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DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION AND CONTINUANCE OF POLISH AMERICAN CULTURE

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**CHURCHES ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK • A MILLENNIUM OF POLISH JEWRY • PRESIDENT OBAMA VISITS CHICAGO POLONIA
NOWAKOWSKI BROTHERS SEE FUTURE FOR TOLEDO LANDMARK • POLISH AMERICAN CONGRESS ON IMMIGRATION
CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF EPIPHANY • COPERNICUS HOUSE TO BE RAZED • POLISH FILMMAKERS WIN BIG**



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

NEWSMARK

PARLIAMENT TO INVESTIGATE CIA PAYMENT FOR "BLACK SITES." (Radio Poland) — Polish MPs will investigate how the secret services used the USD 30 million received from the CIA for hosting their "black sites."

As US Senate report showed the CIA handed over up to USD 30 million to the secret services of an unnamed country that hosted the "black sites" where terrorist suspects captured in Afghanistan and Iraq were detained without warrant and subjected to "enhanced investigation techniques," i.e., "torture," Poland's daily Rzeczpospolita reported.

While the US Senate report fails to name the country in question, it leaves enough cues to make identification of Poland unambiguous, MPs of the Polish parliamentary secret-services committee said.

The cash was sent by diplomatic post from the US embassy in Berlin to the Polish intelligence headquarters, the report said. Marek Biernacki, the Polish parliamentary committee chairman, said the form of the transfer was "particularly worrying" and called for an investigation into how the money was spent.

IDA SWEEPS EUROPEAN MOVIE CEREMONY. Pawel Pawlikowski's feature film *Ida* won five top European Film prizes, popularly known as "European Oscars," at the latest European Film Awards ceremony held in Riga, Estonia. These have included best movie, best director and people's choice. Set in communist Poland's drab Gomułka era (1956-1970), it tells the story of *Ida*, a girl raised in a convent school and about to become take her vows. From her aunt, a former fanatical communist and Stalinist prosecutor once known as "bloody Wanda," she learns she was a Jewish child saved from the Holocaust by Catholic nuns. *Ida* was filmed in the minimalistic black and white convention of European art cinema. For over a year it has won more than 80 awards at international film festivals and is a front-runner for Europe's Golden Globe and an Academy Award for the best foreign film in March.

TURKEY LIFTS VISA REQUIREMENT FOR POLES. While the United States continues to dance around the issue of visa requirements for Poles, the prime minister of Turkey has announced the requirements will be dropped for Poles as part of talks marking 600 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

"Every modern inhabitant of Lehistan, meaning Poland, will be able to visit Istanbul without any barriers or difficulties," said Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu while at the Grand Theatre—National Opera in Warsaw.

The two countries were celebrating 600 years of bilateral diplomatic relations, which date back to a Polish embassy sent to the Ottoman Empire in 1414. PM Ewa Kopacz noted that "it is rare that two countries can jointly celebrate 600 years of diplomatic relations."

The Ottoman Empire was one of the only states that did not officially recognize the partitions of Poland and the country's disappearance for over a century. In return Poland was one of the first countries to recognize the Republic of Turkey after it was proclaimed in 1923.

RAIN TAKES TOLL ON LANDMARK. Last summer, the skies opened up over New York City, and inundated part of Manhattan with five inches of rain in a few hours. The deluge was more than the roof of the Kosciuszko Foundation could handle, and water made its way into the building, causing an electrical short-circuit, and thousands of dollars of damage to walls and ceilings.

To cover the cost of these repairs, the Foundation has established a dedicated Building Restoration Fund. While donations are more than welcome in any amount, \$1,000 will replace a window; \$750 will help repair or replace plaster; and \$500 will help repair a parquet floor.

To donate, send a check or money order to: The Kosciuszko Foundation, Inc., Attn: Building Restoration Fund, 15 East 65th St., New York, NY 10065. Call (212) 734-2130 if you have questions or can be of further assistance.

