940s and 1950s, I remember that our family followed a very traditional Wigilja dinner each year. This was thanks to my Polish-born *babcia* (grandmother) and my Mom, who had come to America in December 1913, just months before the outbreak of the First World War. My Mom was then just eight years old.

Together they really worked at Wigilja! With our big family all together we began with the sharing of the blessed *oplatek*. Then came a multicourse meatless dinner — starting with a true Polish mushroom soup, then herring, veggies, and a main fish course followed by pierogi. (Later on my Mom introduced a shrimp and rice creole dish to the menu.) For dessert there were Christmas cookies. After Santa dropped in, we kids opened up our presents, and sang Polish carols along with tunes like “Rudolph.” Then we went off to church — St. Mary of Czestochowa in Milwaukee — for Midnight Mass. Our Christmas tree was decorated just a day before Wigilja.

DON PIENKOS. We celebrated Christmas in Chicago as a big family event at my grandparents’ house in the 1950s. But aside from our Busia’s mushroom soup, pierogi and *chrusciki*, we had an “American” Christmas dinner. For us kids and our many cousins, the highlight at our seemingly mammoth dining room table was our annual contest to see how many pierogi we could chow down. I can still see my Busia’s smile about that!

“Wigilja for us remains a wonderful and memorable highlight.”

I think we started by sharing *oplatek*. But we didn’t go to Midnight Mass or sing *kolędy*. There were so many wonderful American Christmas tunes those days and they were either playing on the phonograph or on TV. After dinner our *dziadzia* (grandfather) — a terrific guy — liked to place a pile of coins in a big bowl. Each of us kids could reach in with one hand and grab as many as we could hold. I think my parents paid off the mortgage with our loot!

We had a big Christmas tree at my grandparents’ house. Our youngest aunt did the honors of handing out the gifts. One Christmas we all watched “I Love Lucy” when Lucy had her baby.

THE PIENKOS. For years, we have hosted our Wigilja for our family and friends, and we basically follow her tradition — along with the ever popular coin deal. We leave Mass for Christmas Day but we do sing a mix of *kolędy* and American religious and secular Christmas songs with our children and their kids. Before dinner, our grandchildren enjoy some vintage Disney Christmas cartoons or various games. Sharing all the gifts is almost a riot. Lots of fun.

Wigilja for us remains a wonderful and memorable highlight. We are so fortunate!

Christmas in Przemyśl

by Sabina Bober

PRZEMYŚL, Poland — Christmas in my childhood years (the 1980s) was always a family event. The whole family assiduously prepared for the holiday and most important was experiencing it spiritually. Mom, my siblings, and I participated in *Rorate*, a special Mass and devotion to our Lady at dawn during Advent. In the week before Christmas, my older sisters and I would start making decorations for the Christmas tree, something we looked forward to impatiently every year. Dad bought the Christmas tree and it always had to be a living one: I remember none of our neighbors having an artificial tree. That was simply tradition.

Thinking back over the years, I have the picture in my mind of a Christmas tree that was rather not so attractive. Sometimes mom said that dad bought a tree that was defective or crooked or didn’t have enough branches. But, at the time, getting a pretty tree—or any tree at all—was a challenge. Not everybody could buy a Christmas tree: there were limits. They were usually pine trees; nobody even dreamed of a fir tree. I remember that dad resolved one year — to our surprise — to buy a fir tree. How many trips it took, how much going back and forth, how many contacts—but, in the end, when he went to go get the long dreamed of fir, he came back with a pine tree, because some Party secretary got the fir.

My sister and I decorated the tree on Christmas Eve, using the ornaments we had made. We had denied ourselves chocolate (which was on ration cards) for a few months ahead of time, so that there would be something to put on the Christmas tree. Putting the tree in just the right place in the room took up the most time; the ornaments concealed any imperfections in the crooked tree.

On the morning of Christmas Eve, we all waited for the caroler. He had to be male, because it was

believed that a woman would bring bad luck for the coming year. The ladies, therefore, stayed home. Christmas Eve was observed with a strict fast, even for the children once they started school. Mom let us eat a little bit in the morning but, otherwise, we were not to eat un-



Important components of a Polish Christmas are straw and — under the white tablecloth — hay. These evoked the Bethlehem manger. The use of straw dates from earlier Polish tradition, when it was thought of as the hair of Mother Earth, a symbol of fertility and plenty. In urban settings, this custom was displaced with a handful of straw on a plate tied together with a ribbon. This tradition has stood the tests of time, practiced by rich and poor alike.

til the common Wigilia supper. As a six year old, I was supposed to fast, though that was no small task for me, especially as the smells of various Wigilia dishes wafted from the kitchen. The table was decorated with a white tablecloth with straw beneath it, symbolizing poverty. Mom made all the dishes. They included pierogi (with cabbage and mushrooms), stuffed cabbages with rice and potatoes, the traditional baked carp, and *kutia* (which my younger siblings liked to eat). Compote made from dried fruit was a real appetizer. We did not have the traditional twelve courses, because my parents thought they would be wasted, so we limited ourselves to just a few. There was no lack of pastry, which mom baked liberally. For us, they were all rarities—except for pierogi, the other dishes appeared only for Wigilia.

I recall how my parents labored for months before Christmas Eve to assemble all the products needed to make the Wigilia supper, e.g., sugar, which was on ration cards and which mom hid so that it would suffice for baking. My parents’ meat ration cards were inadequate; dad

only bought cold cuts. Our meat came from the barn, where my parents had pigs—some years we shared with our neighbors, others, they with us. It was hard to buy baking powder or yeast in the store; I stood with my sister in line many times to buy sugar or margarine to bake pastries. Butter was practically unavailable.

Just before the Wigilia Supper, the whole family knelt before the image of Our Lady to pray, and then my eldest sister read about the Nativity from the Bible. We thanked God for our health and our successes. We also prayed for our dead, whom mom declared each by name. After our common meal, mom began the singing of Christmas carols (*kolędy*), abiding in that festive atmosphere until Midnight Mass (*Pasterka*). *Pasterka* was one of the few Masses where the church was filled beyond the rafters.

Christmas itself was spent with family, singing carols together. Friends and more distant family members came to visit on St. Stephen’s Day (December 26).

❖ ❖ ❖

Dr. (hab.) Sabina Bober teaches history at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, where she directs the History of East-Central European Minorities Study Unit.

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Schnepf Condemns Terrorist Attacks

by Richard Poremski

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The mood was uncharacteristically reserved at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland on Fri., Nov. 13, 2015.

The guests had assembled to celebrate Poland's 97th Independence Day of November 11, 1918, but the horrific news from a soon became the topic of conversation.

"Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: Good evening. But it is not a good evening because there is very, very, sad news" said Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf from the podium. "This was supposed to be another joyful occasion to celebrate the rebirth of the Republic of Poland after World War I. But the news coming from France is terrifying. France is under terrorist attack at multiple locations in Paris, and over 100 persons have been killed. The operations of the security forces are still being completed.

"We share the pain with all the French people and we profoundly condemn the attacks. This is not only an attack on France, it is an attack on everyone who believes in the principles of democracy, freedom and peace. We are in solidarity with the French nation. We must promise to stay united and together and fight terrorists wherever they are. They are threats to all of us regardless if you live in Paris, Rome or New York.

"Let's have all people of good will stand together, and remain convinced that democracy must win during this struggle. I ask you to join me in a Moment of Silence to honor all of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris," said Ambassador Schnepf.

The respectful moment was concluded with a solo piano performance of the French National Anthem — *La Marseillaise*.

Poland to Shun Refugees after Paris Attack

WARSAW — Poland's new government won't accept migrant quotas imposed by the European Union, as the terror attacks in France have exposed the weakness in the bloc, the nation's future minister for European affairs said.



Szymanski

"In the wake of the tragic events in Paris, Poland doesn't see the political possibilities to implement a decision on the relocation of refugees," Konrad Szymanski was quoted as saying on Wpollyce.pl website. "The attacks mean there's a need for an even deeper revision of the European policy regarding the migrant crisis."

Szymanski's rejection of the EU quotas hours after Paris was rocked by terrorist attacks underscore the divide among governments in the bloc over the influx of Middle Eastern migrants. His Law and Justice party tapped into concerns among the country's conservative Catholic base that too many Muslims are arriving in Europe.

Poland's previous cabinet, led by the Civic Platform party, also opposed efforts led by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to force EU member states to take in more migrants. While incoming Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski said Poland will meet a commitment by the Civic Platform to shel-

ter 7,000 refugees, prime minister designate Beata Szydlo referred to the deal as "blackmail."

MARCHER PROTEST EU EDICT.

Two days before the attacks in Paris, a nationalist rally attached itself to the official November 11 Independence Day commemorations in Warsaw. Tens of thousands marched under the slogan "Poland for the Polish," in protest of the European Union's demand that Poland absorb additional refugees from the Middle East, Africa, and elsewhere.

Police said 25,000 people joined the march, while organizers put the numbers at 50,000.

"God, honor, homeland," chanted the protesters as they marched under a sea of red-and-white Polish flags. Demonstrators trampled and burned a European Union flag at one point, while a banner added to the anti-EU theme with the slogan "EU macht frei" ("Work makes you free" in German), a reference to the slogan over the gates at Auschwitz.

"Yesterday it was Moscow, today it's Brussels which takes away our freedom," chanted one group of protesters. Other banners read "Great Catholic Poland" and "Stop Islamisation."

Several thousand riot police officers were deployed for the protest, which was punctuated by numerous firecrackers and smoke bombs but otherwise went off peacefully.

— *Compiled from Bloomberg, BBC, AP, and other news reports*

FORUM / Don Pienkos

Poland's Big Election Year — One Observer's View

On October 25, 2015 Poland held a truly historic parliamentary election. For the first time in the 26 years of its democratic Third Republic, one political party, Law and Justice, won an absolute majority, 235 out of 460 deputies, to the Sejm, Poland's dominant legislative body.

As a result, Poland's new Prime Minister will be Beata Szydlo, 52. She succeeds Ewa Kopacz of the Civic Platform party, which had headed Poland's governing coalition since 2007.

Earlier in May the Law and Justice party's presidential nominee, the previously little known Andrzej Duda, 42, defeated the seemingly safe incumbent, Bronislaw Komorowski. His win came as a first big shock to the Civic Platform, whose free market policies had been credited as helping make Poland's economy one of the fastest growing in Europe.

In September Poland also held a national referendum, where the voters rejected a proposal to radically alter its method of electing deputies to the Sejm.

Poland's latest vote on October 25 has left western commentators at a loss in figuring out what happened and why. Neither have they demonstrated much appreciation about the impressive vitality of Polish representative democracy since 1989 nor shown they fully grasp the nature of the political party divisions in Poland.

In fact the Civic Platform has the basic features of a moderate conservative free enterprise party. It is internationalist in its embrace of the European Union. At home it has supported the principle of the separation of church and state while respecting the enormous role of the Catholic Church in Polish life. Law and Justice, which has invariably been described in the west as "Euroskeptic" and "rightwing," does stand for morally "conservative" views held by the Church. But its economic posture is populist and commits it to action programs aimed at improving the conditions of Polish working people. This is understandable, given the existence of fairly widespread dissatisfaction over low wages and frustration over the lack of good jobs for

younger people, many of them college graduates. These complaints have long been sore points among critics of the Civic Platform, despite its overall success in managing Poland's economy.

Poland's latest vote on October 25 has left western commentators at a loss in figuring out what happened and why.

Politically, the release of illegal taped private conversations among government officials in 2014 did some damage to the image of the Civic Platform. Worse was the departure, last September, of the party's skillful leader Donald Tusk. A highly effective Prime Minister since 2007, Tusk relocated to Brussels to become the EU's president — itself a sign of Poland's stature in that vast, multistate organization.

October's election also resulted in the failure of the post-communist Alliance of the Democratic Left to win a single seat in parliament. Whether this party is 'history' cannot be known yet. But its defeat offers Law and Justice with a golden opportunity to further enhance its standing by winning over at least some of its disaffected voters in putting together constructive economic policies to gain their support. The same possibilities of course hold true for the Civic Platform.

A real opportunity for closer cooperation between Poland's new government and the United States also exists, if Prime Minister Szydlo and President Duda move systematically in this direction. A closer U.S.-Poland strategic relationship may also mean a greater role for Polish Americans in working to enhance the ties between the two NATO allies and to promote a greater appreciation of Poland and the values Poland's extraordinarily pro-American citizens share with the people of the United States.

❖ ❖ ❖
Don Pienkos is a professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Law and Justice Back in Power

continued from cover

Nowoczesna (Modern) of hard-nosed pro-market economist Ryszard Petru (7.6%) have made their parliamentary debut. The Peasant Party (*Stronnictwo Ludowe* — 5.13%), which just barely cleared the 5% threshold, also made it into parliament.

Better-off and better-educated urban voters, who had been the mainstay of the middle-of-the-road PO, became disaffected after eight years of that party's rule, one marked by scandals, unkept promises and the same old faces on the TV news. For the first time ever, PiS has not only attracted a higher percentage of young people, city-dwellers and voters with higher education than PO but has actually made inroads beyond its traditional base of support in poorer eastern and southern Poland (roughly coinciding with the former the Russian and Austrian partitions) to pick up early voivodeship (province) except two. *Platforma* had previously been able to count on electoral support in western Poland, roughly coinciding with the old Prussian partition. Likewise, for the first time since 1989, the Sejm is free of any post-communists, leftist leftovers from the 45 year-long communist dictatorship.

PiS's success and the Left's defeat means that the wedge cultural issues pushed by the latter — abortion-on-demand, same-sex marriage, or excluding religious instruction from schools — is unlikely to have any traction in the new Sejm. PiS also supports traditional family values, expressed in a Christian social agenda that includes restoration of the former retirement ages

(65 for men, 60 for women) that had been upped by *Platforma*, and addition of a monthly family allowance for second and subsequent children to cope with Poland's demographic decline. PiS hopes to finance some of its program through taxes on foreign banks and chain stores/supermarkets, which PiS argues were advantaged against small business and "mom-and-pop" enterprises.

In terms of foreign policy, PiS is committed to rolling back excessive European Union interference in domestic affairs and recasting "European integration" to enhance national sovereignty. It also advocates a strong NATO and focus on

a Washington-Warsaw security relationship. It opposes increased "refugee" migration into Europe. Given Poland's reliance on coal-fired power plants, it opposes tougher EU climate change rules.

The conservative shift in European public opinion has not been greeted positively by Western European or American mainstream media: media reports on the outcome of the election characterized the PiS victory in such pejorative terms as "nationalist," "xenophobic," "pro-Catholic," "homophobic" and "Euro-skeptical."

