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WHAT GOES AROUND ...
CYCLING LEGEND IGGY
GRONKOWSKI — PAGE 17

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

WAYS TO HELP OTHERS THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON • MCCARRICK LIED TO JOHN PAUL II • CHRISTMAS LORE
OWSIANY ELECTED TO THIRD TERM • MY WIGILIA, THEN AND NOW • REMEMBERING MONSIGNOR MAJER
BASIA'S KARPATKA • HOW'S YOUR CHRISTMAS POLISH? • NEW YEAR'S SUPERSTITIONS • TOP FILMS OF 2020

NEWSMARK

Women's Rights Groups and Government at Odds

WARSAW — On October 30, more than 100,000 people took to the streets to demonstrate against a court ruling that could legislate a near-total ban on abortion in Poland. The country's Constitutional Tribunal ruled on October 22 that an existing law allowing the abortion of damaged fetuses was "incompatible" with the constitution, rejecting the most common of the few legal grounds for pregnancy termination in the predominantly Catholic country. If enacted, the ruling would ban all abortions except in cases of rape and incest, or when the life of the mother is in danger. Efforts by Polish women's rights activists and their international allies forced a delay of the ruling, suggesting more dialogue is in order. Poland's President Andrzej Duda said he believes women should have a right to abortion cases of congenital deformities.

Some hospitals started to turn away women seeking abortions, who are now looking to Germany and other countries for the terminations.



OLC Shrine to Save Stained Glass Windows

The Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, Pa., has decided to preserve the stained-glass windows from the shuttered and recently-sold Polish St. Lawrence Church in Philadelphia.

The windows portray the Holy Sacrament, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Sacred Heart of Mary, and the following saints: Joseph, Peter, Paul, Catherine, Stanislaus Bishop, Adalbert, Casimir, and Hedwig.

"The cost of moving and placing the stained-glass windows in our Shrine will be in tens of thousands of dollars," said the Pauline fathers at OLC. "For this reason, we

are asking all the Friends of the American Czestochowa, and especially our beloved Polish American community to support this cause."

Donations may be mailed to: The National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, 654 Ferry Rd., Doylestown, PA 18901-5509.

Lockdowns Change All Saints Observations

This year's All Saints observations were cancelled as Poland ordered lockdowns at all cemeteries because of COVID-19. Tens of millions of Poles each All Saint's Day visit the graves of loved ones, bringing with them memorial candles and pots of chrysanthemums which in normal times are sold by vendors at the cemetery gates.

This past November, in solidarity with flower vendors who faced bankruptcy because of the lockdown, Poles purchased the pots of chrysanthemums, with some leaving them by the closed cemetery gates, others taking them home to keep until the graves could be accessed. Warsaw city authorities sponsored a "Buy a Chrysanthemum" appeal, which flooded the internet spreading news of the plight of vendors who maintained they could very well lose about six months of work and projected income.

Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said the cemeteries had to be closed because of the usual crowds there, and also on public transportation in order to exercise extra precaution during the country's spike in the virus infection rate.

He added the government would refund the losses due to the sudden closure of cemeteries.

Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia



A Słowo Ciałem się stało, i mieszkało między nami.
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

The Empty Chair at the Wigilia Table

by Staś Kmiec

In the special night of *Wigilia* – the Christmas Vigil, an extra place is set at the table with an empty chair. It is set for an unseen guest.

A prayer is offered, asking that someone in need could share the observance with an unsuspecting family. The old saying: *Gość dom, Bóg w dom* (A guest in the home is God in the home) would apply to this gesture of Polish hospitality. The additional place setting is intended for a wanderer... or so we have been told. It is believed this most important tradition originated in pagan winter solstice rites.

In the Polish folk tradition, Christmas Eve has its own rich rituals. Derived from ancient celebrations, it is a composite of paganism and Christian symbolism. The winter solstice (December 21-22), which for centuries marked the beginning of the new solar year, was dedicated to the ancestors. During the holiday of *Gody* (*Hody*, *Szczodre Gody*, *Szczodruszka*, *Kolęda* or *Kol-*

jada), fires were lit in cemeteries to warm the dead, and *grumadki* (wooden logs) were burned at the crossroads.

The practice of leaving an empty place at the table for the deceased is a relic of old Slavonic ritual meals. *Obiat*, a huge feast, honored the memory of ancestors and tribe members. After all the participants had finished, the table was left untouched for the spirits to take part in the ceremony.

According to ancient folk beliefs, the human soul had to eat from time to time, and therefore it was necessary to prepare certain dishes strictly defined

by tradition. These ingredients, long considered food for the souls of the deceased, included: *bliny* pancakes, *fasola* beans, *groch* peas, *bób* broad beans, *kasza* groats, apples, nuts, and honey.

Sheaves of grain were placed in each of the four interior corners. Called *Diduch* or *Dziad* (grandfather's spirit), they represent people's ancestors being with them in their memories.

Traditions changed after Poland's baptism and conversion to Christianity in 966. Because an empty seat for the dead did not fit Catholic rituals, when the meal began to be celebrated as part of Christmas, the additional covering was instead for a "stray wanderer" or "unexpected visitor." This adaptation fit with the Christian principle of treating others as you would like to be treated, and the Gospel's "Parable of the Unexpected Guest" (Luke 11:5-8). Many, however, continued to show reverence to their deceased family members.

See "Empty Chair," page 5



GIORGIO BATTISTA PITTORI (1687-1767) MATURITY, OIL ON CANVAS



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Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!*



An Eternal Message for Difficult Times

by Rev. Charles Jan Di Mascola

Over the years, I received many questions on religion; sometimes as letters, sometimes telephone calls. (Those are usually to settle bets).

Here is one letter I received about Christmas:

Dear Father:

In our Missalette, in the "Profession of Faith," about halfway down in bold letters it says "bow," and then, in italics it says "On Christmas and its vigil, we kneel for the following two lines: By the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man."

Well I notice that you and the altar boys always bow at this point and that some people in church do too, but what's it all mean? Why should we bow or kneel? Are these words holy or something? What's the real story?"

This is a great question for Christmas because it really encapsulates the meaning of Christmas.

We bow to acknowledge the greatest miracle God has ever performed, that is, He became human – like us – as the greatest act and proof of His love for us.

He lives in us, and left Heaven to be with us. There is an old Polish Christmas carol that says:

Zbawicielu drogi,
Jakżeś to ubogi,
Opuściłeś śliczne niebo,
Obrałeś barłogi
Opuściłeś śliczne niebo,
Obrałeś barłogi

Czyżes nie mógł Sobie,

W największej ozdobie,
Obrać pałacu drogiego,
Nie w tym leżeć żłobie?
Obrać pałacu drogiego,
Nie w tym leżeć żłobie?

Roughly translated, it asks Jesus why he left a beautiful paradise in heaven to be in placed in a manger wearing rags, when he could have chosen to make Himself a magnificent palace.

So, every Sunday we bow to acknowledge and remember the great love God has for us (not just a nod). but on Christmas we kneel because that is the anniversary ... the anniversary of the beginning of the great love between humanity and God, the anniversary of our hope in a future life, the anniversary of the possibility of "Peace on Earth and Good Will to All Men!"

We tend to make things so complicated. Jesus came as a little baby for a reason. To make it clear through the centuries to each of us that His way is so simple, so easy. He came to this Earth as child to make a point. His way for humanity – in this life and into the next – can be summarized in one sentence, and His own words: "Love God and love your neighbor as yourself."

He came as a child to give us a simple way to live forever. We make things complicated, but Christmas reminds us to keep it simple.

◆ ◆ ◆

Father Charles Jan Di Mascola, retired pastor of the Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Turners Falls, Mass., is an authority on all things Polish.

*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 2021.



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EDITOR'S DESK

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

by Mark Kohan

The staff of the Polish American Journal wishes all readers, advertisers, sponsors, and supporters a most joyous Christmas. Yes, 2020 will be a year we will not soon forget, but with the New Year just around the corner, one can't help but think 2021 will be a better one. Let us hope for the success of the vaccine to protect us from COVID-19, an end to the unrest in our country, and better relations between all Americans, regardless of race, religion, or political affiliations.

Like many of you, we are anticipating a quiet Christmas here. No matter how much it pains us not to spend the holidays with love ones, remember we are making sacrifices for the greater good of all, which – in the long run – will help us individually. To quote St. Paul: "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

We may not be able to share opłatek with our family, but we can do so in spirit. We hope you do the same.

Na szczęście, na zdrowie ze świętą Wiliją (Health and good fortune this Vigil).

Congratulations, President-Elect Biden

We send sincere wishes to President-Elect Joe Biden and Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris. We hope Biden's years of experience in Washington can be put to good use by finding common grounds on both sides of the Senate and House.

Biden's victory, however, does not get him off the hook for incorrectly calling Poland a totalitarian country during his Oct. 15, 2020 Town Hall. James Spula, president of the Polish American Congress, took Biden to task in a letter delivered to officials of the Democratic National Committee and to the Biden for President Campaign. We agree with Spula and all who demand Biden issue a correction which states Poland is not a totalitarian country, but a parliamentary republic.

A Rough Road Ahead

What happens between the United States and Europe over the next few years could prove worrisome, as analysts see a growing divide between Western and Central / Eastern Europe, the former being more liberal, the later more conservative.

Ways to Help Others this Christmas Season

For over 66 years, Polish Assistance has been providing compassionate care for the elderly and needy in the New York City and surrounding area's Polonia. In order to minimize exposure and health risk of its elderly in the community, and keeping in mind health and safety of its volunteers, the organization has created new ways to service those under its care. By using a delivery service, it is able to deliver groceries to those who are homebound without exposing its volunteers. Polish Assistance continues to provide support while sheltering at home, and in emergencies, still provides in-person assistance. Polish Assistance helps those who run out of options. 100% of recipients of its assistance are unemployed; 40% of them have been in the United States over 30 years; 100% live below 2020 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services individual poverty line of \$12,760; and 100% of have serious health issues. including renal cell carcinoma, cancer, stroke, blindness, Parkinson's disease, amputees, etc. 15 East 65th St., New York, NY 10065; office@polishassistance.org; (212) 570-5560.

Founded in 1922, the Polish American Association (PAA) has provided immigrants with programs and services that enable them to change their lives. The PAA is the nation's only human services organization providing a comprehensive range of bilingual and bicultural serviced to the Polish community and others in need.

For 97 years, the PAA has created a community dedicated to helping those in need. By providing clients with education, employment, immigration, social, and supportive services, the PAA offers them resources for changing their lives and enhancing their ability to become contributing members of our community. 3834 N Cicero Ave., Chicago, IL 60641; 1 (773) 282-8206.

The Spirit of St. Nicholas, an annual fund drive, benefits children in group homes in Poland under the auspices of Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This year, the home in Stara Wies, Brzozow,

Both Poland and Hungary (which Biden also incorrectly identified as a totalitarian state) are at odds with EU leadership, which – not surprisingly – mirrored Trump's opinion of Brussels. New sources report Poland's approval of Trump to correctly handle world affairs (over 51%, compared to Germany's 13%, Sweden's 18%, or France's 20%) is due largely to Trump and Duda's conservative nationalism, which – as we can see by the U.S. election and abortion-ruling riots in Poland – does not sit well everyone. (To be fair, many pundits pointed to Trump's handling of COVID-19 as the reason for his loss.)

To sweeten ideological ties with Warsaw, Trump planned to pull U.S. bases out of Germany and place them in Poland, closer to Russia. Biden's victory will likely reverse those plans, a decision Poles find unfavorable, given their history with Moscow.

"The presence of the U.S. soldiers here in Poland and extended presence is definitely very important," said Lukasz Warzecha, commentator at the conservative weekly *Do Rzeczy*.

With the Democrats back in the White House, U.S. policy toward Europe will shift to "achieving a certain level of ideological influence: especially when it comes to the promotion of liberal values, such human rights, democracy, the rule of law and more recently social justice," said London School of Economics commentators Cristian Nitoiu, Florin Pasatoiu, and Loredana Simionov.

By contrast, Western European governments are eager for a reset from the Trump years, and a return to more predictable and traditional transatlantic relations, said Jamie Dettmer in *Voice of America News*. He noted Biden's close relationship with Western European leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel. According to Dettmer, shortly before Biden announced his candidacy for the White House, western European leaders and officials privately urged him to run, in hopes the United States will then rejoin both the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and possibly return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran. Trump pulled the United States out of both agreements.

Biden has his work cut out for him reuniting a divided United States. Gaining the trust of Central and Eastern Europe will not be any easier.

which currently cares for 55 children, is in need of clothing, school supplies, and PPE supplies. Additionally, funds are also used for a new hospice program in Przemyśl, which will have 60 beds for the terminally ill. It also will also provide rehab outpatient care for older people and needed services for people from conception to a natural death. Donations, which can be earmarked for either "Special Children with Special Needs" or the "Hospice Program," can be mailed to: PHF Charity Fund, c/o Christine Jozwiak, PO Box 115, Springville, NY 14141-0115.

Established in 1985, The Polish Children's Heartline is a 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit volunteer organization which raises money to purchase medical equipment for children's heart surgery in pediatric units throughout Poland. It is currently working in the regions of Katowice, Lodz, Zabrze, Białystok, Suwalki and Grójewo. Every year over 2,000 procedures are performed in Poland on children with heart problems. In almost 32 years, The Polish Children's Heartline has donated over \$20 million dollars' worth of medical equipment, saving thousands of Polish children's lives.

Make checks payable to The Polish Children's Heartline, and mail c/o Doreen Patras Cramer, 87 Deerfield Dr., Manahawkin, NJ 080501 (732) 680-0680; childshart@aol.com; PolishChildrensHeartline.org.

The Polish American Congress Charitable Foundation, Inc., (PACCF) is a not-for-profit 503(c) (3) with offices in Chicago and Washington. Established in 1971 by the PAC, the Charitable Foundation supports cultural, educational and humanitarian efforts which emphasize Polish-American heritage. A major component of the PACCF's work has been charitable assistance to Poland. With the vast changes taking place in Poland today, the need for help still remains, especially for the poor, elderly, disabled, and children. 6645 North Oliphant Avenue, Suite A, Chicago, IL 60631; www.paccf.org; paccf@paccf.org; (773) 763-9942.

ALMANAC

December Grudzień

1945. Premier of Stanisław Moniuszko opera "Verbum Nobile," in Warsaw.
1857. Birth of novelist Teodor Józef Konrad Korzeniowski, better known as Joseph Conrad.
- ST. BARBARA
Gdy w Barbarę pada zima ostra się zapowiada. A Saint Barbara downpour means a harsh winter in store.
1867. Birth of Josef Piłsudski, Polish military leader.
- ST. NICHOLAS (Sw. Mikolaj).
1923. Birth of Polish American TV star Ted Knight (Konopka).
1990. Shipyard electrician and Solidarity Trade Union leader Lech Wałęsa elected president of Poland.
1922. Gabriel Narutowicz elected first president of the Second Polish Republic.
1949. Johnny Lujack of the Chicago Bears passed for 468 yards and six touchdowns in a 52-21 rout of the Chicago Cardinals.
1570. Signing of the Treaty of Stettin concludes the Northern Seven Years' War
1980. After four days of meetings, members of NATO warned the Soviets to stay out of the internal affairs of Poland.
1575. Election of Stefan Batory (1533-1586). Batory was Voivode of Transylvania (1571-76), Prince of Transylvania (1576-86), from 1576 Queen Anna Jagiellon's husband and *jure uxoris* King of Poland. Many historians consider him to be one of the greatest of the elected Kings of Poland.
1970. Riot police, under orders from defense minister Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, opened fire on workers protesting food price increases and 44 people were killed in Gdańsk, Gdynia, Szczecin, and Elbląg.
1929. Birth of Cardinal Józef Glemp.
1852. Birth of Polish Jewish scientist A.A. Michelson, 1907 Nobel Prize winner in Physics.
1982. Death of Chopin advocate and pianist Arthur Rubinstein.
- ST. THOMAS
1898. In Paris, Marie, 31, and Pierre Curie, Polish and French chemists, discover radium.
1922. Stanisław Wojciechowski elected the second President of the Second Republic of Poland. He was ousted by the May Coup d'État of 1926.
1982. Richard Trumka sworn in as president of United Mine Workers.
- ST. JOHN KANTY (Cantius)
1937. Birth of first Polish American astronaut, Karol Bobko.
1925. Founding of the Kościuszko Foundation in New York City.
- DZIEŃ WIGILIJNY
Na szczęście, na zdrowie ze świętą Wiliją Health and good fortune this Vigil!
1854. About 100 families from Upper Silesia arrive in Panna Maria, Texas to establish the first permanent Polish settlement in the United States. Fr. Leopold Moczygomba holds Midnight Mass under a large oak tree that still stands today.
- BOŻE NARODZENIA
1076. Coronation of Bolesław II the Bold
- ST. STEPHEN
1655. Swedes withdraw from Poland.
1587. Coronation of Sigismund III Waza
1587. Coronation of Zygmunt III
1966. Celebration of the Polish Millennium of Christianity.
1994. Consecration of Bishop John W. Yanta, D.D., at Panna Maria. He is the first Polish American Texan given this honor.
- ST. SYLVESTER

This paper mailed on or before December 1. The January 2021 edition will be mailed on or before December 30, 2020.