— *The PAJ's Robert Strybel contributed to this article.*

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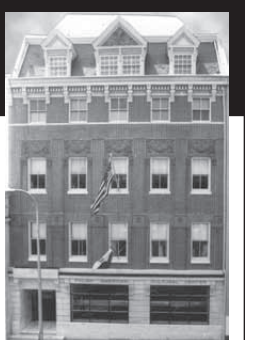
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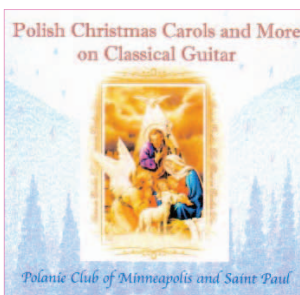
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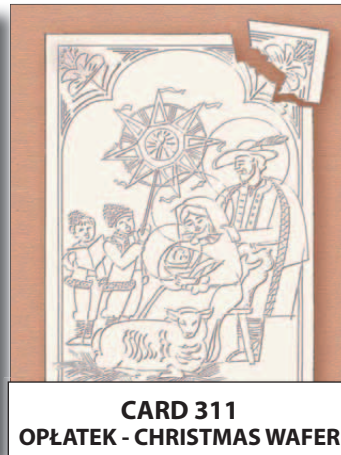
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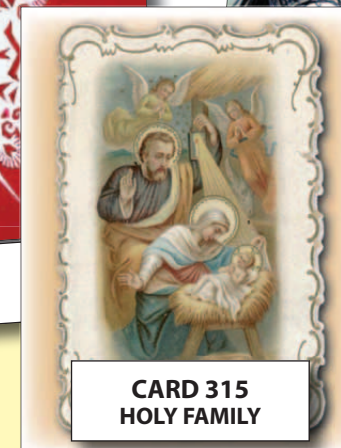


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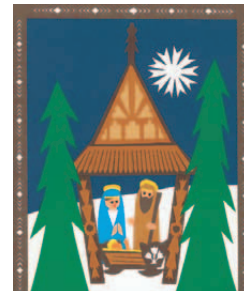
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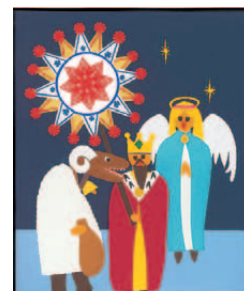
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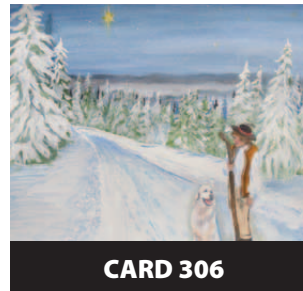
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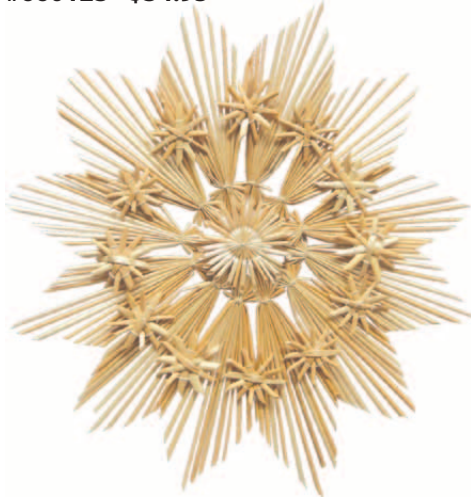
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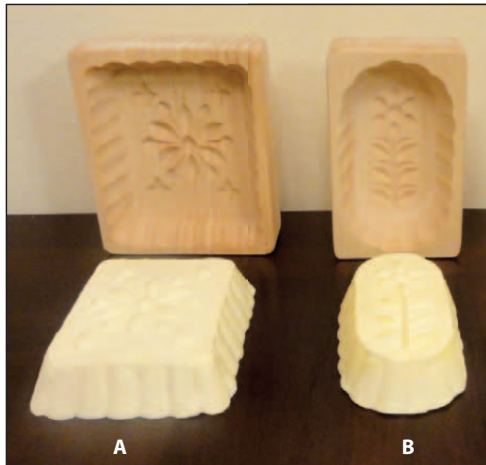


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This calendar includes some of the most beautiful, scenic photographs of Poland we've ever seen. And, at a full 12" x 12", you can truly appreciate Poland's sights from home. Other calendar features include: Weekdays & Months in Polish & English, Polish and US Holidays, and Male & Female Polish Name Days (called imieniny in Polish). Quantities are Limited, so order your's today!
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Christmas Greeting Cards

Each set of cards displays a Polish sentiment on the inside. Designs vary, so you may not get exactly what is shown. Envelopes included.



Cards with 3-D pop-up pictures, Set of 4
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Religious Christmas Cards, Set of 5
Cards Measure: 4.7" x 6.5"
#PCS722 - \$13.95

Christmas Books



Polish Holidays: An Introduction

This handy introductory guide to Polish holidays provides factual information in an easy to digest packet. Contained within is information, recipes, and/or songs for the Harvest Festival,

All Saints' Day, St. Nicholas' Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Year's Eve, Three Kings, Carnival, Fat Thursday, and Easter. SoftCover. 8.5" x 5.5", 28 pages. English.
#BK2573 - \$9.95



Polish Carols Songbook with CD

Holding on to the beautiful tradition of singing Polish Christmas carols, we give you a large collection of the most beautiful Polish carols. You will find in

it lyrics and musical notes to 51 compositions.

Songs include: *Wśród nocnej ciszy, Dzisiaj w Betlejem, Gdy się Chrystus rodzi, W żłobie leży, Anioł pasterzom mówił, Bracia patrzcie jeno, Hej, w dzień Narodzenia, & more.*
#BK2706 - \$19.95

Religious Gifts



St. Joseph Silver Plated Box
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#ARP465 - \$29.95



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for all items on pages 13, 14, 15, and 16

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polamjournal.com
SECURE SERVER

COOKBOOKS

PIEROGI LOVE
New Takes on an Old World Comfort Food
By Casey Barber
\$19.95
Hc; 128 pp.
8.3 x 8.1 inches
Full color photographs

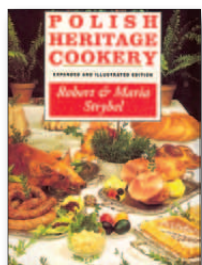


This tasty tribute to the pierogi takes a familiar wrapping and stuffs it with a host of unconventional, innovative, and decidedly non-traditional fillings. With 60 sweet and savory recipes that include everything from the classic Polish cheese and potato offerings to American-inspired Reuben pierogie and fried apple pie-rogies to worldly fillings like falafel and Nutella, there's a pierog for every party and every palate! Each recipe comes with a charming story from Barber's extensive explorations in pierogi flavors.

Casey Barber is a freelance food writer, photographer, and editor of the critically acclaimed website Good Food Stories.

on the market."
— *Polish Cultural News*

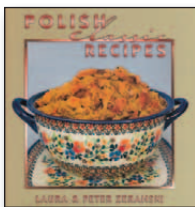
A perennial bestseller, *Polish Heritage Cookery* is the most extensive and varied Polish cookbook ever published. More than 2,200 recipes use easily available American ingredients and measurements. Modern Polish cuisine is a blend of hearty peasant dishes and more elegant gourmet fare, incorporating a broad cross-section of cultural influences. The book includes numerous cultural notes, historical accounts of Polish culinary traditions, and descriptive line drawings. Its expanded edition includes information on Polish products available in the United States, such as plum butter, honey mushrooms, and kielbasa, and their culinary uses.



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.

POLISH CLASSIC RECIPES



\$16.95
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.



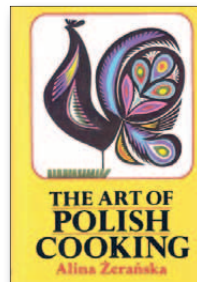
GREAT POLISH RECIPES
by *Raymond T. Laskowski*
\$10.00
Spiral bound, s.c.
62 pp., index
8.5 x 5.5 in.

Published in 1980 and rediscovered this year, this is a collection of four generations of recipes from kitchens in Poland and the United States. Includes appetizers, soups, salads, vegetables, breads, noodles, sauces, stuffing, kielbasa, entrees, and desserts. Straight-forward, easy-to-follow recipes for beginners and experienced cooks alike.



POLISH CLASSIC DESSERTS
\$16.95
By *Laura and Peter Zeranski*
2013, 96 pp. 8 1/2 x 8 1/2. Index. 100

color photos
Organized by type and with titles in both Polish and English. From mazurkas and babas to pastries and beverages, these recipes are designed for the modern kitchen but retain their traditional roots. Each of the forty-five desserts are tested to perfection and paired with mouthwatering photographs and notes on Polish history and customs.



THE ART OF POLISH COOKING
By *Alina Zeranska*
Pub. at \$22.95
PAJ Bookstore Price: \$15.95
Ethnic / Polish
384 pp.
8 1/4 x 5 1/2

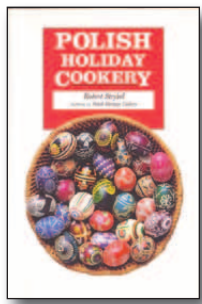
Reissued by Pelican Publ., *The Art of Polish Cooking*, contains 500 authentic recipes, complete with recipes for hors d'oeuvres, soups, entrees, vegetables, pastries, desserts, and beverages. Special holiday menus are also presented, along with charming descriptions of traditional Polish feasts and celebrations. Author Alina Zeranska provides easy-to-follow recipes for favorites like Cabbage Rolls, Chicken in Dill Sauce, Meat Pierogis, and Fruit Mazurka. Zeranska has translated these Polish recipes perfectly using exact American measurements.

POLISH HERITAGE COOKERY
by *Robert Strybel*
\$49.95
h.c. 900 pp.
7.25 x 9.50 in.
Expanded Edition, ill. and full color photographs

"Polish Heritage Cookery is the best Polish cookbook printed in English

POLISH HOLIDAY COOKERY

\$24.95
by *Robert Strybel*
248 pp., hc., Hippocrene Bks.
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

POLISH CHICAGO: OUR HISTORY, OUR RECIPES

\$29.95
by *Joseph W. Zurawski*
240 pp., hc., 720 photographs
G. Bradley Pub.



Since the 1830s, millions of Poles have come to Chicago. This work recounts by vivid prose, rare photographs and poignant anecdote the amazing story of these indomitable people. The volume turns a spotlight on 36 Polish American restaurants and families who opened up their kitchens to share time-tested, delectable Polish recipes.

POLISH PIEROGI: From the Old Country to the Old Neighborhood
\$10.00 by *Eva Gerwecki*, 48 pp., sc.

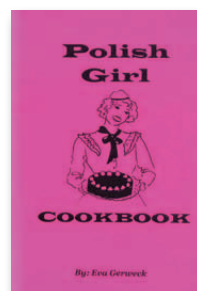
A collection of "secret" recipes, tips, and more for not only fillings and toppings, but a variety of dough recipes as well. Over 150 recipes with regional variations, from California to New York!



THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD POLISH COOKBOOK:

Hamtramck, Detroit and Beyond — \$10.00 by *Elna Lavine*, 44 pp., sc.

96 recipes from the famed Polonia of Detroit. Breakfast, lunch, dinner pastries, pierogi, kluski, cream chipped beef, soups, desserts and more.



POLISH GIRL COOKBOOK
\$10.00 by *Eva Gerwecki*, 44 pp., sc.

Another cookbook full of recipes from Detroit's Old Polish neighborhoods. Appetizers, entrees, breads, desserts, and more! Upper Peninsula style pastries, potato salad, pastries, babka, breads, and more.

POLISH RESTAURANT COOKBOOK

\$10.00
by *Jonathan Becklar*, 44 pp., sc.

This unique cookbook actually replicates recipes taken from menus of Motor City and surrounding area restaurants. It shows you how to make an entire menu right in your kitchen that tastes and smells just like the restaurant. Soups, salads, dressings, sandwiches, stuffed cabbage, and more.



APRONS

\$20.00 each plus \$5.95 s&h
Proclaim your Polish heritage with this lovely restaurant-style apron. 100% Cotton, with two generous pockets. Quality red cloth with machine-embroidered lettering and design. One size fits all!



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POLISH CHEF 2-200 POLISH CHICK 2-224



FOREVER POLISH 2-222 I LOVE PIEROGI 2-225



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TO ORDER, USE FORM ON PAGE 14

HANDTOWELS

\$9.50 each plus \$5.95 s&h
Hanging towels. Machine embroidered designs. Useful and attractive. Red with white towel (cloth may vary).



I LOVE PIEROGI 2-210 POLISH CHEF 2-211



I LOVE KIELBASA 2-212 POLISH CHICK 2-213



STO LAT 2-275 WESOLYCH SWIAT / 2-275

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INTERNATIONAL

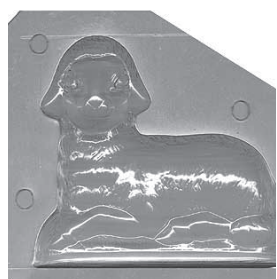


SEASONS AND CELEBRATIONS: Cooking Secrets of Italian Villages by *Rosalie Fuscaldo Gaziano* Pb. 144 pp. was \$15.95 **now \$10.95**

HUNGARIAN COOKBOOK: Old World Recipes for New World Cooks by *Yolanda Nagy Fintor* Pb., 230 pp. was \$11.95 **now \$7.95**

EASTER BUTTERLAMB MOLD

EASTER BUTTERLAMB Easy to use! To make with butter, simply coat the mold with vegetable oil (spray type works best), press in softened butter, clamp halves together, place and refrigerator until hardened and you're done. For chocolate, just pour and let harden. It's that easy! Clean with soap and warm water.



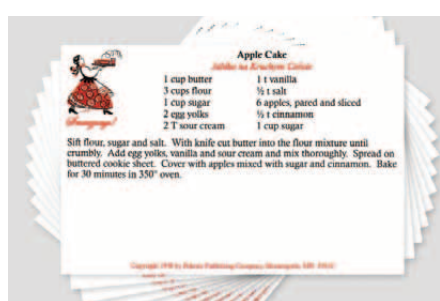
Small (#1-600) 3-1/2" width by 3" tall — \$4.95
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GLOSS-COATED POLISH RECIPE CARDS

Twelve of the most popular and treasured recipes, including Cabbage Rolls, Turkey Cutlets with Mushroom Sauce, Baked Apples in Red Wine and more.

Handy for your recipe box — perfect as party favors or hostess gifts, and — as a stocking stuffer — an ideal way to introduce Polish cooking to family and friends!
2-261 — \$5.00



"STO LAT" BIRTHDAY CARD and "JAK SIĘ MASZ" BLANK NOTE CARD

New for the PAJ Bookstore — Designed by Poppfield Press



CARD 402 — "Sto lat." ("Happy Birthday — May you live 100 years") 4 1/4" x 5 1/2" Full color design with poppy, "Sto lat" lyrics in Polish and English, and role of poppy in Polish culture. Inside left blank for personalization. Printed on 4-1/4 x 5-1/2 glossy stock.

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- 10-pack \$6.00
- 50 or more 50¢ each

SHIPPING (IF ORDERING CARDS ONLY)
1-10 cards \$3.50
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21 or more \$5.95



CARD 403 — "Jak się Masz?" 5 1/2" x 4 1/4" "Jak się masz?" — This good-natured Polish expression of greeting and expression of good will can be heard when friends, neighbors, and family meet. From "How have you been" and "How's everything?" to "How do you do?" a lot of questions are packed into these three little words.

Full color design with "dziewięćsił" (Alpine Everlasting Thistle Flower), the card comes with a blank inside for personalization. Printed on 4-1/4 x 5-1/2 glossy stock. Ideal "Money Card" for gifts, etc.

What Have You Done Since Diocesan Closings and Mergers? An Uplifting Option: Sing Po Angielsku

by Rev. Dr. Czeslaw M. Krysa
Part I

Rust belt PolAm Catholics have been hit badly, in the heart, between our spiritual eyes with closings, mergers, blending of our parishes. Some bishops, pastors, and merged congregations are blatantly anti-multi-cultural, not allowing even ethnic singing in newly merged "worship site". Perhaps these individuals have forgotten that Catholicism is by nature diverse, a worldwide church. We, PolAms, on the other hand, need the treasury of our hymns, and more than just a patronizing *Serdeczna Matko* at a funeral. Our churches may be closed, our souls are not. Many congregations need to be more open and welcoming and less uni-cultural. From the perspective of singing, here's why:

THE POLISH FAMILY GOSPEL. With the Christmas season approaching, the *kolęda* rises as the Gospel of our Domestic Church and the crown of our hymnic tradition. Some carols ring with a social justice call for equity among rich and needy, while dancing a polonaise with national pride. Others leap like a stag with the folk melodies of the Krakowiak, Mazur, or Oberek. Among the most beloved is the mazurek tuned, *In David's City*. So familiar are both the characters and conversa-

tions in these carols, they paint Bethlehem in the mountains of Poland culminating under the mantle of the *Fairest of Maidens*. Polonia needs to demand such singing in the name of Catholic diversity.

THE POLAM "BOOK OF PSALMS." Like the 150 Psalms (literally songs), our hymnody embodies every possible emotion humans have ever felt. Some boldly, and others humbly yet shamelessly, place these feelings directly before God, Jesus, and his Mama Mary. Most expressive of sorrow, sadness, and anguish are Jesus' *Bitter Laments* at His execution, which appeal to anyone overcome by grief and pain. *Jesus Shepherd* and *All Hail Queen and Mother* are funeral laments, so foreign to North American Catholic celebrations. This tradition is less didactic and exhortative, and therefore more experiential than its English counterpart.

However, the main prize of the resilient and persevering, singer, are the lungs which breathe hope as joy at Easter and in Holy Eucharist. Fifty Alleluia days proclaim spiritual joy: the *Dawn of exaltation* or *Praise the Lord*. These glories are cast like petals before the Eucharistic Lord *born of Mary*, or when asking Mary. *Lead me to Jesus* in the Holy Eucharist. Where have you ever sung a Com-

munion hymn which turns to Jesus' Mother, if not in a Polonia church? Our joy is Jesus in Eucharist, particularly evident at the annual Corpus Christ Procession. Does your merged parish celebrate this four altar witness walk?

NEW EVANGELIZATION

SINGING. In terms of discipleship and taking up Gospel mission, Marian and Eucharistic hymns rise high above their English peers. *Do what my Son tells you to* is the finest and most compelling example. Many Marian evangelization hymns were born among young pilgrims whose ever-increasing 3-10 day on foot pilgrimages, annually crisscross the country. This ministry is growing among PolAms in North America: New Jersey, Chicago, Lewiston, N.Y., and Midland, Ont., Canada. So is the repertoire, including *Lady of the Mountain Brilliant, You're the Breath of the Springtime*, and *Reigning over us for ages*. These sung intercessions ask Mama Mary to place social justice for the vulnerable, disenfranchised, conscience and free will before the eternal King's feet.

All except one of the hymns quoted above

in English italics, appears in a new, bi-lingual volume: *Polish American Heritage Hymns: Spirituality in Song and Ritual*. This lyrics only collection of 91 hymns and six devotions, opens to the wider public, in St. Casimir's 125th anniversary year, thirty-five years of Rev. Dr. Czeslaw M. Krysa's work and experience. A very limited supply of *PolAm Heritage Hymns* will be available by mail beginning mid-December 2015.

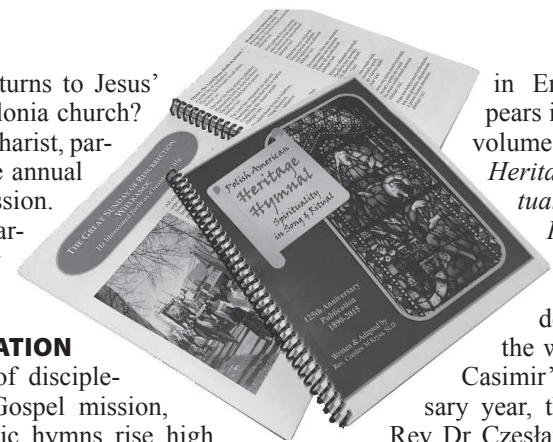
To obtain a copy please mail a check, for \$20 plus \$10 shipping and handling payable to: The Church of St Casimir, 160 Cable St., Buffalo, NY, 14206.

Funds are earmarked for ongoing structural restoration of the landmark church building.



Rev. Dr. Czeslaw M. Krysa, Rector of the Church of St. Casimir, is director of the Buffalo Diocesan Office of Worship, and a visiting lecturer at Christ the King Seminary.

He has written numerous scholarly papers articles, and is the author of the book "A Polish Christmas Eve."



THE PONDERING POLE / Ed Poniewaz

Wise Children from the East

It is not often that I think about and worry for our brothers and sisters in the ancestral homeland, but there is a lot of political turmoil going on with the government and with the influx of refugees into Europe. The new president and prime minister and all of the people of Poland need our thoughts and prayers as they go forward.

We are approaching the Christmas holiday and, as with all of the Christmas holidays of the past, it is a time for reflection, gift giving, and being thankful. There is a small private school in St. Louis with a long and rich history doing one of the most important things in the cause of humanity and that is to teach. It is also a wonderful example of one of those rare enterprises or persons that have made it part of their mission to serve and support Polonia in a special way. Thomas Jefferson School (<http://www.tjs.org/about>) does both of them well.

Thomas Jefferson School (TJ), founded in 1946, "is an independent, non-sectarian, boarding and day school for grades 7-12." The main benefactor of TJ is philanthropist and iconoclast Charles E. Merrill, Jr., the son of Charles E. Merrill, Sr., who along with Edmund C. Lynch created the giant financial securities firm Merrill Lynch & Company.

The Polish connection comes from Charles Jr.'s "extraordinary interest in learning and cultures," a meeting and friendship with Holocaust survivor Bernat Rosner, and was bolstered by his wife Julie Boudreaux, a teacher and education innovator who established a collaboration with a similar school in Poland, Spoleczne Liceum Ogólnokształcące (SLOT).

"Mr. Merrill supports these efforts by sponsoring a scholarship that sends a SLOP student to TJ each year." This scholarship has brought one student per year from Poland to TJ since 1997.

There is much more to the story than space allows, but here are two of the answers from a group of questions I posed to Elizabeth Holekamp Ph.D., Head of School, about the Polish students that have attended TJ:

How has the "experiment" worked?

Without exception, the students who have come from TJ from SLOP have been spectacular. They have integrated very quickly into our school community and have thrived in this setting. They have all done well academically, and have contributed a great deal to the quality of life here. Our only regret is that they can't stay longer!

What happens to the Polish kids after they graduate? Do most stay in the U.S. or go back to Poland?

TJ's Polish students have traditionally returned to Poland to prepare for and take the Matura exam. Many of them have stayed in touch with TJ in the years since their stay with us.

Most of us live based on predetermined formulas and processes and either don't have the time nor interest in exploring something "outside the box." So a man decides to venture into Eastern Europe searching for something "different" and now there is a scholarship program for Polish kids to come to St. Louis to study and learn. And according to Dr. Holekamp, TJ is expanding the program so that: "A group of Polish students and one of their teachers will come to TJ in January, and then a group from TJ will go to Poland in March. The teachers are collaborating on projects in mathematics and music."

That is fantastic.

In the total scheme of things, this story might seem inconsequential or insignificant. But for me, on so many levels, it is like a big bright star shining in the sky.

NAME DROPPING, AGAIN. In the July issue of the Pondering Pole, I introduced you to my grandson Lucca Stanislaus. Soon after Lucca was born, Tony and Alice Kaminski, parishioners at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church in St. Louis announced the arrival of their new granddaughter, **Alayna Kasia**. In the spirit of something different, your help is requested with a new Pondering Pole segment. Send me examples of your Polish-named children and grandchildren. If the "kids" are asking



Benjamin Orr (nee Orzechowski)

for suggestions there are so many ways to use Polish names either in the original or in a modified form to name the little bundle of joy. Please share and if you need help, let me know.

POLISH OR NOT? One of the original principles, along with Ric Ocacek, in forming the rock group *The Cars* was lead singer **Benjamin Orr**. Ben was born Benjamin **Orzechowski** in Lakewood, Ohio in 1947 and according to Wikipedia he is Polish, Russian, Czech, and German descent. The listing doesn't say what the percent of each. He was the unique voice you hear in the hit song "Just What I Needed." Orr died in 2000 of pancreatic cancer. What percent Polish is the Slavic looking rocker Benjamin "Orzechowski" Orr?

Into Dancing with the Stars are you? Into dancing swing? I have a treat for you. Check out the name **Michael Kielbasa** on YouTube. A West Coast guy and a West Coast Swing (a style of dancing) kind of guy, read this brief summary of his dancing life and check him out at (<http://www.michaelkielbasa.com>):

Kielbasa been training and dancing for the past 20 years, in most styles of Partner Dancing. He lives in San Diego, California and teaches out of Starlight Dance Studio. As one of the top Champion West Coast Swing Professionals, Kielbasa has been traveling, teaching and performing not only in the United States but in countries like Canada,

France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, Brazil and Australia. What a hooper! Is Kielbasa Polish or not?

WESOŁYCH ŚWIĄT to all of the *Journal* readers and blessings and peace to all of our Polonian brethren here and around the world. We have so much to be thankful for: dziękuję bardzo to Mark Kohan for the lead on Ben Orr; and dziękuję bardzo to Charles E. Merrill, Jr., and all of the teachers and staff at Thomas Jefferson School for giving a Polish kid

an excellent education and unique cultural experience.

IF YOU HAVE A THOUGHT about this month's topic, have a question, or have interesting facts to share, contact me at: Edward Poniewaz, 6432 Marmaduke Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63139; email alinabrig@yahoo.com.

N.B. If you send email, reference the Polish American Journal or the Pondering Pole in the subject line. I will not open an email if I do not recognize the subject or the sender.

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NEWSWORTHY

International Speakers at Polish American Museum Symposium

PORT WASHINGTON, Long Island, N.Y. — A symposium on the preservation of Polish history in turbulent times — “Above and Beyond the Call of Duty” — as held at the Polish American Museum. Guest speakers were Dr. Boguslaw Winid, Republic of Poland Ambassador to the United Nations and Melissa John, Director of the Bentley Priory Museum, London, England.

The program was conducted by Gerald Kochan, Director and Curator of the Center for Military Studies in the Polish American Museum and promoted by Barbara Szydłowski, Museum president.

The program was opened with the singing of the Polish and American anthems by Evaline Backiel. Ambassador Winid spoke about his research to locate Polish World War I tanks, the discovery of one in Afghanistan, the cooperation of the Polish military stationed there and the shipment of the tank to a military museum in Poland. He co-authored the book “Przywracanie Pamięci” (“Recalling Forgotten History”), a copy of which was presented to the Polish American Museum.

John spoke about her efforts to establish the Bentley Priory Museum, which was dedicated to the Polish Air Forces that served with distinction in the British RAF during the Battle of Britain. The Museum is sited in the former headquarters of the RAF Fighter Command.

During the program, Evaline Backiel and Robert Jakobsze, accompanied by Robert Wirkowski and Bogdan Czerwonka, performed Polish patriotic songs. All are members of the Noste Domine Choir, St. Hyacinth Church, Glen Head, Long Island.

Also unveiled were two new exhibits, one to the Museum, featuring photographs, medals and badges of two Polish armed forces members, namely Corporal Jakub Kochan and Lieutenant Julian Kurtz.

The program was concluded with Kochan, John and Szydłowski, presenting to Ambassador Winid a rare print of a Polish World War II fighter aircraft, painted by Ronald Wong, renowned aviation artist.

Polish Drama Club Premieres in Washington

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Polish Drama Club premiered its new play “Norymberga” (“Nuremberg”) on October 25 to a packed house at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The play stars Miroslaw Podloch in the role of a retired Communist counterintelligence officer who regrets his crimes and demands a trial. Podloch’s role is supported by Laura Migasiuk playing a young, up and coming journalist, whose father was repressed in the Communist era by Podloch’s character. The play clearly portrays the evils of Communism and condemns martial law, which was the attempt by Poland’s then Communist authorities to destroy the Solidarity movement in 1981, but it also examines human weakness and interdependence.

The Polish Drama Club, one Washington Polonia’s newest organizations, is led by experienced actor and director Dorota Ponikiewska. The group recently received non-profit status.

Award-Winning Film at CCSU

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — The S. A. Blejwas Endowed Chair in Polish and Polish American Studies along with the Polish Club will present the Golden Lions award for best film at the 2014 Gdynia Film Festival and the Eagle at the 2015 Polish Film Awards at Vance Academic Center, Room 105 of Central Connecticut State University, Sat., Dec. 5, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.

The film, “Bogowie,” is a 2014 Polish dramatic feature film directed by Łukasz Palkowski. It is based on the life and career of Polish cardiac surgeon Zbigniew Religa, who performed the first successful heart transplant in Poland in 1985.

The film is in Polish with English subtitles

Admission is free and the public is cordially invited. Refreshments will be served.

For further information please contact the Polish Studies Program

at (860) 832-3010 or jacquesm@ccsu.edu

Students Asked to Contribute to Interactive Website

NEW YORK — As part of the activities taking place to commemorate the memory of General Thaddeus Kosciuszko on the bicentenary of his death, the Kosciuszko Foundation and the Polish American Teachers Association are organizing an interactive website.

Kosciuszko has a large number of monuments, poems, geographic locations (mountains, hills, towns, counties, parks, and so on), and institutions (schools, clubs, associations), named after him all over the world.

The Kosciuszko Foundation invites pupils to the age of ten from around the world to contribute to a database that will provide a repository of information on our Global Pole who was admired during and after his lifetime in the United States, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, what is now Belarus, and throughout Europe.

A two-sentence description in English or Polish will suffice, along with weblinks if possible, and high resolution photographs if available. Contributors will be listed.

Kindly forward information by email to GlobalTad@thekf.org. Submissions must be in English, and only one submission per pupil will be published.

Poles Top English Fluency Rating

The fifth annual international English Proficiency Index by company Education First concludes Poles are in the top ten non-native English speakers in the world.

While the 2015 assessment saw Poland fall to ninth place (62.95 points) from last year’s sixth place (64.26 points), the differences in scores were minimal. The country remains in the elite group of Europe’s most fluent English-speaking countries.

Fallen Soldier’s Family, and the Man He Saved Reunite at Marathon

NEW YORK — The family of a fallen soldier from Staten Island, who died shielding a fellow soldier from a suicide bomber, have gotten together with the man he saved to run the New York City marathon.

Army Staff Sgt. Michael Ollis was killed in August 2013 in Afghanistan, but his legacy lives on. His two sisters and Lt. Karol Cierpica, the Polish soldier whose life he saved, decided to run together in his memory.

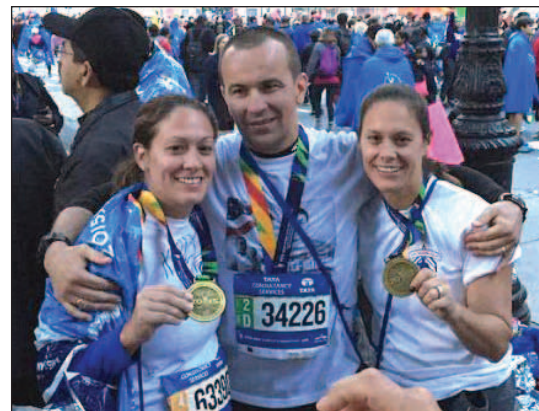
“I feel lucky, because other families who have lost a loved one don’t have a connection like this,” said Manziolillo, who lives in Hawaii, to the *New York Post*. “We have someone who was there with Michael, the closest thing we can relate to.”

Ollis was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light). His platoon was attacked in the middle of the night as a car bomb blasted a hole in the wall of their army base.

They then came under fire from Al-Qaeda rebels who fired mortar shells, shoulder-fired rockets and hand grenades into the base.

Ten suicide bombers made into the base. Eight were killed while a ninth were shot. But a surprise tenth bomber took the pair of them by surprise. Ollis stepped forward to protect Cierpica. The bomber detonated his vest, killing Ollis, 24.

Ollis received a posthumous Silver Star for his heroism. He also received Poland’s highest honor for a foreign soldier, the Army Gold Medal. His parents, Bob and Linda, along with the sisters, were met by



Kimberly Loschiavo (right) and her sister Kelly Manziolillo (left), ran the New York City marathon with Polish military Lt. Karol Cierpica in honor of their brother, Staff Sgt. Mike Ollis, who sacrificed his life saving Cierpica.

the Polish President.

The family says their most emotional meeting was with Cierpica and his pregnant wife Basia.

“He absolutely looked scared, like a deer in headlights when he was staring at us,” Bob said. “I grabbed him and I hugged him.”

“It was very emotional for me because of meeting the family,” Cierpica said. The family had a lot of questions for him and wanted to know exactly what happened in the last few minutes of Ollis’ life.

When the Cierpica’s baby was born they named him Michael. Then the Cierpicas asked about running the marathon in Ollis’ memory.

“I was very surprised. We were so pleased. We’re just thrilled about it,” Linda said.

“I’m a soldier, [but] actually, running is my passion ... What is important for me is the marathon we run together with my friends to honor [Ollis],” said Cierpica, who started the Thank You For Your Service foundation.

“My mission is for servicemen like Michael, servicemen and family who lost fathers, sons, fighting for their country,” he said.