McCarrick Lied to John Paul II

VATICAN CITY — An investigation commissioned by Pope Francis found Pope John Paul II had rejected explicit warnings about sexual abuse by Theodore E. McCarrick, now a disgraced former cardinal, choosing to believe the American prelate's denials and misleading accounts by bishops as he elevated him to the highest ranks of the church hierarchy.

By pointing fingers at Pope Francis's predecessors, emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, and in particular Pope John Paul II, the findings have caused an uproar in the Church.

"Pope John Paul II personally made the decision to appoint McCarrick," the report says, despite receiving a letter in 1999 from then-archbishop of New York Cardinal John O'Connor that summed up allegations that McCarrick had engaged in sexual conduct with another priest, had committed pedophilia, and shared a bed with young adult men and seminarians.

John Paul II ordered an investigation to determine whether the allegations were true, and "McCarrick's denial was believed," said the new report. "John Paul II's past experience in Poland regarding the use of spurious allegations against bishops" to hurt the church "played a role in his willingness to believe" McCarrick, and the allegations were dismissed as rumor. It is believed McCarrick used this to his advantage to deceive John Paul II.

"Theodore McCarrick is not only a predator, he's a pathological liar," said George Weigel, a biographer of John Paul II. "Pathological liars fool people," Weigel told current New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan in an interview for the cardinal's SiriusXM radio program.

"Saints are human beings. Human beings can be deceived by pathological liars and John Paul II was," said Weigel.

Abortion, Same-sex Unions Worry Catholic Leaders

by Benjamin Fiore, S.J.

St. Paul's archbishop **Bernard A. Hebda's** remarks on Pope Francis's statement which favored "civil unions" for same-sex couples, resulted in controversy. He noted that the pope's statement was a "kind of middle way that would allow persons of the same sex in long-term relationships to have legal benefits without a civil redefinition of marriage itself."

Critics found fault with his further remark that "we are called to find ways of extending a true sense of family to those who find themselves on the margins." Here the controversy revolved around the pope's and archbishop's apparent support for same-sex couples establishing families with children. The true sense of family is the issue. Neither the pope nor the archbishop support a redefinition of marriage according to "progressive social norms." They are most likely urging their followers not to reject same sex family members and isolate them from their natural families but to include them in the life of the family that brought them into the world.

Bishop Questions Voting for Pro-Abortion Candidates

Bishop Thomas Paprocki of the Springfield, Ill. diocese, before the recent election, said that voting for pro-abortion Democrat Joe Biden would require a proportionately grave reason that outweighs the killing of 860,000 babies per year. The issue of the death penalty does not come close in numbers, with that involving tens rather than hundreds of thousands of killings. Paprocki explains "While abortion is considered to be an intrinsic evil, the death penalty has been called 'in admissible' by Pope Francis,



Bishop Thomas Paprocki: "... voting for someone with the intent to support abortion is formal cooperation and is always sinful."

which is not the same as calling it an intrinsic evil, but is more of a prudential judgment about its efficacy."

Paprocki's views were shared by Pittsburgh's bishop **David Zubik**, Knoxville, Tennessee's bishop **Rick Stika**, and St. Louis, Missouri's archbishop **Mitchell Rozanski**. The bishops' remarks will have no effect with a Biden win. Furthermore, some 57% of the voting Catholics voted for Biden, and the U.S. Bishops Conference president has praised the merits of the president-elect. Nonetheless, these lamentable facts do not take away from the validity of Bishop Paprocki's teaching.

U.S. Senate Approved Justice Barrett's Nomination

On a strictly party-line vote, the senate voted 52 to 48 to approve the nomination of the new Supreme Court Justice. Alaska's senator **Lisa Murkowski** voted with the majority, despite her usual pro-abortion positions. Another judge named on President Trump's list as a potential candidate was **Sara Pitlyk**, recently confirmed to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, in the face of left-wing attacks on her pro-life public statements. In her support, a colleague in the Thomas More Society called her "a towering intellect, a supremely capable lawyer, and a strong Consti-

tutional conservative." She was law clerk to then-judge Brett Kavanaugh and studied at Boston College, Georgetown University, Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven, Belgium, and Yale University.

Communion Withheld

Judge Sara Smolenski, a District Court judge in Grand Rapids, Michigan, was informed privately by the pastor of her church, that as a woman married to another woman she would not be welcome to receive Holy Communion. The call followed a previous Sunday when she and other parishioners wore gay pride pins to church. Soon after this news broke, she was welcomed to a service at the nearby Methodist Church which she thanked for their inclusiveness. **Fr. Nolan**, the pastor of St. Stephen's was supported in his decision by Grand Rapids **Bishop Walkowiak** who said, "no community of faith can sustain the public contradiction of its beliefs by its own members." He has come under fire for suspending gay teachers from the parish elementary school and withholding communion from another gay couple, reversing the practice of a former pastor. A large crowd from across Grand Rapids attended his Mass to show their support for him.

Pro-Life Sculpture Blessed

Bishop Donald Hying of the diocese of Madison, Wisconsin, blessed a pro-life sculpture by artist **Martin Hudáček** in Resurrection cemetery. The Slovak artist described the work as the "fundamental conviction that death does not have the final say." Titled "The Memorial of Unborn Children II," the sculpture depicts the shock, horror, grief, and regret of parents who have lost a child to abortion — all the ways children are sadly and tragically lost at the very beginning of their lives." The sculpture depicts the father's shock and shame at seeing his lost daughter, appearing as a 4-year-old. While he supports and comforts the mother, she reaches out to the outstretched arms of the child. This is the only copy of the work outside of Europe and one of only three in existence.

Alaskan Bishop Grounded

Due to the high cost of maintenance, the dangers of flying in remote parts of Alaska in treacherous weather, as well as the increased availability of commercial flights, **Bishop Chad Zielinski** of the RC diocese of Fairbanks, Alaska, has retired the diocesan Cessna which he used for the last six years to visit communities in his far-flung diocese, the largest in area in the United States.

"I'm sad to have to let *Yellow Bird* go; it's the end of an era," said Bishop Zielinski. "But it's the only way we can be good stewards of the limited resources we have and honor the sacrifices of the people who make our work possible."

Football Fans Defend Polish Cathedrals and Churches

In the face of pro-abortion demonstrations which aim at the Catholic Church and church buildings and services, Polish football (soccer) fans drove rioters away from Poznań's ancient archbasilica of Ss. Peter & Paul, Poland's oldest cathedral dating to the 10th century.

"Lech Poznań," the team's name was prominent on the shirts of the fans that took control of the area.

Similarly in Szczecin, Częstochowa, Gdańsk, Chełm, Jasło, Andrychów, Ząbki, and Chełmża, footballers have been protecting churches.

"We will not accept the desecration of memorials, murals, or churches," said members of the Szczecin club. "This will not help you in your fight: it can only be counter-productive, as for many Poles, including your relations, they are important symbols of life."

The protestors are demonstrating against the Supreme Court of Poland's decision that abortion of children with birth defects, such as Down's syndrome, is unconstitutional.

A sad side of the demonstrations is that the protests seem to demonstrate that the younger generation of Poles is becoming atheist at a fierce speed. Polarization in Polish society will most likely increase because of this development.

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

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

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

A sincere "THANK YOU" for your donation to the PAJ PRESS FUND: **Galeziewski Family**, Phoenix; **Yolanta Jagusiak**, Brooklyn, N.Y.; **Jane Kedron**, Port Reading, N.J.; **Edward J. Klodnik**, Cleveland; **Carol Klotz**, Springfield, Ala.; **Stephen Malkiewicz, OFM, Milwaukee**, Wisc.; **Brian Matulewicz**, Upper Gwynedd, Pa.; **Dr. John Nizioł**, Clifton, N.J.; and three **Friends of the PAJ**. Dziękujemy wam wszystkim! The PAJ thanks all who donated.

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Chicago Proposal to Give Landmark Status to St. Adalbert's

CHICAGO — In 2016, the Archdiocese of Chicago made a decision to close St. Adalbert Church in Chicago's Pilsen area. Former parishioners and historic preservationists held steadfast in the belief that this iconic 106-year-old church should be preserved and receive "landmark" designation. For over a century St. Adalbert was the crown-jewel and Catholic symbol of the Polish national spirit on the city's South Side. Even though officials claim the church is not in danger of being demolished, supporters want it to be safeguarded as a landmark.

Since the Archdiocese closed St. Adalbert's doors and officially desanctified it in 2019, Chicago's Department of Planning and Development doesn't require the Archdiocese's consent to determine its future status. **Maurice Cox**, Chicago's commissioner of planning and development, held the first community meeting Oct. 27, at which city leaders highlighted a preliminary landmark recommendation on preserving the church. Cox said, "The city is ready to commit to preparing

the designation report and to coordinate with the Archdiocese for designation and redevelopment of St. Adalbert."

In the last four years, the Archdiocese has twice contracted to sell the property. Both deals failed. In Nov. 2016, it unsuccessfully contracted with the Chicago Academy of Music; then in September 2018, it negotiated with a real estate development firm.

A special Dec. 1, 2020, meeting, to be led by Alderman Tom Tunney of the 44th Ward and chair of the city's Council Committee on

Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards, is planned whereby first steps will be considered regarding the church's landmark status. For the designation, the Commission of must consider any two of seven criteria, the building must be: a critical part of the city's heritage, site of a significant historic event, related to a significant person, manifest important architecture or an important architect, have a distinctive theme as a district, or possess unique visual feature. A preliminary commission recommendation is expected to be ready by spring 2021.

MODLITWY

PUBLICATION OF PRAYERS. The Polish American Journal gladly accepts prayers ads for publication. They must be received by the 10th of each month, prior to the month of publication, and must be pre-paid at the cost of \$15.00 each, which can be paid by check or charge. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please call 1 (800) 422-1275 or (716) 312-8088. Send to: Polish American Journal, P.O. Box 271, N. Boston, NY 14110.

PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF ST. SR. FAUSTINA. St. Sr. Faustina, you told us that your mission would continue after your death and that you would not forget us. Our Lord also granted you a great privilege, telling you to "distribute graces as you will, to whom you will, and when you will." Relying on this, I ask your intercession for the graces I need, especially (silently mention your petitions). Help me St. Faustina, above all, to trust in Jesus as you did and thus to glorify his mercy every moment of my life. Amen. St. Sr. Faustina, pray for us! **W.C.**

Suzan Marzec - More Than "Simply Polish"



Suzan Marzec

by Geraldine Balut Coleman

DETROIT — Suzan Marzec celebrated years of passing on Polish folk dancing as well as the customs and traditions of the land where her father was born. Through the years, as choreographer and artistic director of both *Radomianie*, an adult Polish Folklore Ensemble, and the Centennial Dancers, troupes of the Polish National Alliance (PNA), she has taught more than 2000 children and adults regional Polish dances and language classes, as well as workshops. Additionally, Marzec has taught authentic Polish folk dances throughout the United States.

She began her post-high school studies at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, but later completed an associate degree in PE Fitness from Henry Ford Community College. In 1992 she was one of the first Americans to earn a degree in Folk Dancing and Customs from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland.

Marzec started dancing at the age four with the *Wieliczka* dancers of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA) in southwest Detroit. In 1983 she became the director of the PRCUA's Syrena dance troupe when she and six other young women performed at the first World Festival of Polish Folkloric Dance in Rzeszów, Poland. They danced the *Biały Mazur* and an American-style polka.

In 1987, Marzec had the privilege of performing for Pope John Paul II on his visit to Hamtramck, Mich. In 1988 she was the choreographer for the Centennial and *Radomianie* dancers for a scene in the movie, *The Polish Wedding*, filmed in Hamtramck, starring Claire Danes, Gabriel Byrne, and Lena Olin.

Seeking new challenges, in 2006 Marzec decided to open a store, where she continues to express her enthusiasm for all things Polish. Nestled in a small strip mall in Garden City, Mich., a western suburb of Detroit, her establishment, Simply Polish, offers her customers an array of amber, glass ornaments, pottery, jewelry, and embroidered works of art, all made in Poland.

Poignancy of empty chair will take on added meaning this pandemic year

continued from cover

In the rural tradition, there was a vivid attachment to the worship of the dead. It was believed that on the last day of the year, peasant huts were visited by the souls of relatives. It was remembered not to quarrel with the dead, and not to be sad. It was important to care for fire on Christmas Eve, so lights were lit, and in many places the fire was kept in the furnace throughout the night to warm any chilled souls that might visit.

Plate for the "Visitors from the beyond"

On Christmas Eve all family members meet for *Wigilia*; this also includes deceased loved ones.

In the 1866 "Pieśni o domu naszym" ("Song about our home"), Wincenty Pol mentions that everyone would put a fraction of their *oplatek* wafer on the plate of the additional cover. With the introduction of colored *oplatki* for animals and ornament decoration, a green wafer was reserved for the spirits.

There was a conviction among the people that, on this day, the dead were taking part in the *Kolacja wigilijna* (Vigil supper) with the living. It was combined with an All Souls' Wake, a dinner for the dead. Attempts were made to feed the spirits of relatives to their fullest. The dishes referring to the tradition of the presence of the souls of their deceased ancestors on Christmas Eve were characteristic of this dinner. Dried fruit symbolized a



A rural peasant family celebrating wigilia in the forgotten Galicia of the Carpathian Mountains, as depicted by Osyp (Józef) Kurytas (1930).

dish made from various grains and mixed with honey, poppyseed and nuts, was eaten at All Souls' services. Its presence on *Wigilia* tables is a relic of the old rituals in honor of the deceased. Various poppyseed breads and cakes traditionally appeared on the festive table every year.

In the 1926 book *Obrzędowość ludowa Bożego Narodzenia, jej początek i znaczenie pierwotne* (Folk Rites of Christmas), author Witold Klinger describes some of the customs of Christmas Eve as celebrated in Polish villages. In the Hutsul region, after praying together at the Christmas table, there was a custom of putting half a tablespoon of wheat and other foods, and a pot of honey in the window corners. Then spreading a handful of broad beans around all corners of the chamber.

This was intended for the angels and souls, so they could "refresh themselves" at night.

In Małopolska, the souls of the deceased enjoyed *barszcz*. In Podlasie, the host would say a prayer, then pour spirits into a goblet and with a finger put some of the liquid onto the tablecloth, which would be intended for the departed. Near Jarosław, after the meal, the housewife left the remnants on the table for three days and three nights to let the spirits visit during the days ahead. In Gorlice, *barszcz*



Kutia/Kucja — an ancient dish made from various grains and mixed with honey, poppyseed, and nuts, traditionally eaten at All Souls' services — is found on *wigilia* tables in honor of the deceased.

dormant life, with poppy seeds symbolizing both life and death.

Bread was believed to have magical properties and could not be missing on the Christmas table. It is a symbol of life, a gift from God, but also a gift for the soul during its journey. *Kutia/Kucja*, an ancient

was removed from the house and then poured over each of the four corners of the home. Elsewhere, rye bread would be left on the table until the end of Christmas, covered with an *oplatek* wafer and wrapped in a white handkerchief.

A Night Where Souls Wander

Although the *Wigilia* meal was both solemn and sublime, in general, the character was soulful. Sometimes a small candle was placed on the empty plate and lit during the meal.

It was also believed that, on Christmas Eve, by God's grace, the souls of the dead leave the afterlife, and can stay with their relatives, at home and in the farmyard. In the not so distant past, on Christmas

Eve, people would blow on chairs, benches, and stools before sitting on them, so as not to disturb a spirit.

In Poland — but also in the Czech Republic and Ukraine — it was believed that Christmas Eve favors the supernatural, and all activities should be performed very carefully. It is a night when souls wander, and in folk beliefs it is a moment of chats, wonders, amazing phenomena, and occurrences.



Makowiec is just one of the various poppyseed breads and cakes enjoyed on the festive table every year.

Christmas Eve is full of superstitions purportedly possessing extraordinary power, usually having their origins in ancient local pagan beliefs. As recently as the nineteenth century, it was believed that during the *Wigilia*, simply by going into the hall and looking into the room through the keyhole, one could see a person who had died the past year sitting with others. For many, it is believed that the souls of the dead appear at the Christmas Eve supper.

Other Theories

After being turned away from the inn, the Holy Family found a place in a stable, where Jesus was born. Their wandering and looking for shelter is another aspect of the empty chair tradition.

During the Partition period of forced enlistment of Poles into the Russian Army in 1863, the empty chair gained a new dimension. From the year of the January Uprising onwards, the empty place was not only left for ancestors or an unexpected guest but, first and foremost, in memory of those who had been deported.