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SYBIRACY / Stefania Borstowa

Trips To the Woods, Feast in Kyrgyz Family’s Yurt

“Sibracy” (*Poles exiled to Siberia during World War II*) is written by Stefania Borstowa. Borstowa, her children and Marysia, a home servant, were deported from Lvov to KruToyarka, a small village in Kazakhstan. Soon after the Soviet Union invasion, her husband was sent to the labor camp in Eastern Siberia and died of dysentery, but she did not know about it until after World War II.

Excerpt from the letter of 23 September, 1940

I worry since I have no news from Lodz and Zgierz, where my family comes from, nor from Warsaw. Since I have no information, I don’t know whether I should prepare food supplies for winter or use what we have. I am in limbo situation. Should I buy or exchange the supply of wheat or wait? Our situation with wood and heat supply looks like the following: when we have a day free from kolkhoz work, we pull a wheel cart to the woods, about 3 km (2 miles) away to collect and bring a supply of dry branches of birch and hornbeam. This is an arduous task, since the forest is very dense and it feels like a torture to pull out the branches. Our legs, arms and faces are scratched to blood. When we finally load the branches as tight as we can to the wheel cart, it is quite challenging to push it back. We have to catch a breath several times,

on the way back. When we finally reach the house we lie down, barely alive, for an hour. Then we pull our cart back to the woods and do it again and again ... As you can tell, the life here is very primitive. We have to prepare everything with our own sweat and our own hands. (...) I had a chance to buy rain boots, too large, but I bought them, since I might not have any chance later on.

We became friends with a Kyrgyz family who live in a neighboring hamlet, called Boguylachka, 6 km away. They invited me for Sunday to their yurt for a feast. When I entered the yurt, I greeted the hosts and sat cross-legged like they did. We sat on the rugs, which used to be elegant Turkish carpets. Besides me, they were three women and four men, all Kyrgyz. I was struck by their distinctly oriental facial features: slanted eyes, flat noses, yellow sharp buck teeth and protruding cheek bones. Kyrgyz men had mustaches hanging down to the chest which looks bizarre since they have little facial hair, just some hair on the chins and under the noses.

Food was already prepared and waiting. A huge broiled lamb spiced heavily with garlic was placed in the very middle, on the huge baking tin. I could smell this garlic three kilometers before the hamlet on the way there. On the side there was a samovar (self-boiler) on the tray with the tea pot. There was a big yeast



A Kyrgyz yurt.

cake on the lacy napkin, which was probably white in better times. We also had hard-boiled eggs, onion, black salt and the home-made jam with no sugar to eat. Kyrgyz host poured a tea with milk and invited me to participate in the feast. Frankly, I could only eat eggs with no restraint, since I was not sure about the hygiene and cleanliness of other foods. Still, I had to try it all.

ACCORDING TO KYRGYZ’S CUSTOMS, a guest shows appreciation by eating so much that he/she has to burp or get the hiccups or even be forced to leave to puke. Otherwise the hosts are offended that you did not eat enough. I was good in pretending that I ate enough and

burped well to cause the hosts to be satisfied. It is thanks to my childhood anti-cultural education in Lodz — we were playing street games in distance spitting and we held contests in burping and I was quite good. After each of my eructations, the hosts were shaking their heads in adoration and tried to be nice in their own specific way. I was shaking out from chuckles and revulsion inside.

Food consumption was done in a unique way since we had no forks, plates or glasses, we only had clay cups. A chief host sliced the yeast cake in thick pieces like bread and divided it between us. He was also slicing the lamb into thick pieces and was throwing these pieces to us, so we had to catch them in flight. I was also pretty good at catching the pieces in the air.

It was a good experience and a good business for us, Poles. We knew that this Kyrgyz family had enough flour, eggs and sheep for exchange. I kept in mind that when we are friends, it would be easier to buy products at a better price.



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POLISH CAN BE FUN / Robert Strybel

Polish Christmas and New Year's

If we compare the Christmas terminology of Polish and English, we see that the Polish version represents greater variety. English monotonously uses the adjective "Christmas" over and over again. Some examples:

Boże Narodzenie	Christmas
Gwiazdka	Another Name For Christmas
Wigilia	Christmas Eve
Wieczera Wigilijna	Christmas Eve Supper
Oplatek	Christmas Wafer
Kolęda	Christmas Carol
Złóbkę, Szopka	Christmas Crib Or Crèche or Stajenka
Choinka or Drzewko	Christmas Tree
Prezent Pod Choinkę	Christmas Present
Jarmark or	Christmas Fair or Bazaar
Kiermasz Świąteczny	
Jaselka	Christmas Or Nativity Play
Pierwszy Dzień Świąt	Christmas Day
Zabawa Choinkowa	Christmas Party.
Wesołych Świąt!	Merry Christmas!

A few other words worth knowing:

Pasterka	Midnight Mass
Święty Mikołaj	Saint Nicholas
Kolędniczy	Carolers
Sylwestra	New Year's Eve
Bal Sylwestrowy	New Year's Eve Ball
Święto Trzech Króli	Feast Of The Three Kings, Epiphany.

A few delicacies of the holiday season: **śledzie**

(herring), **zupa grzybowa** (mushroom soup), **szczupak** (pike), **kapusta z grzybami** (sauerkraut & mushrooms), **kluski z makiem** (poppyseed noodles), **piernik** (gingerbread), **makowiec** (poppyseed roll), **gęś** (goose), **indyk** (turkey), **bigos** (meat, mushroom & sauerkraut ragoût).

Now let's use the above to describe our holiday activities:

- **Wigilię zawsze spędzam z najbliższą rodziną** — I always spend Christmas Eve with my closest family.
- **Z babcią przelamałem się oplatkiem w szpitalu.** — I broke and shared the Christmas wafer with granny in hospital.
- **Na Pasterce byłem z rodzicami, rodzeństwem i wujkiem Stasiem.** — I was at Midnight Mass with my parents, siblings and Uncle Staś.
- **Z rodziną i przyjaciółmi śpiewaliśmy kolędy przy choince.** — With family and friends we sang carols around the Christmas tree.
- **Pod choinkę Tomek dostał deskorolkę i smartfona.** — Tommy got a skateboard and Smartphone for Christmas.
- **Naszą ulubioną potrawą świąteczną jest staropolski bigos.** — Our favorite holiday dish is Old Polish bigos.
- **Na wielkim balu sylwestrowym świetnie bawiliśmy się do białego rana.** — At a grand New Year's Eve ball we had great fun till the crack of dawn.

WORDS OF WISDOM

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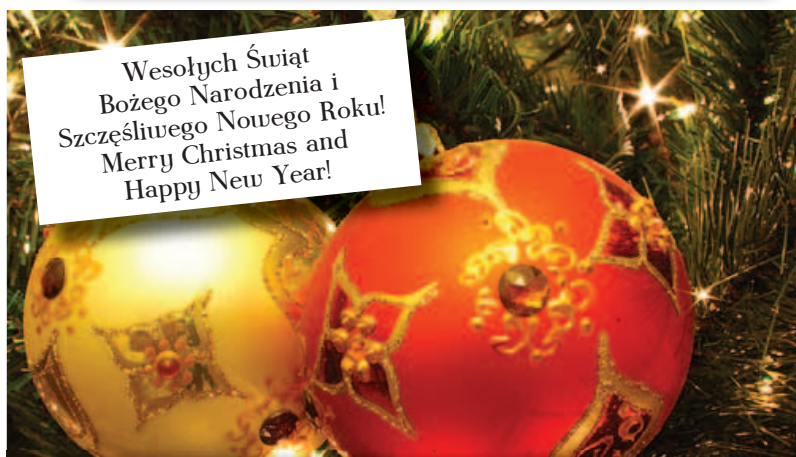
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Christmas Memories — Be sure to Include in Your Family History

How did your Polish grandparents celebrate Christmas? Here in America and in Poland?

This could be an important part of your family history. Celebrating holidays and special events gave the Polish people an overall rhythm to their lives during the year and most Polish immigrants tried to continue this in their new homes.

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

What are your memories?

Do you remember the Christmas tree at your grandparent's house? What were the decorations like? Were they homemade of paper and foil or did they splurge and buy the colorful glass ornaments?

My early memories are of a fir tree in a corner of the living room filled with an array of wooden and paper figures that were mixed in with glistening glass globes. Shiny foil garlands were wrapped around the tree and silver tinsel hung on the tree and this gave it a festive look. I believe that this was the Americanized version of the Christmas tree that my mother who was born here had developed. My grandmother told me that in her village in Poland her father had hung the tree from the ceiling and the family decorated it with walnuts wrapped in silver and gold foil, bright red apples, gingerbread in fancy shapes, and chains made of glossy colored paper. A manger was set up near the tree. She and her brothers and sisters had made many of the decorations but the manger and some of the foil decorations had been made by other generations and saved over the years.

My memories of Christmas Eve and Christmas day start with midnight Mass and afterwards being shuttled off to bed with a promise

that Santa would come only after I was asleep. Morning brought cheer with the opening of presents with my parents and grandparents and then a large breakfast. But again my grandmother told me of her memories Christmas in Poland. Her family began the celebration on Christmas Eve with a huge feast which began with the breaking of the Christmas wafer (oplatek). A piece of the oplatek was passed to each person at the table. After the pieces of the wafer were eaten by each at the table, the traditional dishes were served which included cheese, sauerkraut *pierogi*, fish, mushroom soup with noodles, herring, boiled potatoes, dumplings with plums and poppy seeds, stewed prunes with lemon peel and a fruit and poppy seed cake. After supper, the family gathered to sing carols and tell Christmas stories. The evening's festivities ended with the family blowing out the candles and then traveling to their nearby church to attend midnight Mass.

Are my grandmother's memories similar to your experience with your grandparents? Did your family gather on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day? What were the dishes that were served? What was the filling in your pierogi? Did you have a cucumber salad (*Mizeria*)? What was the soup — mushroom or beet? Were the potatoes mashed or boiled? My family had a ham as the main dish. Was ham on your grandmother's table or did she serve a fish recipe to keep to the traditional meatless Christmas Eve feast? What were the desserts?

These are the memories that will make your family history come alive. Capture them now while your memories are still sharp. Add the memories of your brothers, sisters and cousins to capture as many details as possible. Also remember to enjoy the spirit of Christmas today.

Wesołych świąt!

Stephen M. Szabados is a prominent genealogist, and the author of four books, "Finding Grandma's European Ancestors," "Find Your Family History," "Polish Genealogy," and "Memories of Dziadka."

POLISH CHEF

Christmas Cookie Classics

Recipes from the Polish Women's Alliance of America

PIERNICZKI

Gingerbread Cookies

1/2 cup honey
1 pinch of black pepper
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 tsp. allspice
1 cup sugar
4-5 cups flour
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. cloves
4 eggs
1 tsp. baking soda dissolved in water

Heat honey until it boils, then allow it to cool until lukewarm. In a large bowl, sift the flour with the spices. In a separate large bowl, beat the eggs with the sugar until thick. Add the soda to the eggs, then the honey, then the flour. Mix well.

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured board to 1/4 inch thickness. Cut cookies into Christmas shapes with cookie cutters. Bake them on parchment-covered cookie sheets in a 350 degree oven for about 10-15 minutes, or until just lightly browned. After cooling, The pierniki may be decorated with icing made of powdered sugar, water, and a drop or two of almond or vanilla extract. Or they can be covered

with a chocolate glaze.

To hang: Make a hole in the cookies with a plastic straw before baking, if you want to hang them on your Christmas tree. Loop a thin red ribbon through the hole before hanging. These cookies are delicious as well as pretty enough to add a special Polish touch to your tree.

Yield: 36 cookies

CHRUSCIKI

Angel's Wings Cookies

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
3 large egg yolks
3 tablespoons sour cream
1 tablespoon vodka or whiskey
Vegetable oil

2 and 2/3 cups powdered sugar
Place flour and sugar in medium bowl; stir to combine. Make well in center of flour mixture; add egg yolks, sour cream, and vodka. Stir with spoon until soft dough forms. Place dough on lightly floured surface; knead gently until dough is smooth. Form dough into 2 discs; wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, 30 minutes or overnight.

Working with 1 disc at a time, unwrap dough and place on lightly floured surface. Roll out dough with lightly floured rolling pin to 1/8-inch-thick (12 x 10-inch) rect-

angle. Cut dough lengthwise in half; cut each half into 12 strips. Make a 1-inch vertical slit down center of each strip. Insert one end of strip through cut to form twist; repeat with remaining strips.

Heat oil in large saucepan to 375 F. Place 6 strips at a time into hot oil. Fry about 1 minute or until golden brown, turning cookies once with slotted spoon. Drain on paper towels. Dust liberally with powdered sugar. Cookies are best when served immediately, but can be stored in airtight container 1 day.

ROGALIKI

Almond Crescent Cookies

1/2 pound (2 sticks) butter
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg yolk
1 teaspoon almond extract
1/4 cup ground blanched almonds
1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
Powdered sugar

Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl or stand mixer, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and almond extract, mixing well. Add almonds and flour, and blend thoroughly.

Using walnut-size pieces of dough, shape into a crescent with your hands and place on ungreased

baking sheets. Bake 20 minutes or until slightly brown on the edges. While still hot, roll in powdered sugar. Re-roll in powdered sugar when cool and store tightly covered.

Yield: 36 cookies

CIASTEczKA WANILJOWE

Polish Vanilla Cookies

7 ounces softened butter
1/2 cup sugar
vanilla bean, scraped of its seeds
3.5 ounces ground almonds
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 to 2 tablespoons milk, if necessary
1 tablespoon powdered sugar
mixed with 1 tablespoon vanilla sugar

Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar. Add scraped seeds from vanilla bean and almonds, and mix again. In a separate small bowl, whisk together flour and baking powder. Add it to the butter mixture and thoroughly combine. If dough is too dry, add 1 to 2 tablespoons milk.

On parchment-lined baking sheets, portion out small balls of dough. Roll in your hands and shape into small crescents. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until bottoms are golden. While cookies are still on

the baking pan, sprinkle with sugar mixture. Let cool completely. Store in a tightly covered container.

Yield: 60 cookies

KOLACZKI

1 (8-ounce) cream cheese, softened
12 ounces (3 sticks) butter, softened
3 cups all-purpose flour
2 (14-ounce) cans fillings of choice (apricot, prune, raspberry, etc.)
powdered sugar

Mix cream cheese and butter until light and fluffy. Add flour 1 cup at a time and mix well. Wrap dough in plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Roll out dough 1/4-inch on a surface that has been dusted with equal parts powdered and granulated sugars (not flour). Cut into 2-inch squares. Place 1/2 to 1 teaspoon filling on center of each square. Overlap opposite corners of dough to the center over filling. Bake for 15 minutes or when corners start to brown. Cool and dust with powdered sugar before serving. If not serving immediately, store cookies in a tightly covered container, or freeze, without the powdered sugar. Dust with powdered sugar just before serving.



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"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" Psalm 150:6

Sokolowski's University Inn Wins Vanguard Award

CLEVELAND — Sokolowski's University Inn was among four Cleveland culinary stars honored at the third annual Cleveland Culinary Awards Gala.

Sokolowski, a landmark restaurant, opened in 1923, is Cleveland's oldest family-run restaurant. "You can go to Sokolowski's and spend six dollars or 40, and still eat well," said Joe Crea, cleveland.com's food and dining critic. "Any trip through its cafeteria line is a remarkable adventure," he said.

Bernie Sokolowski spoke of his genuine respect for their parents, "no-nonsense people" who maintained a sense of humor and instilled values in their children, he said.

"We were raised above the restaurant," said his sister, Mary. "When we came home from school we went into the cafeteria line." In their home, there were three laws that all abided: Prayer, family and hard work.

That hard work has paid off. This year, in a story about notable Clevelanders' favorite dining spots, Ivan Schwarz of the Greater Cleveland Film Commission included Sokolowski's on his list of five favorite Cleveland restaurants, calling it an "institution."

"The personality is fantastic and inspiring, and the food is wonderful. (It) caters to the renaissance Cleveland is going through. It shows the old, from where we've come from, and the new, what we're capable of in the future."

Also honored were Chef Michael D. Symon, Farm-to-Table Pioneer Parker Bosley, and Paulius Nasvytis, known nationwide for his innovative cocktails.