Observing the Tradition Today

To celebrate the tradition of hospitality and inclusion, *Open Chairs – Wigilia Campaign (Miejsce przy stole)*, a Facebook organization in Poland, invites a refugee, an immigrant, a homeless, needy or lonely person, to take an empty chair this *Wigilia*.

The aim is to suggest what people could do, *not* what they should do; to break down barriers real or perceived; and to provide a warm family experience to those who may be missing their family at this special time.

In the past, an empty setting was reserved for loved ones who passed away from this world and are no longer sitting at this table. This has changed over time. Now the sym-

bolic covering is for the lonely, for the lost, those who have no one to spend the evening with. Would you let a stranger into your house and invite them to the table?

This year in particular, the *Wigilia* table may be missing the presence of a departed loved one. So, while the *oplatek* and meatless meal are the mainstay of the repast, the importance of the empty chair cannot be forgotten. Not only does it remind us of those who have passed, it also serves as a reminder of present family members and friends absent due to distance and current pandemic restrictions.



When the food has been cleared and the candle gives its last light, the empty chair and our memories remain.



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Familial Handiwork

EAST MEADOW, Mass. — Three generations of the Gibowicz family — (l. to r.): granddaughter Amanda, wife and husband Tessie and Bob, their daughter Lisa, and granddaughter Cara — participate in a time-honored Polish tradition of making pierogi for the Christmas holidays.

Across American Polonia, the preparation of traditional foods for wigilia (the Christmas Vigil meal) and Christmas day brings generations together. Not only are the recipes passed on to the next generation, so are the skills and techniques in producing them as well. These wonderful gatherings are a living link between today's generation and ancestors long passed in Poland.

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Merry Christmas to all my friends at the Polish American Journal. Keep up the good work!

DENNIS PIOTROWSKI

Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!

Wishing you every happiness through this Holiday Season and the coming year

MARY & AL PIZZATO

Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia



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BERNADETTE & RICHARD NAROG
 Yonkers, New York



To my relatives and friends —
 Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia
 i szczęśliwego Nowego Roku 2021!
 Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
ALICE M. ZACHAREWICZ
 East Nassau, New York



Merry Christmas! Wesołych Świąt!
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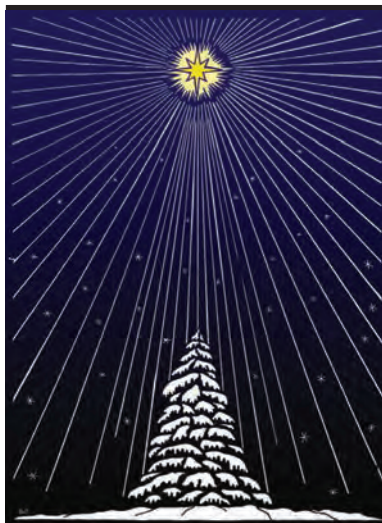
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In memory of
Thaddeus
Borowski

Christmas Lore

by Robert Strybel

Everyone partaking of the wigilia supper should try a little of every dish served, and nothing should be left on one's plate uneaten. Any fussy eater who leaves food on his plate may have to do without in the year ahead.

There should be an even number of people at table. This was once very rigorously adhered to, because it was believed that the odd person appearing at the table would not live to see another Wigilia.

Girls engage in fortune-telling

games by pulling strands of hay from under the table-cloth. A yellow strand means marriage before the start of Lent, a green one foretells a longer wait and a withered strand signified a life of spinsterhood.

On this one night a year, animals spoke in human voices at midnight and the water in wells turned to wine. But only those who had never sinned could taste it.

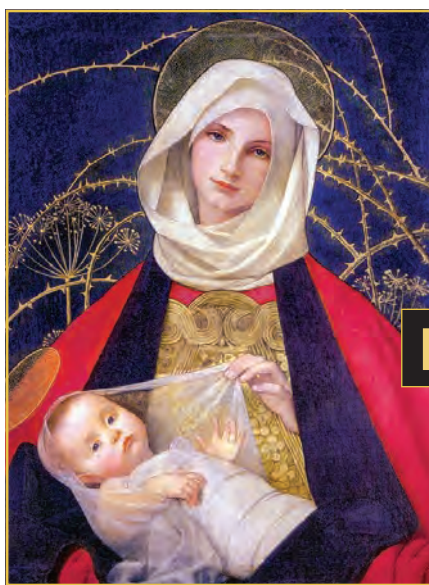
How you are on Wigilia (good, bad, happy, sad, peaceful or upset) resentful) is how you will be all year long – is a common belief.



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We wish all our members, friends, donors and sponsors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

The best gift one can receive is the smile on a child's face that was given a second chance to a normal and healthy life. Thank You for your support.
 — Doreen Patras Cramer, President

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Wesołych Świąt
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KAPLA AND DLUBISZ FAMILIES
 Waterford, Michigan

Owsiany Elected to Third Term as PMA President

On November 18, 2020, the Board of Directors of the Polish Museum of America elected Richard F. Owsiany to his third term as President.

Owsiany has been active with the PMA for many years, and has been on Board of Directors since 2007 and the president since October 2014. Under his leadership, the PMA has continued to make improve-

ments and add new exhibits. This includes new lighting of the exhibits in the Sabina P. Logisz Great Hall, refurbishing of the Deborah Greenlee Polish Pavilion Room, the opening of the Transportation Room exhibit, and the new exhibit of Polish modern art and Polish Past in Chicago (1850-1939), along with many temporary exhibits.

With these improvements, exhibits,

and events, the PMA has become a central gathering place for Polonia. In addition, the PMA has developed relationships with many organizations and Polish government agencies.

Also elected as officers are Andrew Pawlowski and Paul Odrobina as vice presidents; Dean Uminski (treas.); and Victoria Granacki (sec.).

SCHOLARSHIPS

Kosciuszko Foundation Scholarship Applications Due in January

NEW YORK — The Kosciuszko Foundation, an American Center for Polish Culture, is accepting scholarship applications for the Fall 2020/Spring 2021 academic year. Among the scholarships available to Americans of Polish descent are scholarships for:

- graduate level studies – any major;
- a female resident of Massachusetts for studies towards an M.D. in medicine;
- undergraduate studies for Massachusetts residents;
- undergraduate studies for members of the Polish American Club of North Jersey;
- undergraduate studies for members of PNA Brooklyn, USA, Group #1903;
- undergraduate studies in nursing, teaching and business, for residents of New Jersey;
- undergraduate studies in the natural sciences (min. GPA 3.5);

Scholarships will be awarded for full-time studies only. Qualified applicants are required to complete an on-line application form, submit a financial information form, essay, official transcripts (three years), two letters of recommendation, proof of Polish ancestry, photo, curriculum vitae, a \$35 application fee and where applicable, letters of admission to college or graduate study programs. The deadline for undergraduate candidates is January 15; for graduate level candidates it is January 22. Details may be found on the Kosciuszko Foundation's website at: www.thekf.org/kf/scholarships/tuition/

Kosciuszko Foundation's Tuition Scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to American students of Polish descent for studies in the U.S. and at English Schools of Medicine in Poland.

Rhode Island Polonia Scholarship Foundation 2020 Awards

The Rhode Island Polonia Scholarship Foundation awarded four high school seniors \$1,000.00 grants toward their college education. The 2020 recipients are Victoria Jakubiak, Karolina Chrzastowska, Matthew Tactacan, and Nicholas Platek.

Due to the Coronavirus and restrictions for social gathering, the award ceremony had to be suspended for this year.

The recipients met all Foundation requirements including writing an essay on a selected topic pertaining to Polish culture, history, or music. The 2020 topic focused upon researching the efforts made by ordinary Poles to shelter Jews and to help them escape certain death during World War II in German occupied Poland. Under the German occupation, any Pole who was caught aiding Jews was to be executed; the death penalty was also extended to their family members.

Since its founding in 1978 the RI Polonia Foundation has awarded 351 grants totaling over \$308,000.00. These grants are made possible through the support of private individuals, businesses, and Polish American organizations. In addition to providing financial support, the Foundation strives to promote an appreciation of Polish culture and create an awareness of contributions made by Poland and Polish Americans. Gregory Malec serves as the Foundation president and Dr. Dorothy Pieniadz serves as the Scholarship Selection chairperson.

For additional information about the Foundation please visit www.facebook.com/Rhode-Island-Polonia-Scholarship-Foundation.



Dear Friends,

I hope you and your dearest are staying safe, sheltered in place, and healthy during these unprecedented times. It is hard to believe that 2020 is already coming to a close. The holiday season is an excellent opportunity to reflect on the past year while also looking forward to the rapidly approaching New Year.

In this time of difficulty, we at the Kosciuszko Foundation understand what you and every member are having to deal with. Individually, our entire staff, as well as prospective scholarship recipients, are also experiencing the same challenges. Especially, scholars and grant recipients that are awaiting our help right now. Some of our most dedicated members are suffering from the anxiety of the current situation, not having a physical connection to families, and the KF community. Therefore, we knew that it is important for the Foundation to adopt a digital platform in order to expand our community online.

It's been a year full of challenges and hardships. Thus, I wanted to acknowledge the stress that the coronavirus was causing, express my empathy, and appreciate all of the members and contributors for supporting the Foundation through this difficult year. We, at the KF, were privileged to forward your contributions to the scholarship recipients. I am very happy to see our Polish Community growing in strength and loyalty during this dire time of crisis. I would particularly like to thank the KF Team for working full time and providing us with splendid Polish cultural entertainment and constantly operating the scholarship funds. This year would have been difficult if it wasn't for your hard work.

While reflecting on the past I would also like to instill that we are passionate about what we do for the Polish Community. We, at the KF, are constantly innovating and finding ways to meet our members' evolving needs to stay connected with you, even virtually. We will continue on improving these modes. There were numerous online events planned in the fall along with our highly anticipated virtual tour through the marvelous KF Art Gallery.

Today more than ever we need to belong and embrace the KF Community. Hence, I would like to address an appeal, please become a KF member, renew your membership, or make a donation today and be part of a distinguished philanthropic group. Your membership due covers many expenses associated with the Foundation's educational mission. Friends of the Kosciuszko Foundation help make possible virtual exhibitions, educational and exchange programs, cultural content, scientific and educational resources, and more. For more information please visit our website www.thekf.org or call our office. We are always here, eager, and happy to assist you.

One more time thank you for continuous support and best wishes for Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday Season & a prosperous New Year.

Marek Skulimowski
President & Executive Director

*The Kosciuszko Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that makes all donations to us tax-deductible. Make your donation by December 31 to ensure that it can be deducted from this year's taxes

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Wesołych Świąt
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**JANE GIZA SHUBACK
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POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE (a non-profit corporation, State of New Jersey) begins its 35th year of helping children. An all volunteer non-profit organization receiving generous donations from Polonia and American supporters makes it possible for over 2000 Polish children to be treated annually by cardiac surgeons and physicians in hospitals in Poland. As requested, equipment critical to pediatric care is provided to seven hospitals in Zabrze, Katowice, Lodz, Suwalki, Bialystok, Grajewo, and Ostroleka. Contributions may be made in memory of and/or honor of family and friends. Each donation is tax exempt and acknowledged. We thank you for your support and ask for your continued support for much help is still needed. "If we don't help our Polish children, who will?" —Doreen Patras Cramer, President

Make checks payable to The Polish Children's Heartline, and mail c/o Doreen Patras Cramer, 87 Deerfield Dr., Manahawkin, NJ 08050
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HAPPENINGS: CHICAGO STYLE

My Wigilia, Then and Now

by Geraldine Balut Coleman

CHICAGO — As it is in most Polish and Polish American homes, the holidays of Christmas Eve and Easter focus on both their religious aspects and dining. They have always been crowded with family and friends when it came to celebrating the traditional *wigilia* meal. Although this year we may not have the family gatherings that we had anticipated because of COVID-19 restrictions, we still have our fond memories of Christmases past that make us laugh and sometimes cry.

As a child and teen, I so lovingly remember the caravan of three cars traveling 20 miles on an unplowed country road, getting to midnight Mass. There were no street lights in rural Michigan, just roads usually filled with snow. And as a general rule our cars were the only ones venturing out. But what made this ride special was selecting which of the eight grandchildren would have the thrill of sitting in the car with *dziadzia*. I always lucked out because I was the only grandchild who understood and spoke Polish. It was a ride that delighted us. My grandfather would always be singing, sometimes a couple of off-color Polish folk-tunes. Oh, how that irritated *busia*! Naturally, she expressed her disdain in Polish, not realizing that one of her grandchildren understood what she was saying. I understood her remarks but her comments really meant nothing to me. I guess I was too young to really understand.

I really don't remember the ride back to the farmhouse after Mass, as I was always in dreamland. But Christmas morning, all eight grandchildren were awake early. First, we'd go to the barn to watch our grandparents milk the cows and try to help — sometimes to the annoyance of *busia*. Once our grandparents were back in the farmhouse, barn chores done, the entire family spent the rest of the day opening Christmas gifts, eating our hearts out, and enjoying the fun of being outside playing in waist deep snow. I remember Uncle Eddie always "surprising" each of us with a large man's stocking filled with a variety of unshelled nuts and those treasured tangerines. It always seemed as though December 26 was the end of this exciting holiday. But the fond memories of *wigilia* and Christmas are permanently planted in my mind.

Each of us has memories of *wigilia* of days gone by, but this year's memories may be different. Many of our friends are older and will not venture out of their homes. Our Vigil repast will be limited to an immediate family or just staying home. The pandemic is getting worse, so our lives must be guarded.

These unfortunate circumstances, however, will not stop me from creating special dishes that have been in my family for years. Even if this year, those past *wigilias* will be in my memory.



Author Geraldine Balut Coleman — above (left), as a child with family members playing in the Michigan snow, and (right) proudly displaying her *wigilia* specialties — said the pandemic will not stop her from preparing the traditional dishes she has made for years.

Each year, my family *Wigilia* meal consisted of *barszcz z uszka*, walleye or Lake Superior whitefish, *kügel*, sweet and sour fish (*słodko - kwaśna ryba*), pierogi, Blanche's pineapple carrot salad, her pickled beets (*ćwikła*), broccoli Polonaise, *chalka*, sweet cherry compote (*kompot z wiśni i gruszek*), Polish-style almond crescent cookies (*migdalowe półksiężycy*), and *kolaczki*.

In this article I will present four dishes that most of you may not have in your Polish recipes repertoire but are worth trying.

Walleye With Vodka Cream Sauce Served with Czerwona Kapusta Zasmazana

This first dish is a must for my *wigilia*. Not only is it delicious, it is also beautifully presented. The recipe can be modified to accommodate the number of guests to be served.

INGREDIENTS

6 - 8 T. butter
1/2-3/4 c. chopped onion
5 c. shredded cabbage, red preferred
6 t. lemon juice
4 (4-4.5 lbs.) Walleye or Lake Superior Whitefish fillet (8 oz. piece for each diner)
1 c. vegetable broth
1 c. sour cream
3 t. finely chopped chives
6 T. vodka

Salt and freshly ground pepper, white preferred, to taste
8-10 oz. dried cranberries or cherries
4 T. red caviar
Thinly sliced green onions length-wise (only the greens for garnish)

Melt 3 T. butter in a large cooking pot. Add onion and sauté until softened, about 3 minutes. Add cabbage, cranberries, and a bit of water, cover, and cook over low heat until cabbage is tender, but still slightly crisp. Stir in 3 t. lemon juice and



season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside. (I usually do this ahead of time).

Check walleye fillets and remove any remaining scales. Wash, pat dry, and season with pepper.

Heat remaining 3 T. butter in a skillet large enough to hold fillets in a single layer. When butter starts bubbling, add fish fillets and cook on both sides until opaque and just firm, about 5 minutes. Remove fillets to a plate and keep warm.

Tilt skillet, add vodka and flame it. Shake skillet over heat until flame dies. Add stock and boil until liquid in skillet is reduced by half. Remove from the heat, add sour cream and chives, stir to blend, taste sauce, and adjust seasonings as desired with salt, pepper, and remaining 3 t. lemon juice.

Make a bed of cabbage on one or two serving plates. Position fillets atop the cabbage and cover lightly with sauce. Place a 1/2 T. of caviar and green onion tops atop each fillet and serve at once. Serves eight.

Noodle Pudding Kügel

Christmas Eve would not be complete without this famous noodle pudding recipe given to me by my children's great-grandmother, Mayme. This is a recipe that I must always remember to double, because so many ask for second helpings.



INGREDIENTS

1 8 oz. pkg. broad noodles
1 t. cinnamon
4 eggs
1/2 c. honey
2 apples, chopped
1 c. raisins
1 stick butter

Cook noodles in boiling water for about 7 minutes, until almost tender. Blanche with cold water and drain. Beat eggs separately. Add 1/2 t. cinnamon, 1/4 c. honey, raisins, apples, and 1/2 stick melted butter. Mix well; fold in noodles. Grease a 9" x 13" x 2" pan and fill with noodle mixture. Sprinkle remaining cinnamon and honey on top and drizzle with remaining butter. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Sweet and Sour Fish Słodko - kwaśna ryba

This is one of my all-time favorites. You may find a recipe similar

to this one in a Jewish or Polish cookbook. It is one of the most interesting, tasteful, and memorable fish dishes I have ever had. I am still hoping that my children will continue the legacy of preparing this dish. I have made this dish in the past, but only for adult company. It's guaranteed a gourmet crowd pleaser.