Merry Christmas!




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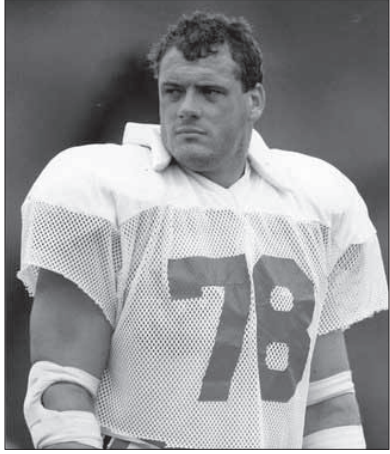
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SPORTS / Tom Tarapacki

Pair Could Enter Pro Football Hall of Fame



Kenn

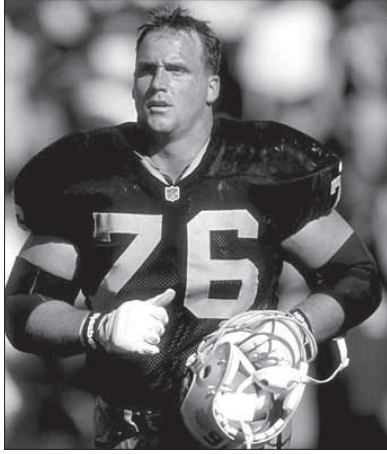
The annals of pro football are filled with the names of great Polish American offensive linemen, names like Alex Wojciechowicz, Ron Solt, Jerry Ostroski, Conrad Dobler, Mike Munchak, Bruce Kozerski, Jim Dombrowski, Bryan Bulaga and Frank Gatski among many others. Two recently retired Polish American offensive linemen, **Mike Kenn** and **Steve Wisniewski**, have been nominated for the Pro Football Hall of Fame and could be inducted next year.

Mike Kenn's real family name is Kuchowicz. He is a native of Evanston, Ill. and went to the University of Michigan before becoming a first round draft choice of the Atlanta Falcons (13th overall). He starred in the NFL for 17 seasons (1978-94), all with the Falcons, and holds the team record for most games started with 252. During his pro career he missed only nine games due to injury. The 6-7, 286 lb. tackle was a punishing blocker who was named to five consecutive pro bowls from 1980-84.

Steve Wisniewski, a Vermont native who grew up in Texas, played at Penn State before going to Oakland. The 6'4", 300 lb. guard played all of his 13 seasons with the Raiders, and missed only one game in the pros. Tough and aggressive, "Wiz" took pride in playing hard until the whistle blew. Some considered him a dirty player but he was never thrown out of a game. In addition to eight Pro Bowls, he was named to the prestigious NFL 1990's All-Decade team.

Both have been inducted into the National Polish American Sports Hall of Fame; Kenn in 2006 and Wisniewski in 2004.

GOOD GENES. Houston Texan tight end **C.J. Fiedorowicz** apparently inherited some good genes from his parents, both of whom were terrific athletes. It also helped



Wisniewski

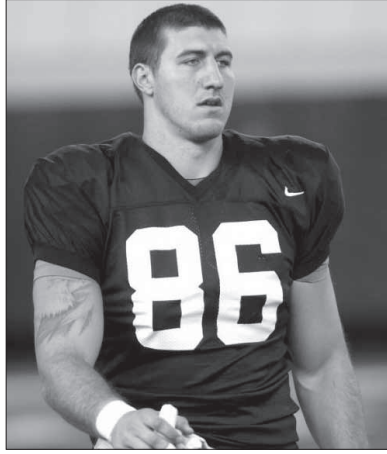
that his dad, Gary, introduced C.J. (that's Colton John) to the weight room when the youngster was in the 8th grade — and stood 6-5.

Fiedorowicz attended Johnsbury, Ill. High School, where he earned two letters as a sprinter on the track relay squad. He picked up two more letters as pitcher for the baseball team. In basketball he set a school record, scoring 1,400 points in four seasons. But football was his main sport. He joined the varsity as a freshman, and scored two touchdowns in his first game. He finished his high school career with 183 receptions for 3,121 yards, and 42 touchdowns. He earned first team all-conference honors for three straight seasons and was league Player of the Year as a senior. Fiedorowicz attended the University of Iowa from 2010 to 2013, and was drafted by Houston in the 3rd round in 2014. Now in his second season in the NFL, C.J.'s coaches are pleased with his progress as he has moved into a starting position.



Wiessenberg

POLISH JANE FONDA? Dubbed "The Jane Fonda of Poland" by the Polish magazine *Pani*, **Sylwia Wiessenberg** is spreading her message



Fiedorowicz

of fitness around the world.

Growing up in Poland in the 1980s, Wiessenberg was a competitive gymnast and a member of her school's track and dance teams. She left Poland at 17 to study abroad, and eventually moved to the US. She then worked in finance, but by the early 2000s decided to make a change. Living in New York City and the mother of two, she transformed her passion for fitness into what she branded as Tonique in 2008. Sylwia teaches class in New York City, and ships her DVDs around the world.

The program began following her first pregnancy. "My goal was to prove everyone wrong who had told me that once you have a child your body falls apart and loses its firmness and shape." She said designed a program that takes lunges and squats and builds creative variations around them. She also is a proponent of eating healthy, unprocessed, organic foods.

Her workout is intense. Jack Anderson recently wrote in the *Huffington Post*: "If the Spanish Inquisition had known about this technique of physical torture, they would have used it instead of the rack." Still, Sylwia is proof that it works. "She has the most fit body that I have ever seen in real life," he added.

PERKOSKI'S NOTEBOOK. Former Jaguar and Eagle safety **Chris Proinski** was signed by the Bears earlier this season ... **Barbara Orzechowska-Ryszal**, a Polish fencer who competed in the women's team foil event at the 1960 Summer Olympics, died at age 69 ... New England Patriots tight end **Rob Gronkowski** scored his 60th career touchdown, becoming the fastest tight end to 60 touchdowns in NFL history. It took Gronk, in his sixth pro season, just 70 games ... Denver head coach

Gary Kubiak recently got his 300th win as a player, assistant coach and head coach ... fullback **Henry Hynoski**, who was signed by the Giants as an undrafted free agent in 2011 and won a Super Bowl ring as a rookie, was released this season ... **William (Barclay) Berezowski**, who won the Grey Cup with CFL Hamilton Tiger Cats in 1953, died at 87 ... **Stefen Wisniewski** has become the starting center for Jacksonville ... kicker **Sebastian Janikowski** set the Raiders franchise record for games played when he reached the 241 game mark. Only five active NFL players have played in more games.

EYE ON THE BALL. Before he became an actor, **Peter Falk** enjoyed sports — even though his right eye was surgically removed at age three due to a tumor. For most of his life,



he wore an artificial eye. However, that didn't prevent him from becoming a star athlete at Ossining (N.Y.) HS, excelling in baseball and basketball.

In fact, he sometimes used the false eye to his advantage.

"I remember once in high school the umpire called me out at third base when I was sure I was safe." He once recalled. "I got so mad I took out my glass eye, handed it to him and said, 'Try this.' I got such a laugh you wouldn't believe."

Falk was known for playing Italian American roles, especially *Colombo*, one of TV's most memorable characters. In fact, Falk's ancestors on both sides came from Poland and Eastern Europe.

However, in 1995's comedy-drama *Roommates* Falk played Rocky Holczek, a cantankerous old Polish American baker living in Pittsburgh with his grandson. It's a good movie that's definitely worth renting.

Falk died in 2011 at age 83.

GONE FISHING. While many rock stars of the '60s and '70s turned to drugs and wild behavior when they weren't performing, **Cory Wells** of Three Dog Night did something a little different: he went fishing.

Cory was born **Emil Lewandowski** in Buffalo. His mother, Sophie Lewandowski, was a single mom. It was as a boy in Buffalo that he began riding his bike to various fishing spots in the area. Eventually he moved west, changed his name

and became a founding member of Three Dog Night, who had hits like "Joy to the World," "Shambala," and "Mama Told Me Not to Come." While on tour with the band, unlike many rock musicians who partied all night, Wells went to bed early. He then got up before dawn to go fishing. He never got involved in drugs or alcohol.

When the band broke up in 1975, Wells became more involved in fishing, appearing on the TV show *The American Sportsman* and participating in various charity fishing tournaments.

He also wrote about it for outdoor magazines. "I wrote everything under my own name, but most people didn't put the name together with Three Dog Night," he said. The band reunited in 1980, and Wells continued to fish while on tour around the world.

Wells was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in late September and died in October in his home in Dunkirk, N.Y. He was married for 51 years, and had two daughters and five grandchildren.

THEY SAID IT. "A long time ago I told myself I would never work at anything I didn't enjoy. Music and fishing happened to be the two things I really loved."

— *The late Cory Wells.*

❖ ❖ ❖

"People have been asking me if I'm playing the best football of my career. Maybe it is but I still hope I can get better. **I know I can get better.**"

— *Poland's Robert Lewandowski, the record-setting soccer player who has developed into the most feared striker in Europe.*

FIRST WOMAN POLICE CHIEF.

Poland is set to see its first female head of a regional police department, with Irene Doroszkiewicz nominated to become head of the Opole Police Inspectorate.

Doroszkiewicz was nominated by former President Bronisław Komorowski to head up the police in the southwest Poland province.

She is one of six officers to be promoted at this year's ceremony at the Belvedere Palace in Warsaw.



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TRAVELOGUE / Staś Kmieć

Poland's "Olympic" Stadium

Part XVII

As the bus enters the city limits of Poland's fourth largest city Wrocław, I see an impressive and massive site in the distance. Upon inquiry, Krzysiek and Piotr tell me it is the *Stadion Miejski* (Municipal Stadium), a new Sports Arena. It was built for the 2012 UEFA European Soccer Championship and ranks among the highest in soccer stadium categories. It has a capacity of 42,771 spectators, and all seating is covered. The winning architectural concept with its distinctive shape, was developed by JSK Architekci and chosen to be easily recognizable and associated with a dynamic city.

My *Mazowsze* friends began chiming in with anecdotes about something far more interesting to me — it was the city's *Stadion Olimpijski* (Olympic Stadium). This particular structure was built from 1926 to 1928 as the Silesian Arena (*Schlesierkampfbahn*), when the city of Wrocław was still part of Germany and called Breslau. As the centerpiece of a larger sports park complex; it was extended from 1935 to 1939 and renamed *Hermann-Göring-Stadion* under the Nazi authorities.

Despite its current Polish name, the arena has never been an Olympic Games site, though among many Poles it is said to have been a part of Germany's 1936 Sumer Olympics. That myth may have perpetuated because Richard Konwiarz achieved a bronze medal in the art competitions at the 1932 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles for his architectural design.

Heavily devastated in World War II during the three-month long Siege of Breslau, the stadium was rebuilt by the Polish municipal administration and named after General Karol Świerczewski. It was used by the Wrocław University School



of Physical Education in the 1970s, and was modernized with floodlights and undersoil heating.

City administration assumed ownership in 2006 and had the speedway racing track rebuilt. It is now used mostly for speedway racing, and serves as the home stadium of Giants Wrocław — an American football team based in Wrocław; they play in the Polish American Football League.

The stadium now has a capacity of 35,000 and was supposed to be one of the main pitches on *UEFA Euro 2012*. The newly constructed *Stadion Miejski* was used for that event instead. Passing the imposing stadium, my sights are set on the new Polish city I am about to discover.

Chopin Society of Chicago Hosts ACPC Convention

by Peter Obst

CHICAGO — The 67th convention of the American Council for Polish Culture (ACPC) was hosted by the Chopin Society of Chicago, with the theme *Polish Emigrant Composers and Musicians*.

Opening ceremonies began with the presentation of colors by the Polish Army Historical Association, who wore uniforms of the Polish Armed Forces from the inter-war period. Justine Izewski led in the singing of the Polish and American national anthems. She also sang Michał Ogiński's *Pożegnanie Ojczyzny* (Farewell to the Homeland) and Fryderyk Chopin's *Życzenie* (The Wish). After greetings by host Jarosław Golembowski and ACPC

CULTURAL TELEGRAM / Kasia Romanowska

Chopin Piano Competition Winner Recorded

Deutsche Grammophon will present the debut solo album from **Seong-Jin Cho**, winner of the **17th International Chopin Piano Competition**. Cho took the coveted first prize, among the most prestigious titles in the world of classical music. He was named winner October 20, 2015, following three weeks and three stages of competition in Warsaw. The recording, set for international release on 6 November, contains highlights from the 21-year-old South Korean pianist's recital rounds.

This live album marks the start of a long-term collaboration between DG and the Fryderyk Chopin Institute, created to promote the work of outstanding interpreters of Chopin's music to the widest possible audience.

The International Chopin Piano Competition was founded in Warsaw in 1927 and has been held every five years since 1955. It stands today as the world's premiere competition for classical pianists.

Seong-Jin Cho was born in Seoul, South Korea in 1994. He won the International Fryderyk Chopin Competition for Young Pianists in 2008 and took third prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 2011. Cho,

who lives in Paris, has already performed with leading orchestras and conductors, including the Mariinsky Orchestra and Valery Gergiev, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Myung-Whun Chung, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic and Yuri Temirkanov, and the Russian National Orchestra with Mikhail Pletnev.

STUHR DIRECTS ROZEWICZ. In the Polonia Theatre in Warsaw Jerzy Stuhr is directing *On all Fours (Naczworakach)*, a play by Tadeusz Rozewicz. Jerzy Stuhr directs the performance and will also play the main character, Lawrence.

The cast, among others, includes Dorota Stalińska and Wiesław Komasa. The premiere was Nov. 5.

The play is a Polish classic. The text, belonging to the theatrical canon and once played everywhere, has gained new content and timeliness.

"I was looking for art, through which I could tell the audience about my current state of mind. It was not easy," said Stuhr.

LODZ: THE DEAD CITY. "There is no need to deceive ourselves, the film in Lodz has died," said Bogusław Linda, the lead actor in *Powidoki (Afterscenery)* — the latest film

by Andrzej Wajda.

"Once there was a studio, and studios are created by people who are employed there: editors, sound, lighting engineers, extras and many others. Now, it's impossible to recreate that atmosphere. Lodz made a terrible mistake by closing the studio, and therefore lost its culture. Today, this town is dead, it's a city of bums."

Lodzians' reaction was immediate, because the statement was understood as a comment to the entire city. The people are outraged by the actor's words and started boycotting the movie.

WYSPIAŃSKI, WYCZÓLKOWSKI AND WITKACY. Pastel art masterpieces are on display in the **National Museum** in Warsaw. All 250 works presented at the exhibition come from the collection of the National Museum. Alongside the outstanding works of the big three pastel masters — Wyczółkowski, Wyspiański and Witkiewicz — at the exhibition can also be seen the work of other Polish and European artists.

The attraction of the exhibition is *The Wawel Treasury* by Leon Wyczółkowski from 1907, shown for the first time since the interwar period.



Dr. Jarosław Golembowski (Convention Chair), Mary Ellen Tyszka (ACPC President), Dr. Sławomir Dobrzański (Accompanist), Katarzyna Sądej (Vocalist), Dr. Wanda O'Brien-Trefil (Music Committee Chair) and Alicia Dutka (Music Committee Member).

elected in this session were: Robert Dutka, Raymond Glembocki, Jackie Kolowski, Cecilia Larkin, Peter Obst, Patricia Skurzynski, and Ted Więcek. Outgoing President Mary Ellen Tyszka was recognized for her strong leadership over the past two years.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE. Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki presented on the 2014 Boston session of the National Conference for the Social Studies (NCSS), which was the largest such conference ever. Helping the Glembockis and Debbie Majka at the booth were Dr. Andrzej Pronczuk and journalist Jason Franzen. They announced that the next NCSS session will take place in New Orleans, La., November 13-15, 2015. The Education Committee renewed its commitment to creating prizes for students addressing topics from Polish history at the annual National History Day (NHD) competition. In this year's finals there were 24 entries that featured Poland or individuals of Polish extraction. Unfortunately, none received prizes.