INGREDIENTS

4-6 lbs. fresh trout (fillets) cut into 4-inch pieces
Water to cover fish
Juice of three lemons
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 bay leaves
Brown sugar to taste, I prefer two fistfuls.
12 ginger snaps (approx.) soaked in 1/4 - 1/2 c. of water
1 small box raisins (light or dark)

Mix everything together, except lemon juice. Let mixture come to boil, then pour in lemon juice and once again bring to a boiling point. Continue to boil until mixture has thickened. Be gentle with this mixture so that fish pieces do not break. Cook at low heat for one hour. Cool in pot all afternoon so that sauce thickens slightly and fish pieces do not fall apart. Place fish on platter, cover with plastic wrap. Make sure you garnish fish with onion slices and raisins from the mixture. Pour most of the sauce onto the fish to keep it moist. The sauce will gel once refrigerated. Serve cold. All of this can be done two days in advance and refrigerated. Serves 8-12.

Sweet Cherry Mélange Kompot z wiśni i gruszek

This is a variation of the traditional fruit compote which is served at our *Wigilia*. It is another dish appropriate for this joyous event.

INGREDIENTS

1 can (16 oz.) light sweet cherries
1/2 t. shredded lemon peel
1 can (16 oz.) dark sweet cherries
2 T. brown sugar
1 can (16 oz.) Bartlett pears
2 cinnamon sticks, broken
1 can (8.75 oz.) apricot halves
5 whole cloves
1/4 c. brandy (optional)

Drain fruits, reserving 1/2 c. syrup from each fruit can. Combine reserved syrups with brown sugar. Add fruits, spices, and lemon peel. Heat gently for 10 minutes. Heat brandy. Ignite and pour flaming liquid over hot fruits. Serve immediately. For an added flare, place reserved juices into a chafing dish... and follow the recipe as you would if you were using a pan over the stove. Makes 8-10 servings.

Smacznego! Wesołych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!



All photos courtesy of the author.

MINNESOTA VOICE

Remembering Monsignor Majer: A Founding Father of Polonia

by Mark Dillon

The politics of partitioned Poland kept Msgr. Dominic Majer from practicing his faith in his homeland and led him to emigrate to the U.S. in 1873. Once in America, he faced an insurance monopoly that drove some of his fellow priests to condemn his efforts to support two new Polish fraternal organizations in the 1890s.

Msgr. Majer's name is fondly remembered in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. and Springville, N.Y. (south of Buffalo) as the co-founder of the Polish Union of America. One has to dig a little harder, however, to learn about the important role he played as what would today be termed a "community organizer" for Polish Americans in both St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Originally from the Russian partition, Majer attended seminary in Warsaw, and was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in Vienna, then capital of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. However, Orthodox Russians saw him as a liturgical spy and would not let him return home. Majer was initially assigned to a parish in Lvov, then called Lemberg, and came to America after a fellow priest convinced him of the value of mission work in the United States.

SUPPORT FOR ST. ADALBERT'S.

Upon arriving in Minnesota, Majer became a friend to Polish community members who felt they were being left out. In St. Paul, parishioners at St. Stanislaus parish, not happy with being excluded from management while being asked to fund construction of a rectory for a pastor of Czech heritage, found a welcome supporter in Majer. In 1880-1881, he helped the Poles of

St. Paul found St. Adalbert's parish in another part of town.

Initially, Polish parishioners purchased and repurposed the French-Canadian heritage wooden Church of St. Louis as a home for St. Adalbert's, and built a bigger church of brick and stone in 1911, the year pastor Majer died. Majer's funeral in March that year was one of the first events at the new church, which today is home to a Vietnamese Catholic community.

"Majer was the first Polish priest to be made a prelate in the United States," notes Historic Saint Paul website writer Jane McClure. "He was active in efforts to promote the Polish Catholic church and steer a course between competing factions in America's Polish Catholic churches."

BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION IN MINNEAPOLIS.

One divide Majer bridged was the social distance across the Mississippi River, which over the years has been as wide as the Hudson River between New Jersey and New York. As in St. Paul, Minneapolis Polish Catholics wanted a church of their own.

In the early 1880s, Poles in Northeast Minneapolis generally attended Mass at St. Anthony of Padua or St. Boniface, but they went to St. Adalbert's to go to confession in Polish and to hear Majer's Polish sermons, according to a *History of Holy Cross Parish, 1886-1986*.

Msgr. Majer's effectiveness as a preacher at St. Adalbert's was noted by the Winona, Minn. Polish newspaper *Wiarus (Faithful One)* reporting on the installation Mass of Fr. Jakub Wojcik (Souce: *Poles in Minnesota*, by John Radzilowski).

"It was so moving that nearly everyone wept uncontrollably," the

paper said in July 8, 1886 report.

Majer's leadership was matched by his humility. Not being territorial, Majer formed a lay committee at St. Adalbert's to help Minneapolis Poles find new alternative space with John Ziemkowski as president; Frank Lilla as treasurer; and Boleslaus Volkman, secretary.

This January 3, 2021 marks the 135th anniversary of the group's purchase of two lots for \$850 on the southeast corner of the present intersection of Seventeenth Avenue and Fourth Street Northeast – the current site of Holy Cross Church. (By the way, in October, Holy Cross expanded its campus with the purchase of single family home at 1606 Fourth St. NE).

It is difficult to learn more about Majer's days as pastor at St. Adalbert's as early parish records are housed at the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, and the school has currently banned public access to its archival materials as part of COVID-related safety restrictions.

Radzilowski's *Poles in Minnesota* describes Majer as one of the few clerical leaders who "were able to hold both the trust of their bishop and the loyalty of their parishioners."

AN INSURANCE RIVALRY.

One facet of Majer's civic work is that he pioneered groups that helped first generation Polish Americans shed



Majer was the first Polish priest to be made a prelate in the United States.

the financially autocratic world left behind in Europe to build more democratically-run structures.

Majer's support for the then-emerging Polish National Alliance and founding of the Polish Union of America – a competitive threat in attracting prospective insurance policyholders – did not sit well with the Chicago-run Polish Roman Catholic Union of America (PRCUA).

An opinion piece in the April 11, 1894 edition of the Winona, Minn. newspaper *Katolik* berated PNA leaders for promoting "disunion" while quoting from an anti-PNA 1892 statement signed by several bishops and priests.

While the PRCUA "endeavors to unite the Polish Catholic people in America for better mutual assistance in temporal needs, as well as for promoting morality and civilization" the PNA was, according to the newspaper statement, "self-styled Polish patriots, who separated themselves from the Catholic Union in 1874" and "under the pretext of patriotism and civilization" were resolved to "wipe out" the PRCUA, aided by "insidious theories of the liberal press."

Majer was at the "center of these conflicts" says Radzilowski's book. A founding member of the PRCUA, Majer had a falling out with group leader Fr. Wincenty Barzynski of Chicago and then led a group of dissident priests from Minnesota and Wisconsin to support the PNA, who then brought the PNA's 1887 national convention to St. Paul.

BOARD OFFICER THEFTS.

Two years later, however, things soured at the PNA in Chicago as a former board officer embezzled an estimated \$12,000 of members' money.

According to a Sept. 28, 1889 report in *The St. Paul Globe*, a board member allegedly forged reports of members' deaths to collect bogus policy claims, and also took advantage of lax financial controls that enabled him to be the sole signatory for bank withdrawals.

Faced with scandal, a perceived lack of personal accountability at PNA, and what he felt was rising anti-clerical sentiment at the organization, Majer struck out on his own in 1890 by starting Polish Union of America.

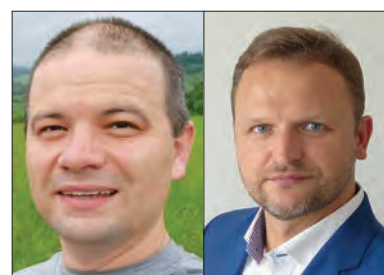
Eventually, a culturally divisive atmosphere in Minnesota prompted PUA to move its headquarters to Buffalo, N.Y., where it then thrived. By 1937, when the fraternal insurer was headquartered in Pennsylvania, it had 50,000 members and 460 lodges. At the time, then PUA Secretary S.W. Warakowski said "Poles in the hard coal region have felt the common needs and contributed to common solutions" adding "those who labor in the dark have not only succored the needy but encouraged the young to follow the light of American opportunities."

A FINANCIAL LEGACY. After helping PUA find its footing, Msgr. Majer also thrived, saving up a tidy sum during his life through bond investments. According to his 1911 probated will, he left \$15,673 (about \$350,000 in today's dollars) to his brother Paul Majer in Silniczka, Poland, a village about 60 miles southeast of Lodz, \$3,000 to St. Adalbert's, \$2,000 toward the construction of the St. Paul Cathedral and \$1,000 plus a year's salary to his housekeeper, Maria Riley. His nephew, Vincent Majer of Minto, North Dakota got the priest's gold watch.

Genealogists in Poland, United States to Hold Zoom Conference in January

In June, Covid-19 cancelled the Polish American Foundation of Connecticut's trip to Poland. The June trip included a day at the Polish genealogy conference in Warsaw where one of the trip organizers, Dorena Wasik, was scheduled to speak. All the trip participants were disappointed by the trip cancellation. Other Polish genealogical societies across the United States had similar problems — cancelled trips to Poland and cancelled conferences.

Genealogy researchers in Po-



Professional genealogists (l. to r.) Piotr Nojszewski, Aleksandra Kacprzak, Lucjan Cichocki, Marta Czerwieniec, Michal Jan Marciniak, and Tadeusz Pilat will present twelve lectures on six Saturdays next month.

land faced their own problems. The pandemic closed the churches and archives needed to perform

research and stopped their clients from traveling to Poland in search of long-lost family. COVID-19 was claiming another victim: genealogy research.

Wasik and the Polish American Foundation discussed what they could do to help American genealogists unable to travel to Poland, researchers in Poland who could not perform research and Polish Genealogical societies who cancelled events. The answer was easy: a ZOOM genealogy lecture series featuring six professional Polish genealogists living in Poland. The lecture series will consist of twelve lectures on six Saturdays, starting in January 2021. The series is free with a \$40 Polish American Foundation membership, but if you belong to an affiliated Polish Genealogical Society, you can join the Polish American Foundation for \$20 to access the free lecture series.

The Polish Genealogical Society of America, based out of Chicago, was the first on board with the project and has worked with the Polish

American Foundation to design and promote the event. Robert Pine, PGSA Vice president, described the lecture series as a "win-win" for their organization. "The series has some topics we have never offered and the discounted membership it is a nice benefit for our members" says Pine. The Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan, the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts, the Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota, the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State and the Toledo Polish Genealogical Society have all signed on as affiliates. Also joining the genealogical societies is the Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown, Conn., which is a genealogy-based library and the Polish Heritage Society of Nebraska.

The main organizer, Wasik comment about the lecture series, "The response from the Polish Genealogical Societies has been very positive and they are excited to be able to offer a discount to their members." Any interested Polish Genealogical

Societies and Cultural Organizations are welcome to become affiliated members until December 1, 2021. There is no cost for a Society or Organization to affiliate and then give their members the discounted Polish American Foundation membership.

Besides the Polish Genealogical Society of America, the Polish American Foundation is working with the Stowarzyszenie Polscy Profesjonalni Genealodzy (the Association of Polish Professional Genealogists). The group, based in Poland, was established in 2019 to provide professional genealogists with opportunities to learn from each other and provide even better services to their clients. They are providing three of the speakers, including their vice president Michał Jan Marciniak.

Wasik hopes to have attendees from as many different Polish Genealogical Societies as possible. "I hope this event will bring the Societies and cultural clubs together and we can learn about what each one has to offer. We will be running a "commercial" between the lecture sessions which will highlight the affiliated organizations and what events they are offering. I am also excited to introduce some previously unknown speakers to a new American audience."

For information on the lecture series go to www.paf-welcome-home.org or you can contact Dorena Wasik at dorenaw@paf-ct.org.

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Included is a helpful genealogical contact sheet to help check your family records in Poland, track down ancestral homesteads and possibly even turn up long-lost relatives. For more information, please contact: strybel@interia.pl.

REVIEW

Wheeling's Polonia puts West Virginia's Polish Community in focus

reviewed by
Matthew Stefanski

Thinking of early 20th century Polonia in America conjures images of bustling neighborhoods teaming with new immigrants, crowded tenement houses, church steeples and factory smokestacks. Such Polish enclaves could be found in numerous U.S. cities at the turn of the century, usually clustered around booming industrial plants, which they powered with their labor. Although places like Chicago and New York became epicenters of Polish immigration, large cities were by no means representative of the entire Polonia experience at that time.

In *Wheeling's Polonia: Reconstructing Polish Community in a West Virginia Steel Town*, William Hal Gorby seeks to reframe smaller urban communities as equally important to understanding the Polish emigre experience. "Given that most Americans did not live in cities over several hundred thousand

people," he argues, "turning our attention to smaller urban locals dramatically alters our understanding of the lived experiences of working-class immigrants." With this guiding aim, Gorby takes readers on a fascinating journey through nearly 50 years of rich Polonia history in Wheeling, West Virginia.

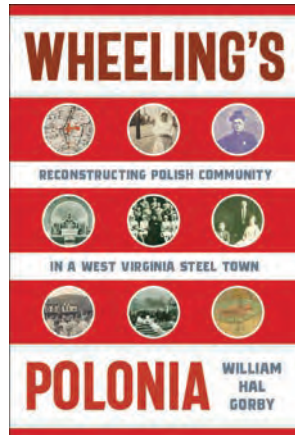
To the casual observer, West Virginia is hardly a place associated with Polonia. A rugged Appalachian region, it was an agricultural state at the turn of the century, with a predominantly rural, protestant population living in small communities sprinkled throughout its numerous valleys. However, the industrial northern panhandle, situated along the Ohio River, was different. In close proximity to manufacturing centers like Pittsburgh, and with the river as a means of transportation, the hamlets here quickly developed into centers of industry, powered by the coal from surrounding mines.

Through in-depth research carried out over the course of a decade, Gorby presents a comprehensive picture of a Polish community in Wheeling as it established itself, overcame numerous obstacles, and prospered. While the individual members of Polonia were attracted to the area by its plentiful jobs in local furnaces, factories and coal mines, it was the Church of St. Ladislaus which they built that grouped the Polish immigrants together and formed the nucleus of their community. Under the steady leadership of Father Musial, who was pastor of the parish from its inception in 1902 until 1961, St.

Ladislaus served as the spiritual and social center of the Polonia and helped to shape its identity. From processions and picnics to weddings and funerals, the parish was a convenor and conduit to expressions of "Polishness" in the community. Hal Gorby expertly conveys to readers the multifaceted role that the parish played in the life of Wheeling's Polonia.

Over the course of nine chapters, readers learn about how Polonia in Wheeling dealt with grief and hardship, wartime mobilization, labor strikes, economic downturns, poverty, nativism, prohibition, and assimilation over the years. And while the people and places described in *Wheeling's Polonia* are unique to the upper Ohio River Valley, the forces the book explores affected Polish communities large and small across the United States. This makes Hal Gorby's work a fascinating read even for those who have never stepped foot in the Mountain State.

There are surely many other small and mid-sized Polonias that have been overshadowed by larger neighbors and still await a comprehensive accounting, places like my native Bayonne, N.J. While Wheeling has some unique characteristics, being that it was a mostly urban, industrial, Catholic community in a state that was otherwise not; its Polish history, as Hal Gorby has shown, is absorbing, relatable, and no less worthy of documenting than that of larger metropolises. Wheeling's Polonia established fraternal lodges and joined labor unions, set up small businesses, bought liberty bonds and sent their sons to war, including 56 men who joined the Polish Haller Army during World War I. While St. Ladislaus closed 25 years ago and the factories that surrounded it have long been shuttered, Wheeling's Polonia is fortunate to have this work to tell its history, a history as Hal Gorby puts it, "of ordinary people."




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BOOKS IN BRIEF

Women Shine in Trawinski's *The Life of Marek Zaczek*

reviewed by Mary E. Lanham

THE LIFE OF MAREK ZACZEK
Volume One – Under the Shadows of Eagles: A Historical Novel of the Period 1772–1797
by David Trawinski
Outskirts Press 2020, 442 pgs.

Set against the backdrop of late eighteenth-century Poland, is the first volume of the life of Marek Zaczek by well-known Polish American author David Trawinski. In this volume, the protagonist comes of age during the turbulent times of the partitions of Poland.