PULASKI OBSERVATION. The Savannah Casimir Pulaski Committee reported that the next observance of Pulaski's birthday will be on March 5, 2016 at the Pulaski

Monument, in Savannah, Ga. Polish Heritage Society of Philadelphia president Marie Hejnosz reported that the *Adam Styka Art Exhibit and Competition*, would again take place this year at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, Pa. Henrietta Nowakowski announced that a 5,000 dollar grant is available to conduct research on the Polish "strike" of 1619 at the Jamestown colony in Virginia.

AWARDS PRESENTED. The Convention ended with the Awards Banquet. Music was provided by Jarosław Golembowski, the Marcus Band, and singer Ewa Staniszevska. Honored with the ACPC Founders Award were Raymond and Cecilia Glembocki, and Camille Kapielski. The Cultural Award was presented to Dr. Paweł Checinski, a pianist and teacher of piano, for a lifetime dedicated to music, especially that of Fryderyk Chopin. The Distinguished Service Award recipient was Dr. Zbigniew Sobol for his long service as a physician and surgeon who supported many charitable programs that helped the people of Poland through aid to hospitals and institutions. The ACPC is also very pleased to associate with a very large contingent of members from its South Bend affiliate.

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

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

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BOOKS IN BRIEF/ Mary Lanham

Just in time for Christmas, and a Look Into Poland's Punk Communities

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS POLISH STYLE

by Lawrence G. Kozlowski
Self published, 2013, 30 pps.
525 Beatty Road
Monroeville, PA 15146

Just in time for Christmas, Polish artist, folklorist, and author, Lawrence G. Kozlowski has reissued his book *Celebrate Christmas Polish Style*. As he has with his other books, Kozlowski packs a lot of fun information into this small tome.

The book opens with the Advent season, before highlighting a number of feast day celebrations. Each saint highlighted includes a depiction of them, their story, the role the feast plays in Polish culture, and a recipe. This all builds up to a section on Wigilia that takes up almost half the book.

These 13 pages cover the history of the Wigilia, menus for seven- to twelve-course versions of the dinner, and over 40 recipes. The recipes are easy to understand and include caraway soup, poached fish Polish style, poppy seed roll, a number of pierogi and peppered vodka. The

great thing about the book is that it's spiral bound so it lays flat on the counter and has a plastic cover so it stays clean. After the Wigilia and Christmas section, Kozlowski covers the feasts up to Three Kings, following the earlier format.

The last section of the book is a true gem. Knowing that Christmas is the one time of the year when the whole family is likely to be around, Kozlowski has included a few genealogical pages that can be filled out. Besides the standard family tree, one page is devoted to special family traditions, while two more are set up to record family recipes. These are wonderful templates that can be easily photocopied and added to the book each year. Much to his credit, Lawrence devotes the last page to a bibliography and thank-yous.

With *Celebrate Christmas Polish Style* Kozlowski has simmered down the Polish traditions to a pure concentrate. It hits on all the highlights, religion, food, and family. This thin book is perfect both for the beginner who is interested in learning about their Polish traditions and



the seasoned expert who needs a quick reference guide. It's perfect for any library.

Celebrate Christmas Polish Style by Lawrence Kozlowski is available from Pysankiusa.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. Lawrence G. Kozlowski, the onetime director of the Alliance College's Kujawiaki, is now best known for as a folk arts demonstrator and as cultural commissioner for the Polish Falcons of America. With art degrees from the Polish Ministry of Culture in Lublin, Kielce, Krakow, and Rzeszow, he has received the honor of being recognized as a master folk craftsman in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Kozlowski's previous publications include *Celebrate Easter Polish Style*, *Easter Eggs Polish Style*, *Paper Cuttings Polish Style*, *Polish Ornaments Polish Style*, *Celebrate Christmas Slovak Style*, *Celebrate Easter Slovak Style*, and *Pin-Tip Eggs Slavic Style*. He currently writes the culture section in Sokol Polski.

TRANSNATIONAL PUNK COMMUNITIES IN POLAND

From Nihilism to Nothing Outside Punk
By Marta Marciniak
Lexington Books, 2015, 217 pps.

4501 Forbes Blvd., Suite 200
Lanham, MD 20706
(301) 459-3366

Transnational Punk Communities in Poland is a study about the punk subculture and how it developed. Marciniak primarily draws on interviews that she conducted in communities like northeast Ohio and Upper Silesia, Poland. It delves into the philosophy, music, and politics of punk culture as well as how the different generations relate to each other. But the greater focus is on how the subculture developed locally and internationally.

One interesting topic that the author examines is that of the economy of the subculture. Much of it is a DIY economy such as small independent record labels and DIY punk music festivals. One of these festivals is Punk Island. Punk Island is "organized annually in New York City in June by 'collective of DIY punks from NYC,' working with the support of a non-profit called Make Music New York..."

What makes this work different

from other ethnographies about the punk subculture is that the author has credibility within this group. Marciniak identifies as a punk, herself, so those who she interviews



are more apt to open up to her rather than an outsider. *Transnational Punk Communities in Poland* is an extremely detailed and thoroughly researched academic work complete with a bibliography, endnotes, and index.

Transnational Punk Communities in Poland: From Nihilism to Nothing Outside Punk by Marta

Marciniak is available from Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. Marta Marciniak, originally from Warsaw, has earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Warsaw and holds a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University at Buffalo. She currently lives in the United States with her husband and son.

From Books in Brief to you, *Wesołych Świąt* and have a Happy New Year!

POLONIA PLACES

GREGORY L. WITUL

Dr. Francis E. Fronczak Home

806 Fillmore Avenue
Buffalo, New York
Status: Threatened

For the last few months there has been a major effort underway in Buffalo, New York to save a house from the wrecking ball. Members of religious organizations, the preservation community, and greater Polonia have volunteered their time, money, and energy to rescue



A photo of the Fronczak Home from the East Side Buffalo Landmarks series from 1990.

the rundown building on Buffalo's Polish East Side. These groups and individuals have been working tirelessly to save this particular home because it was the former residence of Buffalo's greatest Polish American, Dr. Francis E. Fronczak.

Francis Eustace Fronczak was born in Buffalo's Polish East Side on the 20th of September 1874. While attending St. Stanislaus School, the teachers and faculty could see Francis was a bright child, and would go far. Once done with primary school, Fronczak continued his education, a rarity in Polonia. He enrolled at

Canisius College and would in time graduate with a medical degree, a law degree, and pass the New York State bar exam. Although proficient in law, Fronczak chose to focus on his medical career. This would turn out to be a fateful choice.

By 1905, Francis had become known in America's greater Polonia because of his work in the Pan-American Exposition and national Polish organizations. On April 27th of that year, a train from Canada rushed to Niagara Falls carrying a fearful Ignacy Paderewski. The pianist and composer had lost all feeling in his arms and believed his life to be over. When the future Prime Minister of Poland arrived in the States he called upon an acquaintance of his that he believed could heal him: Dr. Fronczak. Over the course of a week, Francis was able to heal his patient, and the episode made headlines across the country.



Fronczak: Hosted many dignitaries in his Fillmore Avenue home.

For the two men, a deep friendship was born.

Francis would do much more in his life, include working with General Jozef Haller and his Blue Army while serving as a colonel in the U.S. forces, act as a member of the



The home at 806 Fillmore as it originally appeared in 1897.

Polish National Committee in Paris, and become the City of Buffalo's Health Commissioner. In the home at 806 Fillmore, Mrs. Fronczak would cook Paderewski his favorite meal, beet soup and wiener schnitzel, Francis would sit and chat with Wladyslaw Reymont when he was in town, and Haller would reminisce about the Great War.

According to historian and "Polonia preservationist" Monica Rzepka, the home at 806 Fillmore was built in 1897 by Dr. Irving Potter. Potter lived at the address for 10 years before selling the residence to Fronczak. In 1941, the Fronczak family hired their friend, the notable Polish architect Joseph E. Fronczak, to expand the residence and a brick addition was attached to the front of the house. The home stayed in the family after Francis's death in 1953 being passed on to his daughter, Dr. Eugenia Fronczak and her husband Dr. Edward Bukowski. The Bukowskis raised their own family at the homestead, and after the passing of Edward, the building was sold and transformed into the St. Vladimir and Olga Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The church, a passion proj-



The Fronczak house in the summer of 2015.

ect of Rev. Alexis Zaryk lasted for eight years, and was his home parish when he was elevated to the post of Bishop. In 1984, the building was sold to newspaper publisher Ronald Fleming, who moved his *Fine Print News* and family into the house. After Fleming's death in 2010, the residence was abandoned. After sitting vacant for four years the city of Buffalo decided to demolish the

building, spurring the preservation effort that continues today.

If you want to help preserve Dr. Fronczak's legacy, please donate to the Fronczak Fund sponsored by the Polish Legacy Project. Checks and money order can be sent to the Polish Legacy Project, P.O. Box 411 Buffalo, NY 14240, just add Fronczak Fund in the note. Thank you for your support and *Wesołych Świąt!*

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OBITUARIES

Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, Engineered Martial Law in Poland

(AP) — Gen. Czeslaw Kiszczak, a Polish general and communist-era leader who played a key role in imposing martial law in 1981 but eight years later also took part in talks that allowed for a peaceful transition to democracy, died Nov. 5, 2015 in Warsaw. He was 90.

After Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the nation's top leader at the time, Kiszczak was the most important figure in the crackdown aimed at crushing the pro-democracy Solidarity movement. Martial law included the mass round-up and internment of Solidarity activists, curfews and other harsh measures.

Both men long argued that they acted to stave off a Soviet invasion. With Poland under Soviet control at the time, many believed that Moscow would invade to crush democratic change, as it did in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

"I saved the country from terrible troubles," Kiszczak said years later.

Kiszczak was also the last prime minister of commu-



nist Poland, a job he only held for less than three weeks in 1989 before the country's transition to a free-market democracy.

Jaruzelski died in 2014.

Both men remain deeply controversial. They are hated by many Poles for repressions that caused the suffering of many Poles, accused of acting in the interests of Moscow, but they have also won some grudging praise for stepping away from power without violence.

Still, many Poles find it infuriating that Jaruzelski and Kiszczak went to their deaths without facing punishment for martial law and other repressive measures, while some lower level police officers have faced convictions. More than 100 Poles were killed in the crackdown.

In the quarter century of democratic Poland, Kiszczak was tried in court multiple times for his role in imposing martial law, but he never served prison time.

One of the most serious accusations against him is connected to the massacre of nine miners who were shot by riot police in 1981 for protesting martial law. Another 25 were wounded.

At times he was acquitted, at other times found guilty, but he always managed to avoid punishment amid appeals, retrials and the expiration of the statute of limitations.

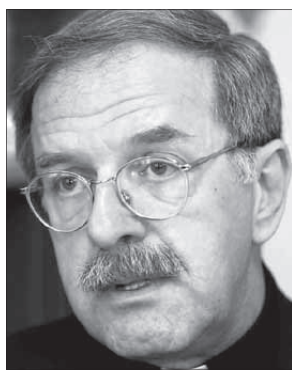
Rev. Msgr. Peter Zendzian, Served Numerous Parishes

RIDGEWOOD, N.Y. — The Rev. Msgr. Peter Zendzian, the leader of St. Matthias Roman Catholic Church since December 2013, died October 30, 2015 at the age of 63.

Zendzian was ordained in 1979 and served as the pastor at Brooklyn's Our Lady of Czestochowa-Saint Casimir and Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church in Maspeth before taking over for Bishop Edward Scharfenberger, whom Pope Francis had appointed to lead the Diocese of Albany, at St. Matthias.

Zendzian arrived at St. Matthias in December 2013, succeeding Bishop Edward Scharfenberger, whom Pope Francis had appointed to lead the Diocese of Albany.

Although he led the faithful of St. Matthias for nearly two years, Zendzian remained close to his native



Maspeth, where he offered prayers during the neighborhood's annual memorial vigil for the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. He was also coordinator of the Polish Apostolate, an organization serving Polish Catholics.

"Msgr. Peter was a wonderful servant of Jesus and a faithful friend to St. Matthias School. His love of its students was evident in his words and actions," St. Matthias School Principal Barbara Wehnes wrote in a message posted on the school website. "Though we only had 1 1/2 years to share his life, we will always hold him in our hearts. We pray for the repose of his soul and ask him to continue to intercede for us as he rests among the company of the angels and saints."

In addition to serving as pastor at Holy Cross and St. Matthias, he was for a time the pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa-St. Casimir Church in Brooklyn. He also served as parochial vicar at St. Margaret Church in Middle Village; St. Rose of Lima Church in Rockaway; St. Francis of Assisi Church in Brooklyn; St. Francis de Sales Church in Belle Harbor; and St. Joseph Church in Long Island City.

Margaret M. Machay, Owner of Polonia Banquets

CHICAGO — Margaret M. Machay (nee Jagielski), the long-time owner and operator of Polonia Banquets, died Oct. 24, 2015.

In 1964, Marge and her late husband Chuck established the Polonia Ballroom & Grove that went on to become a Chicago landmark. To accommodate their growing business in the 1980s, they initiated a major facility renovation and changed its name to the present Polonia Banquets.

The Machays unselfishly leveraged their establishment to promote polka music in addition to their catering services. For fifty years they hosted events with top polka entertainment that drew crowds from all over the United States and Canada. They showcased weekend-long picnics, festivals, and dances to support the International Polka Association

(IPA), and hosted the nationally known Bel-Aire Polka Days, produced by the late Eddie Blazonczyk.

The family business at 4604 S. Archer Ave. in Chicago continues to be a hub for polka entertainment and events for the community.

The Machay family has also expanded their business with their famous Polonia Catering to a second location in suburban Chicago.

"After a half century, it's quite possible that Polonia Banquets is the longest-running polka establishment under the same management

in the United States," said the IPA News.

In addition to managing her business, Marge found time to serve on the IPA executive board as treasurer and director from Illinois for many years. She also served as IPA Festival & Convention ad book chairperson for several years. When the IPA building was sold, Marge came forward and provided space at Polonia Banquets to house and display the precious polka artifacts that make up today's IPA Polka Hall of Fame Museum.

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Stanley Skawinski, Columnist, Bandleader

SARASOTA, Fla. — Stanley "Stan" Skawinski, 76, a musician and leader for over 30 years of the Stan Skawinski Orchestra, and a columnist of the *Post Eagle* for over 50 years, died Nov. 3, 2015. Born in Garfield, N.J. he moved to Sarasota, Fla. from Wayne, N.J.

Skawinski was in insurance sales and attended Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church. He was a dedicated sports fan and loved attending his grandson's baseball games and school events. Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society.

TOLEDO POLONIA / Margaret Zotkiewicz-Dramczyk

2015 — A Retrospective

As I look back on the year, I am thoughtful of the many Toledo Polonia events in which I was able to participate. I've talked about most of them in previous columns, with a brief re-cap in this final column of 2015:

The **Toledo Area Polka Society** successfully transitioned to paring down monthly dances and adding special events designed to help bolster the club and attract new polka fans. How much fun it was to travel with new friends and old to the Ray Jay Testimonial held in early May in Greensburg, PA. After that, it was on to the final weeks of planning and anticipation for the first Polish Summer Picnic, where expectations were happily exceeded and as the saying goes, "a good time was had by all."

The **International Music Association** of Toledo had a full schedule of dances with many well-known bands coming to town entertain on Sunday afternoons.

The **Polish American Concert Band** held several concerts around the community throughout the year, including the **LaGrange Street Polish Festival**, where their presence has been a constant for many years and the Fall Winter Concert at Woodward High School in North Toledo held Thanksgiving Weekend. With the untimely passing of conductor **Randy Bialecki** earlier this year, the band continues to make its own transitions as 2016 arrives.