Born into a peasant's life on the estate of a duke, Marek Zaczek seems fated to work in the salt mine. As he grows up watching the duke's horses, he develops a love for the animals and soon has his heart set on working with them. As he matures, he becomes infatuated with the idea of becoming like the great winged Hussars.

Marek has aspirations that are above his station, but what he doesn't know about his origins would change his world forever. Marek's mother keeps secrets from him that will turn their lives and the lives of his grandparents upside-down and inside-out. Magda, as his mother is known, is the daughter of a noble couple who were exiled to Russia. The other secret is the truth of Marek's parentage, which she cannot bring herself to reveal to him.

The novel illustrates the cruel

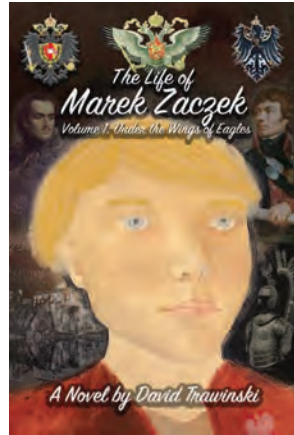
way some nobles exerted their power over the peasants that worked their land; a microcosm of how the royal rulers of some countries treated their subjects. The duke viewed the peasants on his estate as his property, which Magda bravely contradicts. Although, this novel focuses on Marek, the women in the book, especially Magda, shine as resilient characters as they rally against the hardships they are forced to endure at the hands of men.

To give a larger view of the tumultuous times, Trawinski has the characters of the duke and Count Von Arndt, an acquaintance of the duke, discuss and expound upon the changing world order. With this, the author sets the stage for his cast of assorted characters.

The Life of Marek Zaczek: Volume One – Under the Shadows of Eagles: A Historical Novel of the Period 1772 – 1797 by David Trawinski is available to purchase from the author's website, davidtrawinski.com and Amazon.com.

David Trawinski has worked in the aerospace industry for over 35 years. He has degrees in chemistry, computer engineering, and business administration.

After retiring, he switched his focus to writing. Trawinski is also the author of *The Willow's Bend* and *Chasing the Winter's Wind* among others. Originally from Maryland, he now lives in Georgia with his wife.





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Carolers with Szopka
“Do szopy, hej pasterze ...
“To the stable, hey shepherds, to the stable ...



Card 453 – Holy Family
“Maryja Panna, Maryja Panna Dzieciątko piastuje ...
“The Virgin Mary, the Virgin Mary, nurses the Child ...



Card 455
Polish Mountaineer Group
Na szczęście, na zdrowie, na to Boże Narodzynie ...
Good fortune and health to you this Christmas ...



Card 452
Christmas Eve First Star
Niech zawsze nad waszym domem świeci złota gwiazda!
May a gold star always shine over your home.



Card 454
Polish Christmas Wafer
Na szczęście na zdrowie z Wigilią!
Health and good fortune this Vigil!



Card 456 – Three Kings
Trzej Królowie — Kacper, Melchior i Baltazar — podążali za Gwiazdą Syna Bożego ...
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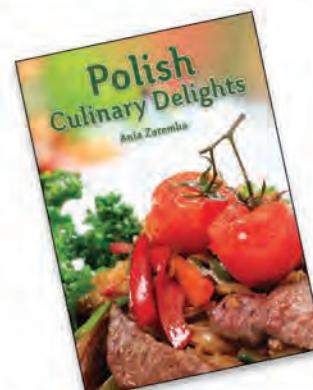
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LANGUAGE

Basia's Karpotka — Carpathian Mountain Cream Cake

by Barbara Bettlejewska

Poles love their cakes! Each region often has several distinctive types. This one is named for the Carpathians, *Karpaty*, the high mountain range in southern Poland, which was the ancestral region of my maternal grandparents. It is made with an easy *choux* pastry, called *ciasto parzone* (steamed cake in Polish), which gives this pastry its trademark "mountain ridges and valleys." The cream filling in this version is light and airy, because whipped cream is used rather than the more common butter. The amount of filling is adequate but not excessive, as this is a very rich cake. If you'd prefer more, just increase the quantities of the filling. A dusting of powdered sugar completes the cake and mimics "snow" on the mountains.

CHOUX

1 cup water
 ½ cup unsalted butter
 1 cup flour
 5 large eggs (yes, five!)
 1 tsp baking powder
 1/8 tsp salt, 1 T sugar

CREAM FILLING

3 egg yolks
 1 cup sugar
 3 T flour
 2 ½-3 T cornstarch
 2 cups boiling milk
 1 T butter
 2 T vanilla extract

WHIPPED CREAM

1 cup whipping cream
 1 to 2 T softened cream cheese
 2 T sugar

CHOUX. Grease two 9" x 13" pans. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Sift flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt and set aside. In a medium-large saucepan, bring water and butter to a boil. Remove from heat and pour in all the flour mixture. Mix quickly with a wood spoon until a dough forms. Add eggs one at a time and mix well with a wooden spoon — the dough will be sticky. Evenly divide into halves and spread into the two pans. Stop spreading dough about ¼ inch from the edge so less dough "crawls" up the sides. Smooth the top of one pan. This will become the bottom of the cake. Leave the surface of the other pan lumpy and bumpy so you have more "mountains and valleys" appear for the top of the cake. Bake around 10 min then lower the temperature to 375 degrees and bake about 15 more minutes until nicely golden brown. Remove pastries and then slit/pierce gently all over with a knife to release steam and minimize development of sogginess. Turn off oven and let pastries cool inside with the



Karpotka is easily recognized by its trademark "mountain ridges and valleys," complete with powdered sugar "snow."

door ajar. After 15 min., carefully remove pastries from pan and place on rack so the bottoms steam out. If the dough has "crawled up" too much, use scissors to trim the edges of the pastries when cool.

CREAM FILLING. Beat sugar gradually for 2-3 minutes into yolks with an electric mixer until mixture is pale yellow. Beat in the flour and cornstarch. While continuing to beat this mixture, gradually add the boiling milk in a slow stream to avoid cooking the yolks. Pour mixture into a saucepan and set over medium high heat. Stir continually with a flat metal spatula or wire whisk all over bottom and sides of pan. As custard comes to boil, it will get lumpy, but will smooth out as you stir. When boil is reached, add butter and vanilla and stir over medium low heat for 2-3 minutes to cook flour. Custard should be very thick; if not, gently cook several more minutes while stirring. Re-

move from heat and set on rack to cool. Stir occasionally while cooling to prevent a skin from forming on top. Let cool completely, then refrigerate uncovered.

WHIPPED CREAM. Assemble the cake as close to serving as possible to prolong the crispness of the pastries. Refrigerate bowl and beater a few minutes until chilled. Whip the cream into stiff peaks and add the softened cream cheese. Make certain the cream cheese is well beaten into the whipped cream to stabilize it and prevent later water separation. Gradually add the sugar. Gently fold the cold custard into the whipped cream until barely incorporated. Place the bottom pastry into its original baking pan or on a large cake plate. Spread all the cream on the pastry. Top with the other pastry. Sift a bit of powdered sugar over the top. This cake is traditionally cut into squares to serve. Refrigerate leftovers uncovered.

How's your Christmas Polish?

by Robert Strybel

Here are some terms all Polish Americans should know this time of year.

BOŻE NARODZENIE. Pronounced. "BAW-zeh nah-raw-DZEH-nyeh", literally God's Birth, Divine Birth or Nativity, this is the standard Polish word for Christmas.

CHOINKA. Pronounced. "haw-EEN-kah", this can be any evergreen in general or a Christmas tree. The fir and spruce are preferred in Polish Christmas tradition. It is set up and trimmed on Dec. 24 and kept up till at least the Epiphany (Jan. 6) or even Candlemas (Feb 2).

DRZEWKO. Pronounced. "JEFF-kaw" literally means "little tree" and is the common term for Christmas tree in southern Poland.

GWIAZDA BETLEJEMSKA. Pronounced. "GVYAHZ-dah bet-lay-EM-skah", the Star of Bethlehem, a name also given to the poinsettia.

GWIAZDKA. Pronounced. "GVYAST-kah", diminutive of "gwiazda", literally meaning little star, one of the names of Christmas

in Polish; also the name of one of Poland's Christmas gift-givers.

KOLEDA. Pronounced. "kaw-LEN-dah", Christmas carol, traditional songs honoring the Nativity, describing angels, shepherds and the Three Kings, (Wise men) with the Holy Family as their centerpiece.

KOLEDNİK. Pronounced "kaw-LEND-neek, caroler; traditionally a caroler-masquerader dressed as a shepherd, King Herod, Death, Devil, Angel, Gypsy, Soldier, etc., forming part of a caroling party making house-to-house rounds.

NOWY ROK. Pronounced. NAW-vih RAWK", New Year's Day, Jan. 1, a time for visiting, feasting and celebrating. Happy New Year is "Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!"

OPŁATEK. Pronounced. "aw-PWAH-tek", this white unleavened wafer, imprinted with nativity motifs, is sometimes referred to as "angel bread" or "the bread of love". The single most important artifact of Polish-style Christmas, it is traditionally it is broken and shared at the start of the Wigilia supper.

PASTERKA. Pronounced. "pah-STAIR-kah", Shepherd's Mass celebrated at midnight on Christmas Eve.

SZOPKA. Pronounced. "SHAWP-kah", Christmas crib, Nativity set.

WESOŁYCH ŚWIĄT. Pronounced "veh-SAW-wikh SHFYONT, Polish for Merry Christmas.

WIGILIA. Pronounced. "vee-GHEEL-yah", Christmas Eve, literally, the Vigil, to Poles the single most important day of the year.

ŻŁÓBEK. Pronounced. "ZHAWW-bek", Christmas crib or Nativity set.

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WIGILIA FAVORITES

Creamed Herring Salad

by Barbara Rolek

Creamed herring salad starts with pickled herring, a much-loved Eastern European treatment of this fish. Pickled herring are featured in oil, creamed, even fried, and appear at Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, Carnival, Lent, weddings, baptisms, and on and on.

In Polish, this is known as *salatka śledziowa w śmietanie*.

This herring salad is made with potatoes, hard-cooked eggs, and sour cream. Sometimes grated beets are added. It's often eaten as a main course and on fast days.



PHOTO: ANIAGOTUJE.COM

Prep: 20 mins
Cook: 20 mins

INGREDIENTS

2 large russet potatoes (peeled, cooked, and cooled)
4 fillets herring (patted dry and finely chopped)

1 medium (3" dia) tart apple (finely chopped)
1 tablespoon red or yellow onion (finely chopped)
1 spear medium dill pickle (finely chopped)
1/2 to 1 cup sour cream
2 tablespoons vinegar
1 dash pepper (to taste)
1 large hard-cooked egg
Optional: fresh dill sprigs

MAKE IT

Add finely chopped herring, apple, onion, and pickle, and mix well.

In a separate small bowl, whisk together sour cream and vinegar and combine with herring and the other ingredients.

Finely chop the egg white and transfer to the salad.

Crumble the egg yolk into the salad and mix well.

The salad should be salty enough from the pickled herring, but add pepper to taste. Refrigerate until ready to serve and garnish with dill sprig, if desired.

Easy Polish Beet Soup (Barszcz Czysty Czerwony)

by Barbara Rolek

Borscht — the Eastern European sour soup made with beets and served hot or cold — is known as *barszcz* in Polish. This soup is slightly different. Whereas traditional borscht is an opaque purple and commonly includes meat, tomatoes, and cabbage, *barszcz* is more of a basic beet broth that is somewhat translucent, whether red or white in color.

Traditional *barszcz* is often made with a *kwas* or sour starter; sometimes people even chill this fermented starter and drink it, as you might with kombucha. However, if the soup is red, then the *kwas* was made with fermented beets (*kwas buraków*). If the *barszcz* is white, it was made with fermented rye flour or rye bread, (*żur* or *kwas chlebowy*).

This easy, clear red Polish beet soup recipe doesn't use a sour starter but instead takes a shortcut and gets the desired hint of sourness from lemon juice or vinegar. This soup is great eaten hot with boiled potatoes or cold with rye bread.

This meatless soup is often served with mushroom *uszka* ("little ear" dumplings) for *wigilia*. When served this way, it is then referred to as *barszcz wigilijny*.

Total: 60 mins
Prep: 15 mins
Cook: 45 mins
Servings: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

4 whole beets (2 cups sliced canned or jarred beets)
4 cups stock (chicken, beef, or vegetable)
1 clove garlic (minced)

1 teaspoon sugar
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (or 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar)
Black pepper (to taste)
Salt (to taste)
Optional: boiled potatoes
Optional: fresh dill (chopped)

MAKE IT

If using fresh beets, heat the oven to 400 F. Wrap beets in aluminum foil and roast until tender, about 30 to 45 minutes. When cool enough to handle, peel, and slice into strips or julienne.

In a medium pot, bring meat or vegetable stock to a boil. Add sliced beets, garlic, sugar, lemon juice, and pepper and salt. Simmer 10 minutes.

Serve hot with optional boiled potatoes and garnish with chopped dill. Enjoy.

Kutia Wigilijna (Polish Christmas Cooked Wheat Pudding)

by Barbara Rolek

Kutia wigilijna or Christmas cooked wheat pudding, consisting of whole or cracked wheat or barley (rice for the aristocracy!), poppy seeds, honey, and sweetmeats (*lakocie*) like figs, raisins, and nuts, and sometimes cream, is typically the first course served at *wigilia*.

Originally, *kutia* was eaten only in eastern Poland where it borders with Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania, but today it is becoming more popular throughout the entire country. The ingredients are variable depending on taste, availability of ingredients, and budget.

There are hundreds of variations for *kutia*, and it exists in other cultures including Russia and Ukraine where it is known as *kutya* or *sochivo*, Lithuania, and Slovakia. (Serbia—*koljivo*, Romania—*coliva*, Bulgaria—*kolivo*, Greece—*kollyva*, Middle East—*kahmieh*, Armenia—*anoushabour*.)

Wheat berries are available at health food stores and online, but kamut berries, whole-grain barley or rice can be substituted with good effect (cooking time must be adjusted).

This recipe is an amalgama-

tion of several from Robert and Maria Strybel's "Polish Heritage Cookery" (Hippocrene Books Inc., 1999).

Prep: 60 mins
Cook: 3 hrs
Plus: 8 hrs

INGREDIENTS

1 cup wheat berries or kamut berries (rinsed)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup poppy seeds
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
4 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 lemon (zested)
2/3 cup plumped raisins

OPTIONAL INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup ground walnuts
1/2 cup coarsely almonds (ground and blanched)
5 plumped figs (chopped)
5 plumped dates (chopped)
1/2 cup half and half

MAKE IT

Place rinsed wheat berries in a large pot or Dutch oven and cover with water by about 5 inches. Stir, cover, and let stand overnight.

When ready to cook, drain the

wheat berries, rinse, drain again and place back in the pot. Add 6 cups cold water and salt, bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer, and cook until tender (anywhere from 90 minutes to 3 hours). Drain and set aside to cool.

Prepare poppy seeds by placing them in a saucepan with water to cover by several inches. Stir and let stand 20 minutes. Pour off any impurities that rise to the surface, then drain through a sieve, rinse under cold water and drain again. Return poppy seeds to the saucepan and scald with boiling water to cover by an inch. Cover and let stand 15 minutes.

Place saucepan on the burner, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Poppy seeds are ready when they can be pulverized between the fingers. Drain and grind once in a poppy seed grinder or 3 times in a regular grinder.

In a large bowl, combine cooled, cooked wheat, ground poppy seeds, confectioners' sugar, honey, vanilla, zest, raisins and walnuts, almonds, figs, and dates, if using any or all.

Mix well and add half and half, incorporating thoroughly.

Refrigerate until ready to serve.

New Year's Superstitions



Eating pickled herring (*marynowane śledzie*) as the first bite of the New Year brings good luck to those of Polish descent.

by Kasia Scentsas

The New Year (*Nowy Rok*) is right around the corner, a time we set aside for getting rid of the old and bringing in the new. Throughout history, most cultures have drawn an association between a person's actions on that New Year's Day and their fate during the following year. Here are a few of the New Year's superstitions (*przesady*), taboos (*tematy tabu*), and old wives tales (*babskie opowieści*) still in general circulation:

- One of the more popular beliefs is that kissing your beloved at the stroke of midnight ensures twelve months of continuing affection. Failing to do so is said to produce the opposite effect.
- Never begin the New Year with unpaid debts (*niesplacone dlugi*).
- Empty cupboards at the turn of the year foretell a year of poverty (*ubóstwo*).
- The first person to enter your home after midnight foretells the kind of luck you'll have in the coming year. A tall, dark, handsome male bearing small

gifts is said to bring the best luck. According to this same tradition, no one should leave the house until someone first enters from outside, and nothing should be removed from the house on New Year's Day.