So it was with the music organizations that strive to keep Polish heritage alive in Toledo. To recap the achievements of several other Pol-Am institutions in Toledo:

New events at **St. Hyacinth Parish** on Parkside Boulevard on the near south side of town, such as the

Polka Picnic in August, now in its third year, and the upcoming New Year's Eve dance in the renovated church hall;

St. Adalbert-St. Hedwig, merged parishes on LaGrange Street, held an October heritage event where guests did not pay to enter but instead, donated. The event was catered by Zavotski Custom Meat & Deli of West Toledo, with musical entertainment provided by **Randy Krajewski & Badinov**. They are holding a similar event, Wigilia, December 12th, celebrating the well-known Christmas tradition;

The digitization of a diary written by a Polish woman who managed to survive the horrors of World War II and settle in West Toledo after years of struggle;

The formation of the **Polish Cultural Center Committee** from among the leadership of local Polish organizations, with the goal of creating a multi-purpose cultural center;

The **Ohio Theatre** on LaGrange Street, reviving the concept of innovative and unique events in an intimate venue;

Young talent on the radio show scene, namely cousins Daniel Earl and Benjamin Lynn, who started on the University of Toledo radio station with a nifty two hour segment called **Golabki**, which recently moved to Polish New Castle Radio. These guys are carrying polkas into the next generation and deserve applause for all of their efforts to keep polka music alive.

I'm sure I've left out other organizations and events worthy of a mention, but as I look forward to the New Year, I also look forward to chronicling the story of Toledo Polonia in 2016.

Happy Holidays!

CHANGING TIMES

Hamtramck Elects Muslim-Majority Council

HAMTRAMCK, Mich. — This historically Polish-Catholic enclave of Detroit, which rose to national prominence more than a decade ago when its city council gave permission to a mosque to broadcast its call to prayer from speakers on its roof, has elected a Muslim-majority city council, believed to be the first in the nation. On Nov. 3, the city elected six city council members, four of Muslim faith.

Hamtramck, with a population of about 22,000 and under the judicious leadership of Mayor Karen

Majewski, was originally settled by Germans, but Polish-Catholic immigrants flooded into the area when the Dodge Brothers plant opened in 1914. At that time, Irish and German Catholics dominated the Detroit political scene, so Poles gravitated to Hamtramck.

The Muslim population in Hamtramck has grown steadily, said University of Michigan-Dearborn associate professor Sally Howell, who has written a book on Michigan and U.S. Muslims. Dearborn has many Arab-American immigrants, but Hamtramck likely became the first city to have a Muslim-majority population in 2013. She estimates that about 50 percent of the city is made up of Muslims, and the city has at least seven mosques, more mosques per capita than anywhere else in the country.

"The growth is taking place in these Muslim communities, and they are transforming the city scape," Howell said. "It's become much more visible in the last 15 years."

RADIATING. After more than 100 years, much of Marie Curie's possessions — her papers, her furniture, even her cookbooks — are still radioactive. Those who wish to open the lead-lined boxes containing her manuscripts must do so in protective clothing, and only after signing a waiver of liability.

— *Christian Science Monitor*



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Polka MAGAZINE

POLISH AMERICAN JOURNAL

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION AND CONTINUANCE OF POLISH AMERICAN MUSIC

Flavor Master

by Gary E. McKee

“The next song goes out to Benjie and Kathy Bronikowski: ‘The Chappell Hill Special’.”

This dedication is a regular at many polka dances, however few dancers understand the significance of the song. The song gives a nod to the town of Chappell Hill, one of the approximately dozen Polish settlements in Texas, located between Brenham and Hempstead, Texas.

In the mid-1800s Polish immigrants began to arrive in Texas. The primary areas of settlement were Panna Maria (southeast of San Antonio), Brenham, Bremond, and Chappell Hill to name a few. They brought their Catholic religion, culture, and music to the new world. Their Polish music, which is string-instrument based, has been handed down orally from generation to generation.

The original music typically consisted of a fiddle, a bowed bass, and an occasional clarinet. As time went by guitars, drums, and accordions were added. Brass horns were never fully accepted into Polish music as the popular feeling was that it Czechized the music. This isn't a negative comment on Czech music, it's just that horns were not popular in the old country and they were protecting their roots.

The Polish *oberek* is a traditional dance that can only be described as a real fast waltz with a lot of foot-stepping in a highly spirited fashion.

REGIONAL FLAVORS. As with all music there are regional interpretations influenced by geography and politics both in the old country and new world. There are basically two flavors of Polish music in Texas. One is the Chappell Hill type, which infuses a rhythmic sound into the mix. The other is the Bremond style, which reflects the music that would be found in the villages of central and southern Poland.

A master of both flavors, Brian



PHOTO: GARY E. MCKEE

Marshall at this year's Bremond Polish Days. He is a master of several types of Polish folk music still popular in Texas today. Marshall has performed all over the United States.

Marshall's fiddle whips up a dance crowd with its distinct sound. What is constant in Polish music is the presence of a fiddle (or two or three) in Polish polkas. Marshall commented, “All Poles play a fiddle, but some shouldn't.”

Tradition dictated that a fiddler was hired for entertainment at functions and it was up to the fiddler to provide accompaniment.

Marshall's father was a guitar player in a band in the 1950s and '60s that played mostly Country & Western music, but would bust into Polish music when the crowd was right.

His grandfather, Ed Marshall, was a fiddler in the 1940s and '50s, but was equally well known for his stage presence as a *druszba* (emcee) at Polish weddings and public events.

IT'S A FAMILY TRADITION. In the tradition of a family band, Marshall's two teenaged sons, Jakub and Michal, have been performing with their father for years on clarinet

and fiddle. At the Polish Festival in Bremond (June 26-27, 2015), Marshall's cousin, Ronnie Kasowski played guitar, and his son Jake, was thumping the bass fiddle. On drums was Chuck Bolin, who is married to a cousin, so it was truly a family band. Thank you Brian Marszalek (Marshall) for posting and sharing information on your heritage.

Marshall has performed all over the United States, including the Lincoln Center in New York, National Folk Festivals in Maine, and Massachusetts, the Festival of Americana fiddle tunes in Washington, to name a just a few. He is now signed with Arhoolie Records, a music label that specializes in American masters of roots music.

Marshall conducted a workshop and performed Polish fiddle music at the 2nd Annual Festival of Texas Fiddling on November 7. This festival was an opportunity to see multiple styles of music performed on the same instrument.

— Texas Polka News

Polkamotion 2015 Deemed a Success

Plans Announced for 2016's Activities

REHOBOTH, Del. — Polkamotion by the Ocean, the five-day polka festival held every year in Rehoboth Beach, was another success in 2015. Large, enthusiastic crowds filled the Rehoboth Beach Convention Center to listen and dance to polka bands that included: Polka Family, The Knewz, Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push, the Eddie Forman Orchestra, The Boys, Polka Country Musicians, The Dynasonics, Old School, Crabtown Sound, and The Variety Tones.

Throughout the fest, hungry patrons consumed over 2,000 pierogi, 120 pounds of kielbasa, hundreds of gołąbki, and other homemade delicacies.

The annual Polkamotion Open Golf Tournament coordinated by “Jolly Rich” Anton was won by the John & Lynn Cieplik/Bob Frydryk & Sue Czech team from Massachusetts. Spectacular weather blessed the golfers, beachgoers, boardwalkers, and shoppers all week. Many thanks to the festival volunteers and all the fans who made Polkamotion 2015 another memorable event.

WHAT ABOUT 2016? Despite the fact that construction at the Rehoboth Beach City Hall/Convention Center will prevent Polkamotion from taking place in the conven-

tion hall next September, arrangements have been made to conduct polka dances at the nearby American Legion Post 17 Pavilion, 113 American Legion Rd., Lewes, Del. So, mark your calendars as follows:

on Thursday, September 15, 2016, Polka Family will perform from 6:00-10:00 p.m.. The Eddie Forman Orchestra with a special Charm City Sound Reunion show will be featured on Fri., Sept. 16 from 6:00 - 10:00 p.m. The Polka Country Musicians will wrap things up at the pavilion from 6:00-10:00 p.m. on Sat., Sept. 17.

Even though the pavilion is only seven miles from Rehoboth Beach, promoters are looking into running a shuttle bus back and forth for folks staying in Rehoboth who prefer not to drive to the dances.

After each dance, polka DJ parties are being planned at some of the fun Rehoboth Beach bars for the polka night owls. And, the annual Polkamotion Open Golf Tournament will be conducted as usual on Wed., Sept. 14, 2016. Call Mike Matousek at (202) 246-7918 for more information.

To keep up with the details as they unfold, visit www.polkamotion.com and www.rbpolka.com. In 2017, the construction will be complete so Polkamotion will be back at the Convention Center as usual.

Three More Stations to Carry Sturr Show

FLORIDA, N.Y. — Three new radio stations have just signed to air the syndicated Jimmy Sturr radio program.

WABH, located in Bath, N.Y., a 10,000 watt station is airing the show on Sunday at 10:00 a.m.; WEEU radio in Reading, Pa. broadcasts the program at noon on Sundays; and WCVT in Center Valley, Pa. is airing the program at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays.

Several months ago, CWTAP-TV, which is associated with Service Electric TV, started broadcasting the one-hour syndicated show.

The Jimmy Sturr radio program is now heard on 28 stations across the country, plus Saturday at 6:00 p.m. on channel 147, Sirius XM radio. This program is also repeated on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m., Eastern Standard Time.

Jim “Chainsaw” Kucharski is Back

CHICAGO — Jim Kucharski is back on the radio with his “Chainsaw's Polka Madhouse” radio program. He will be airing two shows on Sunday afternoons, from 3:00-4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on WHRU 101.5FM in Huntley, Ill., streaming online at www.huntleyradio.com.

From 4:00-5:00 p.m. on Sundays, EST, he will be broadcasting live over WERG 90.5FM in Erie, PA. streaming online at www.wergfm.com. Sunday afternoons from 4:00-5:00 p.m. Eastern Time live over WERG 90.5FM in Erie, Pa., streaming online at www.wergfm.com.

Visit his website, www.polkamadhouse.com, for more information, requests and dedications: cpmshow@aol.com

HOME ON LAGRANGE / Randy Krajewski

Gift of Life Considering Polka as Promotional Song

TOLEDO — Greetings from north Toledo's Polish village, also known as “Lagranga.” Named after Lagrange Street, it is the main thoroughfare which bisects the old neighborhood, and was one of two Polish settlements in Toledo, Ohio. I have lived here my entire life, and I currently reside in the home in which I was raised in. Now, I am raising two daughters and attempting to carry on Polish music traditions as one of the last groups performing in this town. My band, Badinov, formed about nine years ago, and is actively engaged in the Ohio/Michigan area. Comprised of veteran players from bands such as Crusade, TPM, and a Touch of Brass, these guys can definitely play.

As for me, I started accordion lessons when I was six. I was part of a group that head Friday night “band practices” at Joseph's Accordion School on Lagrange Street. Imagine 30 beginner accordionists in the same room! My mom, of course, was my biggest fan. I survived those days, and continued squeezing until I eventually started a polka band. Some may refer to this as an incurable illness; some, a vocation; and yet some just walk the other

way while chuckling and shaking their heads. Whatever your take on it, by age 13 I was an accordion student of the Polish Kid with a New Brass LP on my turntable, and Eddie B. in my bloodstream.

A few years have elapsed since Badinov's debut recording “Trust Me,” and the boys are back at it right now. A new, full-length project is planned for an early 2016 release. It will contain their signature mix of polka styles with selections spanning Chicago, Eastern, and Honky genres, as well as original music penned by Andrew Pawlak and yours truly. I enjoy recording and presenting music that is “outside the box.” I wrote edgy, crossover music during my Crusade days, and I want Badinov to continue to give people a glimpse of where I think polka music could go if we push the boundaries.

The band is recording at Smoochie's Cavern Studios in Dearborn, Mich. A bonus, non-polka original track will also be included, and will highlight the group's instrumental versatility and pop vocal capabilities.

THE GIFT OF LIFE. Those in attendance at

last year's **Lisa Biskup Memorial Benefit** heard a set performed by a hand-picked group called “Accordions a Go-Go.” That evening, the band performed a song I wrote “The Gift of Life,” which was written to honor Lisa's memory. Ron Biskup — Lisa's dad, and the driving force behind the annual benefit— recently informed me that Lisa's University of Michigan-based foundation is interested in using “The Gift of Life” as an advertising tool to promote organ and tissue donation. This is great news, both for myself and the polka community. I am very gratified and looking forward to relaying more information about this as talks progress.

FIRST IS SOME TIME. For those of you who want to ring in the New Year polka style, Badinov will perform at **St. Hyacinth** parish in Toledo. The city has not had a polka New Year's party in a number of years, and Badinov is happy to be a part of the festivities at the same parish that brought back its summer festival after a lengthy hiatus. The setting will be parish's beautiful, newly refurbished school hall. The price is \$25 per person with

beer and set-ups provided, and catering by Malczewski. Join us for what is certain to be a fabulous evening.

A TIP OF THE HAT. Kudos to **James Mackiewicz, Sr.**, director emeritus, and all members of the **Polish American Concert Band (PACB)** on the success of its annual Fall/Winter concert. This year was their 125th anniversary celebration as a performing ensemble in Toledo. The new recital hall at Woodward high school was the setting on Sun., Nov. 29 for a great afternoon of holiday favorites, as well as traditional Polish music. The three Polish tenors — **Jimmy Rutkowski, Eric Hite, and Robert McMahon** — were the featured act, and I reprised my role of 20 some years as pre-concert, sing-along entertainment. Again, congratulations and many more to Toledo's own PACB.

ON THE JAMMER. Remember to tune in to the **Sons of Lagrange** every Monday at 7:00 p.m. on the Polka Jammer network.

All the best for a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2016.

POLKA CALENDAR / John Ziobrowski

To list your event, please send date, band, location, times, and contact number to johnzz@cox.net.

DECEMBER 1

- Eddie Forman. Aqua Turf. Plantsville Ct. 10:45-3:30. (860) 621-9335

DECEMBER 4

- John Stevens/Alex Meixner. Best Western. Matamoras Pa. 6:30-? (570) 660-7859
- Matt Urban VFW, Lancaster NY. Polka Variety Club Christmas Party. 5-11. (716) 681-2797

DECEMBER 5

- Dennis Polisky. PNI/Quovadis Club. Worcester Ma. 5-9. (508) 361-2860
- The Continentals. Firehall. Emigsville Pa. 7-11. (717) 292-3723
- John Stevens. Polish Community Center. Binghamton NY. 6-10. (607) 729-0901
- Jimmy Sturr. Paramount Theater. Middletown NY. Show 3PM. (845) 346-4195
- Chris & Ronnie Polka Band. Polish Club. Port Jefferson NY. (631) 473-9807

DECEMBER 6

- Dennis Polisky. PACC. Lyndhurst NJ. 2-6. (201) 803-0909
- Joe Stanky Cadets. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-9104
- Eddie Forman. German Club. Pawtucket RI. 2-6. (401) 569-6427
- Ray Jay Carousels. Slovenian Hall. Yukon Pa. 3-7. (724) 722-9700
- Henny Versa J's. Roosevelt Hall. Norvelt Pa. 3-7. (724) 423-8558
- John Stevens. Freeland Center. Freeland Pa. 2-6. (570) 636-0400
- Mellotone Band. Pulaski Club. Daytona Beach Fl. (386) 258-7059
- Jimmy Sturr. State Theater. Easton Pa. show 8PM. (800) 999-7828

DECEMBER 12

- The Special Delivery Band. Buffalo Polkas Boosters Christmas Party. Polish Falcons. Depew NY. 8-11. Reservations: (716) 771-1076
- The Continentals. Fidelitas Club. Baltimore Md. 1-5. (410) 256-4178
- The Continentals. Saengerbund Club. Newark De. 7:30-11:30 (302) 366-9454
- Dennis Polisky/Eddie Forman. Ukrainian Am. Club. Cohoes NY. (518) 233-9265
- Mon Valley Push. Slovenian Hall. Yukon Pa. 5-11. (724) 722-9700

DECEMBER 13

- The Special Delivery Band. Clinton Bar & Grill. West Seneca NY. 4:30-7:30. (716) 681-2400
- Dennis Polisky. St. Joseph Polish Club. Colchester Ct. 2-6. (860) 537-2550
- Eddie Derwin. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 722-9700
- Golden Tones. Sacred Heart Parish Center. Cornwall Pa. 3-7. (717) 273-1574
- Rich Bobinski Orch. Polish Community Ctr. Albany NY. 3-7. (518) 283-0129