- Opening all doors and windows at midnight lets the old year escape.
- Babies born on New Year's Day are said to have the best luck throughout their lives.
- A Polish tradition states that if you wake up early on New Year's Day, you will wake up early for the rest of the year. And if you touch the floor with the right foot when getting up from bed, you could expect a lot of good luck for whole new year.
- Eating pickled herring (*marynowane śledzie*) as the first bite of the New Year brings good luck to those of Polish descent.

While many of these traditions are based on mere superstition, the idea that what we do on the first day of the New Year affects our entire year remains popular. Choose your actions carefully!

The Most Important Day

by Robert Strybel

To Polish people everywhere, Christmas Eve is the single most important day of the year. Steeped in religious belief, tradition, and folklore, it is usually shared with one's nearest of kin. It is a festive meal of once-a-year treats and unique customs such as hay under the table-cloth and an empty place-setting at table. These beautiful old customs should be passed on to the next generation.

Wieczerza wigilijna (Christmas Eve Supper) is Poland's single most

important family gathering. It is rife with beautiful symbolism and age-old customs. Hay is scattered on the table beneath the table-cloth, and the meal begins when the evening's first star appears in the sky. It comprises (depending on local tradition) either a dozen or an odd number of meatless dishes. The meal begins when the evening's first star appears in the sky with the sharing of *opłatek*. After the meal, *kolędy* (Christmas carols) are sung and gifts are exchanged, after which the family attends *Pasterka* (Midnight mass).



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SPORTS

Skowronek Carries on Notre Dame Tradition

by Tom Tarapacki

Graduate transfer **Ben Skowronek** has made a big impact at Notre Dame, where his family has a strong sports connection.

The new receiver for the Notre Dame football team is related to one of the greatest names in the school's history:

Johnny Lujack, who won the 1947 Heisman Trophy. Alice Skowronek, sister of Ben Skowronek's great-grandfather Stanley, was Lujack's mother. "I met [Lujack] at a Polish-Catholic funeral in western Pennsylvania years ago," recalled

Notre Dame transfer Ben Skowronek is related to Ben's father Dave who, like Lujack, is from Connellsville,

Pa. Now 95 and living in southern California, Lujack is the oldest living Heisman winner.

Ben suffered a recurrence of a hamstring injury after starting in Notre Dame's first game this season, but came back to make big contributions. That included a pair of leaping grab-and-gos totaling 107 yards and two touchdowns at Pittsburgh.

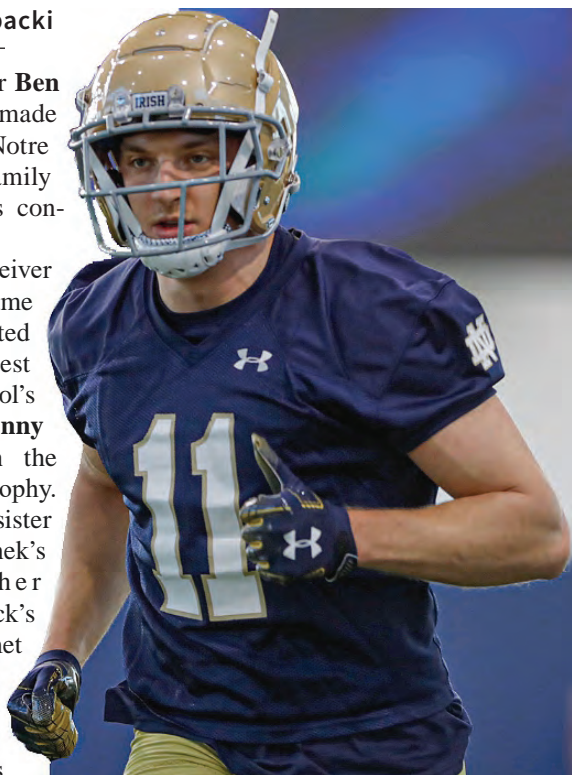
Skowronek played in 43 games for Northwestern, making 110 catches for 1,417 yards and eight touchdowns. In high school at Homestead/Northwestern HS in Ft. Wayne, Ind., he played receiver, returner and safety, and led his team to the 2015 Indiana 6A Sectional Championship. Ben also played basketball, winning the Indiana 4A state championship and lettering twice.

AS SEEN ON TV. Remember **Tom Emanski**? His infomercials for a series of baseball instructional videos were aired on ESPN constantly in the late 1990s and early 2000s and made him a household name.

The baseball coach from New Jersey had developed a "building block" approach to improve the fundamentals of hitting, running, and fielding. He tested his techniques on students at Baseball World, a youth baseball school in Florida. His teams found success winning back-to-back national youth AAU championships in three divisions: 12 and under (1990), 13 and under (1991), and 11 and under (1992). Emanski also coached the 1996 Junior Pan American team to two wins against Cuba and the gold medal.

Emanski decided to put together a set of nine video tapes that laid out his fundamental techniques of baseball. The key was getting the spots on ESPN, which would enable Tom to reach his target demographic. Those ads would have been expensive, but Tom was able to negotiate a deal in which ESPN would get a cut of every video that Emanski sold from the commercials. As a result, ESPN ran the ads a lot, and Emanski sold a lot of videos.

The ads also brought a lot of attention to Atlanta Braves star Fred McGriff, who did the spots



ciszek Gronkowski and the former Mary Bayger, and grew up on Buffalo's East Side. By his early teens, Gronkowski had established himself as a top local competitor on both the roads and on the track, and began garnering a lot of headlines. On March 6, 1920 the *Buffalo Enquirer* proclaimed, "Polish Biker Smashes Two World Marks." Iggy had set records in the ½ and ¾ mile races. Gronkowski would eventually hold five world records in distances of two miles and under.

After failing to qualify for the 1920 Olympics, Gronkowski earned a spot on the American team in 1924. Riding the 188-km (about 116 mile) course on very rough early 20th century roads, Gronkowski finished 45th among 72 starters. His time was 7:34:41.8, and he was second among the four U.S. riders. The U.S. team finished 12th out of 22 teams, as French riders won both



Urban played football, baseball, and basketball. The All-Pro also coached baseball and football in 1920.

He also played baseball, mostly catcher, and was team captain as well. He played basketball too, and even coached the basketball squad starting in his sophomore season, leading it to a 16-10 record. In addi-

In 1916, Urban went to Boston College, where he was a four-year starter at end. As the senior captain, he led the football team to an undefeated Eastern championship. Urban became the first BC player ever named to Walter Camp's All-America squad

the NFL). An end, Urban helped the All-Americans to a record of 9-1-2 in 1921. Buffalo laid claim to the league title, but it was awarded to the Chicago Staleys after Chicago defeated the All-Americans in what was supposed to have been a post-season exhibition.

Urban even played basketball for Worcester Five of the Inter-State Basketball League for a season. When he wasn't playing, Urban coached football and basketball at Canisius College in Buffalo.

Despite earning All-Pro recognition, Urban decided to leave pro football in 1923 after three seasons to focus on baseball. In 1927 he finally made it to the big leagues with the Boston Braves. Urban did very well, catching in 35 games and hitting .288 for the seventh place Braves.

The following season Urban staged a contract holdout, and soon after he reported to the Braves he was traded back to Buffalo. He then played in the minors until he retired from baseball in 1931.

At that time Urban also pulled back from coaching. He had coached football at Canisius College through the 1930 season, and had a record of 46-27-6. His best season was 8-1 in 1923. He coached basketball for the final season in 1930-31, ending with a 68-49 overall record. His best season was 8-1 in 1923-24.

Urban then became club pro at the Grover Cleveland Golf Course in Buffalo, though he helped coach various local amateur and semipro teams. In 1940 he decided to move back to his home town to coach the football, baseball, and basketball teams at Durfee High School.

A tough coach who demanded perfection, Urban soon turned the floundering athletic program around. His squads won two New England basketball championships and a state title in baseball. In 1944, Urban coached Durfee to an undefeated football season. He retired from coaching in 1960, but remained as athletic director until 1967.

Urban died in 1980 at the age of 82.



Ignatius J. Gronkowski, the great-grandfather of Rob Gronkowski, was an outstanding cyclist in the 1920s.

promoting the videos in 1991 as a favor to Emanski for fixing his swing. Emanski had met McGriff when the first baseman was 18 and playing winter ball in Puerto Rico and worked on his swing. At the time, McGriff hadn't played a game in the big leagues.

After some 50,000 airings, the final Baseball World commercial aired on January 2, 2007, during an episode of SportsCenter. The videos, sometimes referred to as "The Nine Commandments," have taught countless youths worldwide how to properly play the sport of baseball.

These days Tom, now 72, lives a quiet life in Florida, knowing that his baseball videos had more of an impact on the game than many Hall of Famers.

BUFFALO GREATS HONORED.

Two athletic greats of the early 20th century were named to the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame: cyclist **Iggy Gronkowski** and **Luke Urban**, one of America's first multi-sport stars.

Ignatius J. Gronkowski, the great-grandfather of Rob Gronkowski, was an outstanding cyclist in the 1920s. The Buffalo native held five world records and also competed for the U.S. in the 1924 Olympics.

Iggy was born in 1897 to Fran-

the individual and team competitions.

Gronkowski was the only American entered to compete in both the road race and the sprint competitions. However, he was scratched from the sprints when they were held a couple of days later.

Iggy's grandson, Gordy Sr., was an outstanding football player at Syracuse, and his great-grandson was Rob Gronkowski. He died in 1981.

Louis John Urban was born on March 22, 1898 in Fall River, Mass. Urban's father was one of the four Urbanski brothers who came from Poland. Luke attended BMC Durfee High School where he played football, basketball and baseball.

tion, he played goalie in hockey. He is one of only a few BC athletes to earn varsity letters in four different sports.

In 1922 Urban signed with the Yankees as a catcher and played in Buffalo, where he batted .299 with one homer and five stolen bases. In 1923 he hit .310.

When he wasn't playing baseball the 5-8, 165-lb., Urban played pro football with the Buffalo All-Americans of the American Professional Football Association (later called



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THE PONDERING POLE

Warsaw Cool

by Ed Poniewaz

Most of us know where the Polish neighborhoods are (or were) in the big cities of the United States. Greenpoint in Brooklyn, Polish Hill in Pittsburgh, Poletown in Detroit, Logan Square in Chicago, and the Nordeast in Minneapolis. This is just a small sample, some of which I was fortunate to have visited and experienced over the years.

I love the neighborhood idea and scene. This is not to be confused with the strictly tourist places, which are wonderful and worth seeing, but neighborhoods are where the people live and are the true pulse of the community.

We are blessed in Saint Louis to have several urban style “areas” and neighborhoods. Areas that have names such as The Central West End, Grand Center, Downtown, the Southside, and the Northside. Within each are one or several neighborhoods with names like Dutch Town, Italian Hill, The Ville, Souldard, and The Grove. Some are quaint, some ethnic, some visually appealing, and some a great mix of bars, restaurants, and nightlife. All are composed of a set of people, a special vibe, and some are simply relaxed and familiar places to live.

I started thinking (imagining really), what are the best neighborhoods in Poland? Are there any and are they equivalent to our cool and fun neighborhoods in the States? My online searching converged at two places. The first is from the *Nomadlist* travel website, which has information “for almost every major town and city in the world with a significant population.” The other is a March 2017 article by Marta Podeszwa entitled “The Coolest Neighborhoods in Warsaw,” which lists and briefly describes ten great neighborhoods within Warsaw’s metropolitan limits.

Warsaw is divided into eighteen districts. The *Nomadlist* neighborhood page is a map of the city’s districts and for instance, the main or primary district is called Srodmiescie (downtown). It was a delight for me as one who once visited the capital city as a tourist to see the map and find and relive some of the sites. However, it also allowed for matching to the Podeszwa picks in her “coolest” article to see where they are located, and give the venue perspective. This is an excellent platform for exploring Warsaw online and I would recommend you try this website not only for Warsaw but for other Polish cities before traveling.

One neat feature of *Nomadlist* is the “tags” button that activates and deactivates overlays of certain areas with descriptive text and highlights. For instance, parts of the city are tagged “hipster district,” “dogs everywhere,” “gentrification role model,” “upcoming area,” and “the most underrated place.” It is an interesting and potentially useful feature.

Here are some of the “coolest” neighborhoods in Warsaw according to Marta Podeszwa to keep in mind for your next visit:

Plac Zbawiciela (Savior Square) is located in the southwest part of the Srodmiescie or downtown district and is not that far from the famous Chopin statue. Zbawiciela is “a magnet to Warsaw’s hipsters” and the Church of the Holiest Savior borders one side of the square. It is also “home to the trendy wine bar and café, Charlotte.”

Plac Grzybowski in the western part of the downtown district is “part of the Old Jewish Quarter, centered around the grand Renaissance All Saints Church,” and “has recently experienced a lot of redevelopment and become one of the coolest areas.” There are “great dining options on the nearby Prozna Street which is made up of beautifully restored tenement houses.”

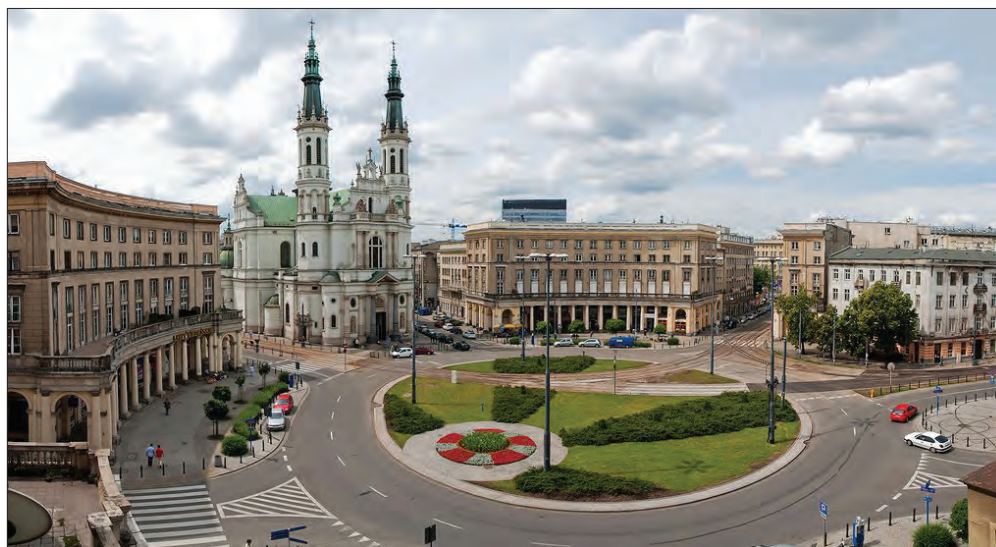
Poznanska Street is part of another neighborhood you might want to hang out. According to Podeszwa, it “is one of the liveliest streets of the central Srodmiescie district, popular both among the locals and visitors.” It has various ethnic restaurants, art galleries, and includes the “fine dining restaurant Nolita (on the nearby Wilcza Street).”

The **Praga district**, which is across the Vistula river from Srodmiescie has two cool neighborhoods: Zabkowska Street, “where you will find a raft of alternative bars and cafés...”, and the Soho Factory complex which is “a mix of post industrial buildings and new developments...” It is also the place for “one of the city’s best Polish restaurants, Warszawa Wschodnia.”

Zoliborz is a district and a neighborhood north of downtown. Per Podeszwa, it is “one of Warsaw residents’ favorite places to live and hang out. It boasts a village feel thanks to its quiet charming streets (make sure you walk around the area’s most beautiful streets such as Brodzinskiego and Wieniawskiego)...”

Other places Marta and others I surveyed have cited are Mokotow, Saska Kepa, Francuska Street, Wisla Left Bank, and Konstancin.

I hope you read the Podeszwa article and check out some of these places on your next visit to Poland and Warsaw. If you do, let me know what you think. Let me also know if you have a favorite “cool” neighborhood of your own in Warsaw or anywhere else in Poland.



Warsaw’s Plac Zbawiciela is “a magnet to Warsaw’s hipsters.” The Church of the Holiest Savior borders one side of the square.

There is a neighborhood you can visit at least in your mind and heart for sure this year and that is Bethlehem. *Wesolych Swiat* to all the PAJ and Pondering Pole readers. My wish is that you have a wonderful and blessed Christmas despite any current difficulties or hardships you have endured or are enduring. Dziękuję bardzo to Jarek Czernikiewicz for his favorite Warsaw neighborhood input.

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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GENEALOGY

Enjoying Christmas but Staying Safe

by Stephen M Szabados

Celebrating holidays are essential to the lives of Polish families, who used the calendar of holidays to set the rhythm for activities during the year. Christmas was a favorite because it seemed to be a magical time. The festive activities surrounding Christmas helped brighten the atmosphere from the dark days of the winter. Family, relatives, friends, neighbors, and strangers seem to become kind, friendly, and generous.

This year with the threat of COVID-19 looming around us, our holiday celebrations may seem even more critical to our lives as we pray for a return to normal activities. Will the magical feeling we get from celebrating Christmas with our family make this return to normalcy possible? Or will family gatherings bring unwanted results? We need to have a balance between celebrating with our families and practicing safe contact. How can we carry on the traditions of our Polish ancestors and still stay safe?