- Eddie Belinsky. Pulaski Club. Daytona Beach Fl. 2-5. (386) 258-7059
- Chris & Ronnie Polka Band. Polish Club. Riverhead NY. (631) 727-9200

DECEMBER 17

- The Knewz. Potts Banquet Hall. Cheektowaga NY. 7-10:30. (716) 826-6575. Free TV taping

DECEMBER 19

- New Direction Band. Broadway Market. Buffalo NY. 12-3. (716) 893-0705
- New Direction Band. Potts Banquet Hall. Cheektowaga NY. 7-11. (716) 826-6575

DECEMBER 20

- Brad Turk. Pulaski Club. Daytona Beach Fl. 2-5. (386) 258-7059

DECEMBER 21

- The Special Delivery Band. Polish Christmas Party. Nite Cappe. Lackawanna NY. 7-10. (716) 825-9488

DECEMBER 22

- Fritz's Polka Band. Finger Lakes Racetrack. Farmington NY. 11-2. (585) 924-3232

DECEMBER 23

- Walt Groller. Holy Family Club. Nazareth Pa. 2-6. (610) 759-4728

DECEMBER 27

- The Swingmasters. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504
- Trel Tones. Roosevelt t hall. Norvelt Pa. 2-6. (724) 423-8558

DECEMBER 31

- Walt Groller. Liederkrantz Club. Reading Pa. 9-1. (610) 373-3982
- The Special Delivery Band/Polka Country Musicians. Millennium Hotel. Cheektowaga NY. (716) 681-2400
- John Gora. Polish Hall. Burlington Ontario. (905) 639-3236
- Bob Turcola. Pulaski Club. Daytona Beach Fl. Evening. (386) 258-7059
- TKO. K of C. Perry Hall. Md. 8:30-? (410) 529-1582

JANUARY 1, 2016

- Dennis Polisky/Eddie Forman. PACC. Ludlow. Ma. 2-6. (413) 567-1961

JANUARY 3

- John Stevens. VFW. Dupont Pa. 2-6. (570) 654-5504

JANUARY 16

- John Stevens. Pulaski Club. Holiday Fla. 5-9. (727) 934-0900
- The Special Delivery Band. St. John the Baptist. Alden NY. Polka Mass, followed by dance. See ad on page 28. (716) 937-6959
- John Gora. White Eagle Banquet Center. Hamilton On. (905) 545-0799

JANUARY 17

- Jimmy Sturr. Cracovia Manor. Wallington NJ. 2-6. (973) 473-8527

JANUARY 19

- John Stevens. St. Marks Evangelist Hall. Summerfield Fla. 6-10. (352) 347-9317



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BUFFALO, N.Y. — What do Christmas, Catholic Charities, and Tom Goldyn have in common? The answer: Polkas, of course!

This year, Special Delivery's darling drummer and vocalist is turning the big 6-0, and the band invites everyone to come celebrate the milestone.

But Tom does not want any gifts. Instead, he asks you bring a non-perishable food item, which the band will then deliver to Catholic Charities for its Food Pantry.

It all takes place December 13, at the Clinton Bar & Grill, 2460 Clinton St. (near Harlem), Cheektowaga from 4:30-7:30 p.m.

As usual, no cover charge, drink specials, great food, and the company of polka music's upper crust, all peppered with the zippy music and pithy repartee.

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DANCE TIME / Jen Pijanowski

An Exciting Time to be a Polka Fan



Angelo Ciatello and Marty Biniasz at the *Polka Buzz* recording at Potts' Banquets.



Josephine and Edward Kurcz will be seen dancing on WBBZ.



In the Halloween spirit — Tom and Karen Bijak.



Gene and Alberta Blaszczyk enjoyed the music of Ed Guca & the Polish Canadians.

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The countdown is already on until Dyngus Day and this anticipation gave us reason to celebrate. Two **Halfway to Dyngus Day** parties were held within a half a mile radius in Cheektowaga.

New Direction hosted an old time polka party at Ray's Lounge in Kaisertown. Ray's is a classic Buffalo tavern and super club that immediately forces you to reminisce of years past. The mere \$5.00 admission was a steal for an evening of polka music spotlighting this forgotten gem. My husband and I grabbed a cocktail and a bite to eat for under \$15.00. Delicious Polish food, hospitality, and a family legacy make Ray's Lounge a staple in the Polish community. It is always nice to attend an event there as it is a blatant reminder to relax and enjoy life.

Next I headed up the street to Polish Villa II, where they were hosting its annual halfway event. The **Piatkowski Brothers** took the stage driving a steady beat for dancers and spectators alike. Al and Rob were joined by Mark Trzepak, Matt Lewandowski, and Al's fifteen-year-old son Zach for an all-star band. Playing favorite polkas and highlighting their musical genius made for a magnificent evening celebrating in the Dyngus Capital of the United States. Polish Villa II proudly hosts the longest Dyngus Day celebration each year starting the morning off with Bloody Marys and music at 10:00 a.m. You can be sure that the Kutas family is already in its planning stages to ensure another fabulous Dyngus Day celebration in 2016. The countdown continues as we are now less than six months away.

WELCOME BACK. Anchor Inn in the heart of Cheektowaga continues to welcome polka fans to enjoy **Phocus** for a free event on the third Sunday of each month. This small corner bar draws a crowd for the polka band and constantly ensures an enjoyable evening before returning back to your weekly schedule on Monday morning. Recently **Phocus**

showcased a new sound introducing **Ricky "Krew" Krupski** filling in with band for a few jobs. With the addition of Ricky's talent on sax, clarinet and his soulful vocals, it gave a new spark to this already capable group of musicians. The mellowing of Jimmy Nowaczewski's trumpet skills with Ricky's saxophone offered a unique mix that produced a new depth to their unique sound. Musically it seemed that Jimmy and Ricky had been playing together for years. Quickly playing to each other's strengths exhibited what kind of music can come when playing from the heart. Only time will tell if we will be lucky enough to hear this duo appear together again.

SCARY DOINGS. **New Direction** along with **Ed Guca & the Polish Canadians** hosted a Halloween polka party at Potts Banquet Hall. Attendees were encouraged to dress in costume and most of the audience came decked out in masquerade. Pirates, witches, Indians and even a mouse trapped in a mousetrap were some of the costumes on display. I am grateful that I didn't have the job of judging the contest where winners in five categories were awarded prizes for their originality. The crowded hall was decked out in festive decorations for this Halloween spooktacular event. **New Direction** dressed as "Men in Black" delivered long time favorites for their fans who were thrilled to be dancing to their steady beat.

This veteran polka band is always opening the door to new venues for polka music. They will once again be returning to the northtowns at Polish Nook in Niagara Falls. Check out their website www.thenewdirectionband.com or the polka calendar for their upcoming dates.

Alternating with Canada's own Eddie Guca provided nonstop entertainment and dancing. An impeccable musician, performer and gentleman, it is always a joy to get a chance to see Ed and his band. Their commitment to professionalism and their love for polkas

shows through every time they are on stage. A meshing of their hits mixed with some long time polka favorites made staying off the dance floor impossible. Given such gifted performers and vocalists, the \$10 admission was a bargain for that caliber of entertainment. The kooky Halloween fun left everyone feeling like a kid again after this enjoyable evening.

WHAT'S THE BUZZ? Local Buffalo hometown TV station WBBZ has put polkas at the forefront of their programming by introducing a new show called **Polka Buzz**. This half-hour weekly program will showcase local bands and the community of fans who enjoy dancing and listening to their music. The first few shows have broadcast and while the station is still working out the bugs, it is exciting to have our local bands presented this new opportunity. The first two live tapings were held in North Tonawanda at Gratwick Banquet Hall. The beautiful hall served as an exquisite backdrop for the television show. The location however, was not the most convenient for the majority of polka followers.

Phocus was the first band highlighted on *Polka Buzz* and it was one of the top watched shows at that time slot in Western New York.

The show is the brainchild of Angelo Ciatello, who has been a long time polka fan and supporter. The next band highlighted on the show was **New Direction**. Their honky style displayed a completely different type of polka music from **Phocus** and that contrast kept the show fresh and exciting. Several of the first few episodes set up exactly why the station decided to introduce a new polka broadcast. Air time was also spent interviewing people and businesses who are in the forefront of the polka community here in Western New York.

The third band to tape was **Special Delivery**, and the venue was moved to the more well-known Potts Banquet Hall. Danny Potts and his staff worked hard to decorate the hall in red in white and

guarantee it was event-ready. White seat covers and centerpieces completed the elegantly decorated hall for the evening's recording of three shows. The change in venue sure helped the crowd with the hall being filled to capacity. Special Delivery definitely played their hearts out, getting barely any breaks during the three-hour taping. They continuously entertained the crowd, keeping the music upbeat and the floor filled with dancers. Fans turned out to get their five minutes of fame dancing the evening away. Even the non-dancing crowd (like me) got a chance to join the evening's host **Marty Biniasz** on the floor to cheer for *Polka Buzz* as the show broke for commercials.

It is an exciting time to be a polka fan in Buffalo and it is my hope that this show inspires many others to

come out and join the fun. You can join a taping of *Polka Buzz* featuring the **Knewz** on December 12th at Potts Banquet Hall.

MERRY CHRISTMAS. December is always a reminder for me of how many blessings God has given me over the past year. Moments spent with friends and family far outweigh any material gifts that we are given. The older I get, the less I wish for items under the tree and the more I yearn for additional time to enjoy with those that I love. As this holiday season is upon us, I am grateful that I have been given the gift to express my love of polka music and my polka friends. Laughs, love and polka memories are some of my greatest treasures. Thank you for giving me purpose to share my passion for this unique music.

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Poland May 2016 Vacation – Jedziemy do Polski!

**Gomulka of Chicago Push,
Biskup of New Brass Invite
Szymanski of Special Delivery**

LUDLOW, Mass. — In May 2016, Lenny Gomulka and Mitch Biskup will hook up with Buffalo's Ted Szymanski to embark on an exciting, memorable tour to beautiful northern Poland.

Flights are departing from Toronto, Chicago, and New York. The group will take in the warm sights of the Baltic Sea region plus the effervescence of Gdansk, Gdynia,

and Sopot. Lenny, Mitch, and Ted will take you on a journey through the sweet homelands of Bialystok and Torun on the renowned Vistula River. You're going to get music, dancing, fun, shopping, parties, and site-seeing galore with a close-knit group camaraderie. You will have the red carpet rolled out for you in the Kashubian Region and throughout the Mazurian Lakes area.

As if all of this were not enough, you will also spend three nights in Vilnius, the capital city of Lithuania, which prides itself on the cul-

ture-rich beautiful city that it is.

The Poland 2016 Spring Tour is from May 20th thru May 31st. All costs are included.

Gomulka and Biskup always help you celebrate in the most jubilant manner as they play, sing and join the musicians and entertainers of Poland.

This tour is filling in quickly. Call or write for a full itinerary. Contact Lenny (413) 374-7096 or Mitch (617) 899-5895; lennygomulka@aol.com or m.biskup@comcast.net. (See ad on this page).

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For more information contact:

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AMERICAN POLONIA AT A GLANCE

Vincent and Helen Knapczyk Honored at Immigrant Heritage Hall of Fame Gala

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — Vincent and Helen Knapczyk, a Polish couple who survived the horrors of Nazi Germany to become inspirational leaders in the Connecticut Polish American community were among those honored with induction into the Immigrant Heritage Hall of Fame (IHHF), Nov. 7 at Central Connecticut State University.

"This year's distinguished group of inductees truly represents the wide diversity of heritage, pursuit of excellence and dedication to service that the Immigrant Heritage Hall of Fame strives to recognize," said Andre Blaszczynski, a long-time Tunxis Community College Professor of Economics who is co-chair of the IHHF Organizing Committee and president of the Polish American Foundation of Connecticut. "The Class of 2015 exemplifies the important role our immigrant population has played in shaping today's America."

Helen and Vincent Knapczyk's lives were shaped by World War II — the Nazi invasion of Poland, exile to Siberia, and escape from Rus-

sia with Gen. Anders' army. Vincent fought with Anders' Polish 2nd Corps in the Italian Campaign, and was wounded in the Battle of Monte Cassino, while Helen was taken to an orphanage in East Africa. After the war, both Helen and Vincent were transported to England, where they married in 1948. They immigrated to the U.S. in 1959, settled in Bridgeport and have served the Polish American community in Connecticut for years as leaders of veterans and civic organizations.

Also inducted were pioneer of aviation from Russia, Igor Ivanovich Sikorsky, and his accomplished son, Igor Sikorsky, Jr. Tariq Farid, a native of Pakistan who founded Edible Arrangements in East Haven in 1999, was also added to the Hall.

The Immigrant Heritage Hall of Fame celebrates the diverse ethnic heritage of Connecticut by honoring individuals and institutions who exemplify the best of their immigrant heritage and have made outstanding contributions to the cultural, economic and civic development of our state and nation.

100 Years of an Artist's Life

by Richard Poremski and Carla Tomaszewski

BROOKLANDVILLE, Md. — On a picture perfect fall day here on November 1, 2015 over 60 family members and friends gathered at the Maryvale Preparatory School, just north of Baltimore, to celebrate the 100th birthday of Stanislaw "Stella" Dernoga Hazard — the family matriarch who is a woman, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother spanning generations.

Stella was born in Baltimore, Md. on Nov. 2, 1915 to Martha and John Dernoga, with the family's lineage being of pure Polish stock dating back to the old country. She displayed her artistic talents early on as a child, having inherited them from the skilled artists in her immediate family. Stella's husband, Charles Oliver "Hap" Hazard, was also accomplished in the arts when they married in 1942 — a classic example of form follows function as it were.

After graduating high school at the age 18, Stella began her chosen formal career at the Maryland Institute of Fine and Applied Arts as an assistant instructor in classic watercolor and basic drawing, later becoming an instructor specializing in watercolor and oils/charcoal portraiture. After Maryland Institute, she worked as a botanical artist/research assistant at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University and Goucher College's Biology Department. The University of California at Berkeley also employed her excellent and detailed graphic skills.

In 1939, Stella began working at the *Baltimore Evening Sun* newspaper. When America entered World War II in 1941, and with all the men being called to arms, she became a pioneer in the then male-dominated newspaper business by being the very first woman editorial staff artist at the *Evening Sun*. She worked alongside notables such as journalist/essayist H.L. Mencken and photographer A. Aubrey Bodine.

Her wartime duties included preparing for publication photo spreads from the European and Pacific fronts. Stella was also sent by the *Sun* to different military training sites to chronicle the important role of women in our armed forces. She produced several full broadside



PHOTO: RICHARD POREMSKI

GENERATIONS OF A POLISH FAMILY. Stanislaw Dernoga Hazard (seated) and daughter Carla Hazard Tomaszewski pose on the milestone occasion of Stanislaw's 100th birthday. To their left is a watercolor of maternal "Grandpa Walenty Staszak with Strawberries" painted in 1963 by his now-centenarian granddaughter, whom he fondly called "Stacia."

spreads of drawings from those assignments. After the war ended the *Sun* assigned Stella to draw the latest fashions as they were introduced from New York's famed 7th Avenue designer houses. Retirement from the newspaper came in 1947 with the birth of her firstborn child Charles Roger. Daughter Carla Martha followed in 1952, completing the family roster.

Over the years, Stella has painted numerous commissions for churches, synagogues, private patrons, scientific institutions, and varied subjects that caught her eye. At her birthday reception, 44 paintings, watercolors, drawings, and sketches were displayed that reflected the full range of her amazing abilities.

Stella held top artistic positions at two other top colleges, as well as pursuing other academic pursuits and attaining a Master's Degree before retiring at age 64. Stella then pursued her hobby of manuscript illumination, iconography and calligraphy. Additionally, she and daughter Carla founded a commercial graphics studio — Poppyfield Press — to actively promote knowledge and appreciation of Polish culture, history and traditions presently and forward into the future.

And so as we wished and sang "Sto lat" (Live for 100 Years!) in Polish to Stella, we now must happily wish and sing to her "Dwiescie lat" (200 Years!) into the next century of her spry life.

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