Decorating the house inside and out can quickly and safely get the family into the Christmas Spirit. The decorations can give our family the warm, welcoming feeling of

Christmas as soon as they drive up to our home. However, inside the house, the risk of transmitting COVID-19 increases, and we should take steps to minimize this risk.

HERE ARE MY COMMON-SENSE SUGGESTIONS:

- Do not travel to attend the family party. Everyone needs to stay close to home – different states and different counties follow different rules and cause confusion.
- Schedule your family gathering at a large enough house to maximize social distancing in the sitting areas. Do not congregate in the kitchen.
- Add tables to increase elbow room at the tables when eating

- Deliver food, beverages, and presents a few days before the gathering to allow time to wipe down packages and containers. Avoid last-minute shopping.
- Prepare food only at the location of the party.
- Minimize who handles food, dishes, and utensils
- Minimize who handles Christmas presents
- Before the party, ask family members if they have COVID symptoms, and urge those with symptoms to stay home
- Have masks available for all family members to wear if they need to
- Ask family members who have attended holiday parties at work or with friends at bars or

restaurants to wear masks or stay home

- Have hand sanitizer dispensers available at multiple places at the party and encourage their use
- Inform family members about these practices in writing before the party

These may seem like extreme measures, but they will minimize the risk of transmission of the virus at your gathering. I feel they are needed because I would be devastated if a family member became infected with the virus at my family celebration.

Even with the above practices, you can still enjoy the festivities. Focus on enjoying a traditional Christmas meal with all the favorite

foods from past Christmas meals. What will you serve? I have memories of cheese, sauerkraut *pierogi*, fish, ham, 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.

Bring out the family photo albums and scrapbooks. Try to create an atmosphere that encourages everyone to remember family stories. If there are small children, read Christmas stories to them. Take pictures and write down the family stories.

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

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FILM

Poland's Top Films of 2020

by Bartosz Szarek

The coronavirus pandemic and the closing of theaters has made this year one of the weirdest and the most challenging years for the film industry – in the U.S. as well as in Poland. With a number of theaters still closed and more of them facing closure due to the ongoing “phase two,” a lot of features are getting their release dates moved and others premiering early on VOD. But we are twelve months into 2020, and despite the difficult circumstances still throwing life as we know it upside down, the films persist. Somehow.

As we enter the final month of the year, with the year's releases still in the rear-view mirror, the *Polish American Journal* presents the finest Polish films of 2020. I have to admit that picking “the magnificent seven” of bold dramas, fascinating reinventions, must-watch documentaries, vital returns from established greats, or fresh features from brand new voices of the season, was no easy chore. But I have made it. And so here it is, in random order.

CHARLATAN

dir. Agnieszka Holland

Agnieszka Holland continues to bring unknown historical figures to a wider audience. A freely inspired biopic shows the eponymous “charlatan” – Jan Mikolášek – an exceptional self-made Czech healer – once utilized by the Nazis, then targeted by the Communists in the late 1950s – who amazed the generation with his astonishing ability to diagnose and treat diseases with herbs.



Agnieszka Holland's film “Charlatan,” which will represent the Czech Republic at the 93rd Academy Awards in April 2021, is based on the true story of Czech healer Jan Mikolášek, who lived from 1887 to 1973.

A figure defined by his ambivalence springs to life in Holland's outstanding period drama. Though constructed more like a thriller than a conventional biopic, the film draws attention with its truly hypnotizing performances, especially by Ivan Trojan as Mikolášek.

Charlatan – a psychological drama about a man trapped in his own life and within his own mind, attempting to break free and develop a profound human connection, is stylish, but combines the kinds of twists and turns that “the mainstream” adores and would definitely appeal to a wide variety of audiences as well as to intellectual needs of art house-foreign film-goers.

VALLEY OF THE GODS

dir. Lech Majewski

Valley of the Gods, Lech Majewski's ambitious epic is a film that majority of people may find to be

insanely vague and absurd. Nonetheless, I am still kind of content that I had an opportunity to watch it and I know that there is “something” in it that will leave you with a sense of satisfaction ... or make you want to throw your chair at the screen. Nothing in between.

If you are someone who has appreciated such wonderfully intense and seemingly imprudent cinematic visions as Emir Kusturica's *Arizona Dream* (1994), Richard Kelly's *Southland Tales* (2006) or any of Werner Herzog's titles of your choice, you would like to find it for yourself. And if you do, be sure to stick out for the mind-blowing twist finale. You know, the kind of conclusions that make your jaw-drop, your heart stop, and your head hurt.

THE HATER

dir. Jan Komasa

The Hater isn't just a character study, but an extensive critique of contemporary culture in general. Reteaming after their efforts on the Oscar-nominated *Corpus Christi* (2019), Jan Komasa and his screenwriter Mateusz Pacewicz depict the main lead as a nutcase fanatic and show how neatly he fits into an online ecosystem designed to stimulate people like him. At the same time, they pinpoint how the protagonist himself is manipulated by opportunistic business moguls and how his lack of empathy is weaponized against democracy in pursuit of profit.

Through smell and sight, *The Hater* depicts the intimacies that bind our divided times in a way that cannot help but resonate. Nobody emerges from the film looking favorable, and it exemplifies the violation of

human rights inherent in the pathological “culture of others”.

The latest Komasa-Pacewicz flick is a compelling and deeply cynical thriller about the worst aspects of our nature and culture, how they emerge to the top on the supposedly recent breakthroughs in technology, and how as more people are given a voice-and-choice to speak – fewer than ever seem willing to listen.

EASTERN

dir. Piotr Adamski

Piotr Adamski's film naturally draws comparisons with Yorgos Lanthimos' *Dogtooth* (2009) – due to its very conceptual on-screen world, a set of freakish rules and every detail appearing determined and unsettling. But Adamski's oeuvre cannot be accused of mannered epigonism and lack of independence.

A truly original work and a metaphor of Poland as a hostile place, divided into two after President Andrzej Duda's narrow re-election win, *Eastern* proved to be more than relevant. Adamski is a visual artist naturally expressing himself artistically, yet treating his films conceptually, not focusing so much on examining the psychological and emotional undertones, but on the here-and-now as a mirror or parallel of the there-and-then.

The entire cast is incredibly charismatic, especially lead actresses Maja Pankiewicz and Paulina Krzyżńska. Their chemistry is what makes *Eastern* such a compelling drama. Their on-screen “resistance” resonates perfectly with current events in Poland, in terms of feminist-led protests, pro-choice marches and battles for gender equality. Complemented by the mysterious Marcin Czarnik, they make up a great team of complex, sincere and enthralling characters to watch.

TONY HALIK: BORN FOR ADVENTURE

dir. Marcin Borhardt

Meet Tony Halik – the man of many faces, the enigma, the legend and ... the liar. A Polish film operator, documentary filmmaker, author of travel books, traveler and explorer, he carved out a special niche for himself in the annals of travel journalism.

It is no secret that he was a keen raconteur, never one to shy away from sparkling embellishments that centered around his stories. Halik once stated that he was born for adventure, therefore he aimed to present everything around him in the most attractive way possible.

We may call it “Halik's interpretation of reality”, but Marcin Borhardt decided to challenge it by making his film very far from a hagiographical account. Tony was not a saint. He had his flaws like all of us. He was a free spirit and had an obsession in which he strongly believed. The revealing of those less admirable episodes from Halik's life doesn't make him less special. To the contrary, it adds nuance and humanizes the eponymous character of Borhardt's documentary. Instead of an icon bursting with clichés and wrapped in over-extended metaphors, we get to see a complex human being.

After seeing the film, I respect Halik even more than I did before.

KILL IT AND LEAVE THIS TOWN

dir. Mariusz Wilczyński

In Polish veteran animator Mariusz Wilczyński's first full-length debut, the grey reality of life under the communist regime reaches into the most intimate domestic spheres. The theme and imagery of black and white with an occasional touch of color is used throughout the film to metaphorically represent events at the time – the world of hope and humanity in the face of horrific inhumanity and destructive interpersonal relationships.

Getting inside someone's head to feel their pain in such an undressed and melancholy manner is never easy, especially when they are openly grieving over the death of their parents. Recollecting broken memories of his childhood in the industrial town of Łódź in the 1960s and 1970s, Wilczyński creates a tense atmosphere of insecurity and horror.

The film's striking look and moving sentiment, including a cameo from the late Andrzej Wajda as a man on a train, matches perfectly with the melancholic tones of Tadeusz Nalepa's music. Although a downer on this scale will not be everybody's liking, *Kill It and Leave This Town* never fails to stun visually (resembling David Lynch's obsession with broken-down industrial spaces that disappear into blackness) feeling both professional and truly personal.

I NEVER CRY

dir. Piotr Domalewski

Piotr Domalewski's second narrative is more on the emotional scales than his directorial debut *Silent Night* (2017) was, efficiently shortening the distance both physically and psychologically between the audience and the characters. The main performance by first-time actress Zofia Stafiej is powerful but alluring both in scenes focused on her part as well as in those where she co-partners much more experienced actors (Kinga Preis or Arkadiusz Jakubik).

In *I Never Cry* the story always dictates the style, and the style is always subordinate to the needs of the story. But rather than on the story itself, Domalewski focuses on the theme. In this case – searching for a lost relationship with the female protagonist's estranged father.

I Never Cry is the first feature-film that has shed any light on the phenomenon of the so-called Euro-orphan. Domalewski follows his characters with curiosity and empathy, showing the consequences of living a life without a family, rather than simply accusing the social system for the ongoing situation.

♦ ♦ ♦

Bartosz Szarek (born 1986, Nowy Sącz) is a Polish film critic, freelance journalist, publicist and festival correspondent. Szarek's reviews appear regularly in top film and entertainment magazines in Poland, including *Kino* and *Ekrany*. Locally, he contributes to a weekly newspaper and website *Dobry Tygodnik Sądecki*, writing about film and music, covering noteworthy cultural events in Nowy Sącz and surroundings.

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IN MEMORIAM

Jan Krawiec – Freedom Fighter, Camps Survivor, Activist, and Journalist

Jan Krawiec, 101, born June 15, 1919, in Bachórzec, a village in the Małopolska region of Poland, passed away on October 28, 2020. He was a World War II Polish freedom fighter, survivor of two concentration camps, a Polish activist, journalist, and retired editor-in-chief of Chicago's *Dziennik Związkowy* (The Polish Daily News).

Upon graduation from a Polish army cadet school, Jan was commissioned a corporal. In August 1939, he was assigned to the 38th Regiment Infantry in Przemyśl, and in September, serving as a second lieutenant, he participated in the September Campaign, that began on September 1, 1939. After the Nazi invasion of Poland, Krawiec worked with the Polish underground resistance press. In

May 1943, he was captured by the Gestapo, but refused to reveal any resistance information. The Gestapo tied his hands with a rope and hung him from a hook on the ceiling with his feet above the floor. After two days, he was taken down and interrogated while lying on the floor. He still revealed nothing and his silence sealed his fate. He was transported by train to Auschwitz-Birkenau with about 200 other Poles crammed into two train cars and became prisoner #153156. He soon learned that he was lucky. There wasn't enough work for the prisoners at Auschwitz so, after three weeks of being quarantined, he was transported to Buchenwald where he was imprisoned until April 13, 1945, when he was liberated by U.S. troops.



PHOTO: GERALDINE BALUT COLEMAN

Following the war, he decided not to return to Poland. He stayed in Germany until 1949, and then he moved to Chicago. From 1950 to

1959 he worked as a mechanic at the Canfield Beverage Company, while perfecting his English language skills. From 1959 to 1963, he began his journalism career as a writer for the *Dziennik Chicagowski*, a Chicago-based Polish-language newspaper (1890-1971), while attending Loyola University in Chicago, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in political science. From 1963 to 1967, he pursued a career as a social worker for Cook County, Illinois. In 1967, he continued his journalism career by joining the *Dziennik Związkowy* and in 1968 became its editor-in-chief, a position he kept until his retirement in 1985. In 1972, despite USSR red tape, he became the only Polish American permitted to join the United States press corps on

President Richard Nixon's visit to the USSR.

For many years, he was a popular docent at the Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie, Illinois, where, as part of the Museum's Speakers' Bureau, he met with over 3,000 students to tell them about what is not written in the history textbooks. He felt it was important for them to know that the Nazi Holocaust was not limited to Jewish people.

In May 2016, Krawiec was honored as Chicago's 125th Polish Constitution Day Parade Grand Marshal. He is survived by nieces and nephews living in both the United States and Poland.

When asked how he had aged so well, his response was, "I drank good scotch with good friends."

— Geraldine Balut Coleman

Maria Chudzinski, Warsaw Uprising Fighter, Prisoner of War, and NU Law Librarian

CHICAGO — Maria Chudzinski Chase, 97, was born Maria Chmielinska in Warsaw on July 2, 1923, and passed away on November 2, 2020. As a teenager, she joined the Polish Underground Resistance (Home Army), fought in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, and was taken prisoner by the Germans. She spent the remainder of World War II as a prisoner of war at Oberlangen (Stalag VI-C) camp in Germany. Following the fall of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, Oberlangen became the only POW camp in Nazi-occupied Europe for female prisoners of war. Maria, along with 1,722 women prisoners, was liberated by the Polish 1st Armored Division on April 12, 1945. That same year she moved to England and enlisted in the Polish Air Force. She was



PHOTO: GERALDINE BALUT COLEMAN

among 84 Polish women selected for special duty.

She eventually met her husband, the late Brunon, also a captain and

pilot of the Polish Air Force on the Western Front during World War II, while each was studying at London University. There she received a degree in foreign trade. Married in London, they decided to immigrate to Chicago in January 1952. She eventually spent 45 years working in the international section of Northwestern University Law School Library.

In 2008 Cynthia Grant Bowman met Chudzinski while teaching at Northwestern's Law School. After meeting with Maria, she decided to write Maria's biography, *Beyond The Uprising: A Polish Girl's Journey*. Chudzinski is survived by two sons, Mark and Andrzej, a grandchild, Anna, and her sister, Janina Chmielinska.

— Geraldine Balut Coleman

Walter E. Nowak, Veteran, former PAV Post and State Commander

Walter E. "Wally" Nowak, 69, passed away November 15, 2020 at Baystate Medical Center. Born in Ludlow, Mass. to the late Edward and Alice (Zawistowski) Nowak, he was a lifelong area resident.

Nowak served honorably in the U.S. Air Force during Vietnam. He served for 12 years as Post Commander of the Polish American Vet-

erans of Wilbraham, and past State Commander for the PAV of Massachusetts. He was a member of the Polish American Citizens Club of Ludlow. He was also a member of the International Polka Association and played with several Polish bands throughout the years.

For over 35 years, he coached many soccer, baseball, and basketball teams in Indian Orchard, Ludlow, Chicopee, and Holyoke, leading many to championships, including Holyoke Catholic High School's Western Mass championship.

Nowak retired after 35 years with the Massachusetts State Lottery Commission where he worked as an administrative assistant. He will be remembered as someone who loved to have a good time and was never afraid to speak his mind.

Memorial contributions may be made to Immaculate Conception Church, 25 Parker St., Indian Orchard MA 01151.

Matthew Lassen: Camps Survivor and Entrepreneur

Matthew S. Lassen (Lasinski), 94, was born in Warsaw, Poland, on January 1, 1926, and passed away on October 20, 2020.

Lassen fought with the Polish Underground at 17, leaving his home to safeguard his family. He was captured by the Nazis and sent to both Auschwitz and Mauthausen. He survived because of his outstanding drafting skills while in the camps, as well as through the kindness and generosity of an artist prisoner who shared food with him. A portrait drawn by the artist was one of the few possessions Las-



PHOTO: ADELA LASSEN

sen was able to save from his imprisonment.

After Auschwitz was liberated, he continued the fight the Nazis by joining a Polish contingent of the British Army in Italy. After the war and while still in England, he developed innovative telephone technologies. Later, in the United States, he became involved with companies that eventu-

ally evolved into Verizon. He was a holder of several telephone technology patents.

In Chicago in 1951 he met and married Adela Winikaitis. A very focused and driven individual throughout his life, his great passions were real estate and stock investing.

He is survived by his wife, Adela, their children, Christine Bertrand and Karen Britten Wecker, their spouses, four grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

— Geraldine Balut Coleman

Charles Clinton "Chuck" Webb, Career Army Veteran, Member of Michigan State Polka Hall of Fame

Charles Clinton "Chuck" Webb (CW5, U.S. Army retired), age 82, of North Muskegon passed away on October 17, 2020, surrounded by his family.

Webb was born Feb. 2, 1938 to the late Albert and Daisy (Hogan) Webb in Alpena, Mich. He graduated from Grand Haven High School in 1956, and married his wife of 49 years, Theresa J. Webb on June 17, 1961; she preceded him in death on January 26, 2011.

Music talent began early in his life as a guitarist, and he started a band in the 1950's in Grand Haven called the "Rockin' Polkateers." After marrying his wife, who was an accomplished accordionist for her father's band, he added a banjo to round-out his guitar playing,

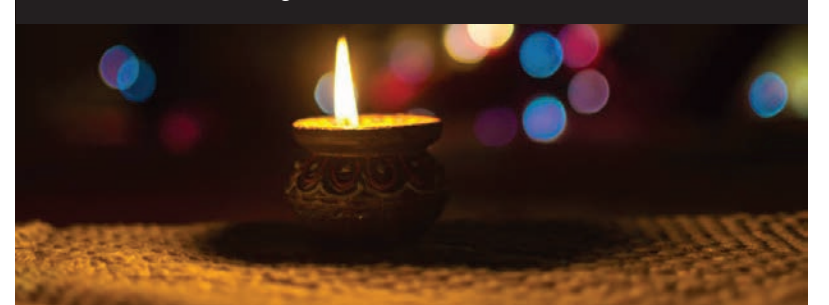
and Chuck and Theresa created the Grabinski's Orchestra, carrying on the legacy of his father-in-law. The Grabinskis played at thousands of dances, festivals, and weddings throughout the Midwest until their last job on New Year's Eve 2010.

Webb was the chairman of the Seaway and Lumbertown Polka Fests in the 1970s and 1980s, and also organized and taught polka dancing lessons for the community during that time. He was inducted into the Michigan State Polka Music Hall of Fame in 1999. His wife and father-in-law were previously inducted in 1977 and 1972, respectively. He encouraged others to learn and enjoy playing music, especially the young, and led the Polish Roman Catholic Union's month-

ly polka jam sessions and played in the Virgil Baker Orchestra for the last several years.

Webb completed a 38-year career in the United States Army in 1998, rising within the enlisted ranks from E1 to E7 and the warrant officer ranks from WO1 to his final rank of CW5. He held positions in combat support and combat heavy engineer units in Michigan, Illinois, New Jersey, and Texas. He deployed around the world to include the southern border, Egypt, Oman, and Honduras. His awards include the Legion of Merit and The Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal.

Memorial contributions may be directed to the Harbor Hospice Foundation.

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Polka's Collective Memory

by David Jackson

I have been thinking about polka music again, this time in the context of some reading I have just started doing about a concept called cultural or collective memory. Scholar Astrid Erll defines cultural memory as “the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts,” which to me means cultural memory provides a way to think about how ethnic groups preserve and celebrate the past in their current times.

In a sense, cultural memory is a broader way of looking at the entire concept of history as a form of remembering, and instead of attempting to tell the “objective” story of what happened, to look instead at what and how a group of people choose to remember. Polka music plays a prominent role in Polish American cultural memory.

Polka music plays a prominent role in Polish American cultural memory.

Perhaps the classic example of a polka's lyrics contributing to the cultural memory of Polish Americans is Happy Louie's “Love and Peace,” released in 1969. The song begins with an admonition to “cut out those Polish jokes,” and then mentions the love of his Polish grandparents, places in North America named for Polish cities, and the extent of the Polish diaspora. He namechecks contemporary Polish American leaders, as well as Pułaski, Paderewski, the trumpeter of Kraków, Piłsudski, and Kościuszko. Finally, Louie affirms his hyphenated identity with, “this Polish heart within me for America will burn.” This is very powerful stuff that inspired countless Polish Americans during the time of great popularity of Polish jokes and a simultaneous rebirth of ethnic pride.

Promoting Polish and Polish American pride is a common theme in polka music. “Polish and Proud of It” by Eddie Blazonczyk, “Polish and Proud,” by Touch of Brass, and “Proud to be Polish” by Polka Family are just a few of the songs in this vein.

In a much broader sense, many polkas contribute to the Polish American cultural memory by preserving melodies of Polish folk songs, as well as preserving the Polish language. Sure, the melodies sound a little different when played by an electrified polka band, but they're still there. In the book *Treasured Polish Folk Songs*, there are myriad melodies that are still played by contemporary Polish American polka bands, with many dating back hundreds of years!

While there is some legitimate criticism of the quality of Polish sung by contemporary polka bands, the fact that they try to sing in Polish at all, and often succeed, preserves the cultural memory of our ancestral language. As each generation gets further removed from the immigrant experience, the day-to-day value of the language declines, and therefore fewer and fewer of us speak it. But we want it maintained, and we like to hear it sung, especially around Christmas time. Polka bands and sing-

ers provide us with this benefit.

While there is some legitimate criticism of the quality of Polish sung by contemporary polka bands, the fact that they try to sing in Polish at all, and often succeed, preserves the cultural memory of our ancestral language.

Polka bands contribute to the Polish community's cultural memory of the people, organizations, events, and places we have lost. Randy Krajewski of Toledo, Ohio has contributed enormously in this area. A particularly moving duo of songs, “Jim and Lou's” and “North End Tears” come to mind.

“Jim and Lou's” celebrates a local bar that was run by the same family for more than 50 years, and was written during the time when it was still operating as a



Randy Krajewski of Toledo, Ohio has contributed enormously in the area's Polonia. His releases carry on his tradition of contributing to the cultural memory of the Polish American community, most recently in the very specific area of the history of polka music itself. PHOTO: LES KAPUSCINSKI

hangout and informal cultural center of one of Toledo's old Polish American neighborhoods located on and around Lagrange Street on the north side of the city. It celebrated an establishment we thought would always be there.

In 2005, Jim & Lou's bar was burned to the ground by rioters during one of the city's most unpleasant recent events. Krajewski penned “North End Tears” to encapsulate the sense of loss, frustration and anger the Polish American community felt at losing this iconic location.

Is there a distinction between songs that preserve in the cultural memory the people, places and things we think we will always have, and those which preserve what we have lost or fear we are losing? Or is one of the reasons we preserve memories of what we care about through song because we know we could lose them at any time?

Krajewski's latest releases carry on his tradition of contributing to the cultural memory of the Polish American community, this time in the very specific area of the history of polka music itself. “Seven Springs Saturday Night” celebrates the heyday of the Polka Fireworks held annually for decades at the Seven Springs resort, although this year's event had to be canceled due to

the coronavirus pandemic.

The song weaves the personal together with the bigger picture with lyrics about “your five best friends” (bandmates) and “best girl,” while also paying tribute to the legendary bands and their performances as the festival:

*Blaz is playing “Marylou”
Lenny's singing “Moonlight”
Brass is next and the Brothers Krew
Dynatonas at midnight*

While celebrating the past, the song implicitly reminds us that the good times are fleeting. I take the song to be not just a celebration of the past, but also as a warning that we need some new bands, fans and energy to keep polka music going. I think this interpretation

is especially true in light of the lyrics of another current release from Krajewski called, “Polka Train.”

Like “Seven Springs Saturday Night” the ram-bunctious and more abstract “Polka Train” also links Krajewski's personal musical development and career with the broader context

of what we think of broadly as Chicago-style polka music.

While celebrating the musical achievements of multiple polka greats, the song takes an ominous tone about three quarters of the way through, when the polka train rolls into a tunnel, everyone has

to hold on tight, then polka legend Dan Gury reassures everyone that, “we ain't never turning back.” Krajewski then intones that he's not on the train to achieve fame, but he just wants to ride. I take this to mean the polka music train will keep going, even if it may have fewer passengers than in the good old days, and that Krajewski is going to keep riding it and making music with his friends.

I want the polka train to keep rolling, because I love the music, and hope that the musicians we still have keep creating, and that new musicians jump on the train too.

As a Polish American, a scholar, and host of a polka radio program, I think a lot about polka music. Maybe too much. We should never forget that it's good music, often played very well by talented musicians, and that it's fun to listen to and dance to. But I also think it's more than that.

◆ ◆ ◆

David J. Jackson is professor of political science at Bowling Green State University. He is also the host of the Sunday Morning Polka Show of Northwest Ohio, <https://www.mixcloud.com/david-j-jackson/>. Jackson can be reached at jacksod@bgsu.edu.

Those interested in Randy Krajewski and Badinov's music can reach him at randallkrajewski@gmail.com.

IPA Polka Hall of Fame/Music Awards Update

CHICAGO — In the fall of 2014, the IPA established the Polka Music Hall of Fame and Awards Committee to oversee and enhance the various processes necessary to properly recognize deserving polka professionals.

The most-recent three-member committee comprised IPA 2nd Vice President Fred Kendzierski and IPA Director Brad Turk and was chaired by Polka Hall of Famer Fred Bulinski. During its tenure, this committee incorporated a number of improvements that helped to better represent all polka genres. Special thanks go out to Fred Bulinski who, for over six years, personally managed an extreme workload for the good of the greater polka industry. Congratulations for a job well done, gentlemen.

In keeping with the IPA's objective for more inclusion and diverse participation, the Executive Board recently approved the expansion of the committee to a five-member team. The new committee now leverages the talents of Polka Hall of Famers Jackie Libera, Jimmy Weber, Fred Ziwich, Gary Brueggen, and Mike Matousek.

New Innovations

As the IPA marches forward to embrace new technologies, the Polka Hall of Fame/Music Awards Committee is thrilled to announce the following innovative enhancements to the Hall of Fame and Music Awards submission processes.

Attention IPA Hall of Fame Candidates

The process for polka professionals who would like to be considered for possible IPA Hall of Fame (HOF) induction has been electronically simplified —no more hard copy writing, printing, and physical mailing.

Candidates simply need to go online to www.ipapolkas.com/application-hof and upload their biographies into the new electronic biography submission application. With the click of a button their information is forwarded to the Board of Trustees for review. Remember, to determine if a candidate is qualified to be placed on the HOF ballot, the trustees look at three areas:

1. Experience. Candidate must have 25 years or

more of dedicated professional experience in the polka industry;

2. Awards, accomplishments, achievements; and;
3. Contributions toward preserving and advancing the polka music industry. Contact information for references is also required.

Complete instructions are available on the website. The deadline to submit for consideration in the next voting cycle is December 31, 2020.

Questions may be directed to HallOfFame@ipapolkas.com.

Attention Polka Artists Vying for IPA Awards

Polka artists interested in possible music awards recognition now have an easy electronic method to get on the ballot. Beginning this year, all working polka artists seeking IPA awards for the current year must go online to www.ipapolkas.com/application-musicawards to submit their information.

All those who register are eligible for the IPA's *Favorite Band* and *Favorite Vocalist* award categories. Recording artists have a special section to upload their musical tracks and graphics to be considered for their additional awards.

In all, deserving polka artists are recognized with music awards that include: *Favorite Album*, *Favorite Song*, *Favorite Band*, *Favorite Male Vocalist*, and *Favorite Female Vocalist* for Polish and International (Slovenian, Czech, German, Dutchmen, etc.) polka styles.

An academy of 195 electors from across the country determines the award winners by casting their votes on annual ballots. The lists of polka artists on these ballots will be generated by the submissions received through the new electronic process. So, you've got to submit every year to win.

Complete instructions are available on the website. The deadline to submit for consideration in the next voting cycle is January 14, 2021.

Eligible recordings must have been released between January 1 and December 31, 2020. Questions may be directed to MusicAwards@ipapolkas.com.

DECEMBER POLKA BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays courtesy Li'l John's Polka Show, WAVL Radio 910 AM and 98.7 FM, Saturday 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and on the web at www.987jack.fm. Live streaming at www.PA_Talk.com. For information, write to: 121 Seminole Dr., Greensburg, PA 15601; (724) 834-7871; johnnalevanon@aol.com.

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

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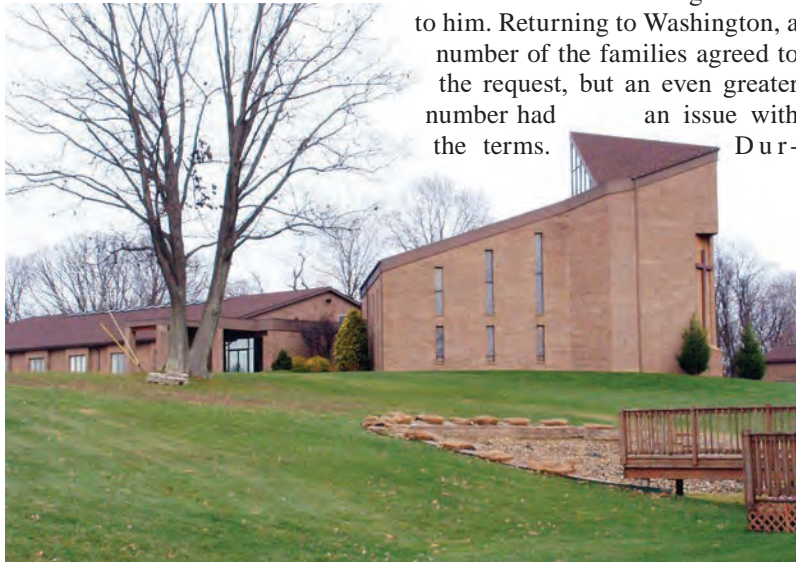
POLONIA PLACES

Holy Trinity NCC, Washington, Pennsylvania

by Gregory L. Witul

605 North Hewitt Ave.
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Status: Open

Southwestern Pennsylvania has long been home to many Polish American communities. Outside of the epicenter of Pittsburgh, the communities of Glassport, McKees Rocks, and New Castle have all developed unique and distinct Polonias in the Keystone state. About 20 miles east of the West Virginia bor-



der is another Pennsylvania Polish community of note, the area around Washington, Pa., home to the Polish Club and Holy Trinity Polish National Catholic Church.

THE ORIGIN OF HOLY TRINITY Church can be traced back to when Poles began moving into the new development of Woodland in Canton Township, just west of Washington, in 1910. A former park, Woodland offered attractive lots at affordable prices and soon became populated with Polish immigrants. After a number of families had moved into the area, they desired a church of their own to practice their faith in their own tongue. After raising the necessary funds, W.H. Fuhr was

hired to build a church and the Dunbar and Wallace Lumber Company provided the materials. In short order, a plain church with a pitched roof and gothic windows stood on Griffith Avenue ready to serve the community.

With their church finished, a delegation was sent to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Pittsburgh, Regis Canevin, to request he come dedicate their new parish and assign it a Polish priest. Bishop Canevin agreed, once the deed to the church and all its assets were signed over to him. Returning to Washington, a number of the families agreed to the request, but an even greater number had an issue with the terms. Dur-

ing the meeting, Julian Bredniak brought up an article he read in the newspaper about a Polish bishop in Scranton who didn't require his parishes to give up their church property to receive a priest. The group was intrigued by the article and asked Bredniak to write to the bishop to find out more. Upon receiving the letter in Scranton, Bishop Hodur dispatched two priests, Father Kuznik and Father Laszewski to Washington to help shepherd the Poles there. When they arrived on January 20, 1914, the priests oversaw the development of a new charter for the parish that would allow it to be fully embraced by the Polish National Catholic Church. On January 25, 1914 at the Polish

Hall a new charter was created for the parish and the name Holy Trinity was chosen.

As this was happening, some of the families wanted to stay faithful to the Church in Rome and a schism developed. In very short order, the mortgage on the property was called and it was sold at auction for \$3,420 to settle with W.H. Fuhr. When the winners of the auction emerged, it turned out to be the Dunbar and Wallace Lumber Company, who turned around and granted a new mortgage to the Polish National group in August of 1914.

Over the next year, the first society of the parish was created The Society for the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament, three acres were purchased to serve as a cemetery, and on August 25, 1915 Bishop Hodur traveled to Washington to formally dedicate the parish. The first half of the twentieth century would see the parish campus grow further, with a rectory and the church becoming debt free in 1937.

Sons of the parish would go off to Europe and the South Pacific during the Second World War with some never returning home. Around the same time, the church was renovated with the addition of stone and brick and the post-war years saw a number of renovations as well. In the 1960s the vision of a new church entered the dreams of the parish and a long-term plan was developed. Money was saved and when 25 acres along Malone Ridge Road at North Hewitt Avenue came on the market, they were purchased. It would take almost a quarter century but in August of 1988 a ground-breaking celebration for the new church was held and the next year the church was dedicated.

Today Holy Trinity is a robust and active parish under the guidance of Father Mark Swoger, and holds a number of parish events through the year including a new Fall Fish Fry.

Embassy's Kosciuszko Freedom Run



BALTIMORE, M.D. — The Kosciuszko Freedom Run – a virtual 5k run/walk – is jointly sponsored by the Washington, D.C. embassies of Poland and Lithuania to annually honor Thaddeus Kosciuszko, their shared freedom fighting national hero.

Additionally, U.S. General Kosciuszko is also hailed as “A Hero of Two Nations” by the United States and Poland.

Above, Polish National Alliance, Council 21 — “Team Baltimore” — participated in the national event on October 31, 2020 by utilizing a 5k course laid out in Patterson Park that included the General Casimir Pulaski Monument, which honors another Son of Poland and hero of America. — *Richard Poremski*

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