Meet Miss Poland



PHOTO: PAP/GRZEGORZ MONIOT

Twenty-two year-old model Ewa Mielnicka has been voted Miss Poland in a competition to find the most beautiful woman in the country. Nine ladies competed in the final, but the jury awarded the prize to Mielnicka, who wowed the crowd with her down-to-earth attitude and good looks.

Mielnicka hails from the village of Baba in Masowsze, and she won the title of Miss Masowsze in May.

The 25th annual competition was held in Krynica Zdroj in southern Poland, the first weekend of December. She will represent Poland in the 2015 Miss World competition.

Crisis Revives Cold-war Climate

Russian planes buzzing NATO airspace

by Robert Strybel

WARSAW — Poland is responding to Moscow's aggression against Ukraine by beefing up its defenses and planning to shift some of its military potential towards its eastern border, closer to Ukraine and Russia. Polish Defense Minister Tomasz Siemoniak said the plan, whose first tangible effects were expected in 2017, would include the eastward relocation of military units and investments to upgrade the country's military infrastructure.



Defense Minister Tomasz Siemoniak

After a crisis broke out over Russia's illegal annexation of the Ukraine's Crimea region, the Polish government called on its NATO allies to establish a permanent military presence on Polish soil as a deterrent to Russia's neo-imperial designs. But, fearful of antagonizing Moscow, NATO has agreed only to a rotating troop presence in Poland rather than permanent military bases Polish leaders had wanted.

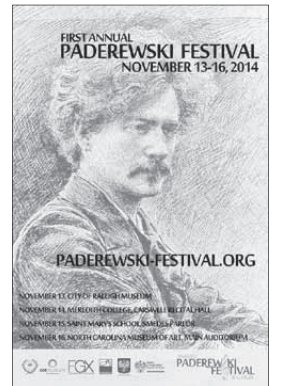
"Poland has been there for the United States," U.S. ambassador to Poland Stephen Mull said in fairly good Polish at the American troop-welcoming ceremony last year. "Today, as the transatlantic community confronts Russia's unacceptable aggression against Poland's neighbor Ukraine, a sovereign and independent state, we have a solemn obligation in the framework of NATO to reassure Poland of our security guarantee." But the lofty rhetoric could not conceal the fact that the 600-strong American troop contin-

See "Cold War," page 4

Raleigh Welcomes Paderewski

by Dr. Maja Trochimczyk

RALEIGH, N.C. — On November 13-16, 2014, the first Annual Paderewski Festival in Raleigh was organized by Dr. Mark Fountain, honorary consul for Poland in North Carolina; concert pianist Brenda Bruce; and artistic director Adam Wibrowski (working in tandem with the European liaison, pianist Barbara Stann). Three concerts and four lectures were spread over four days, seemingly encompassing the city: the City Museum, the Meredith College, Smedes Parlor at St. Mary's School, and the North Carolina Museum of Art. Halls were filled to capacity and the audiences included both the Polonia (with many researchers in biological and engineering professions) and the luminaries of cultural life in the Triangle area: the greater Raleigh-Durham, with Duke



See "Paderewski Festival," page 4

America's Championing of Polish Independence Day



PHOTO: RICHARD POREMSKI

CRUCIAL INSISTENCE OF PRESIDENT WILSON CITED. Speaking in the Polish Embassy's Blue Salon is (r.) former Prime Minister of Poland Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, flanked by Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf. Both gentlemen are framed by paintings of Stefan Czarniecki (l.) and Stanczyk. In his remarks, Minister Bielecki pointedly recalled that President Woodrow Wilson insisted upon ... and achieved ... the formal reestablishment of a sovereign Polish nation at the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, following the Armistice of World War I on Nov. 11, 1918.

by Richard Poremski

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In league with the patriotic occasion, everyone entering the Embassy of the Republic of Poland here on November 7, 2014 was pinned with a round red and white rosette, mirroring the national colors of Poland. Even the statue of Ignacy Jan Paderewski in front of the Embassy proudly sported one. The gala event being celebrated was the 96th Anniversary of Polish Independence on November 11, 1918.

At the invitation of Ambassador Ryszard Schnepf the Embassy was filled with approximately 250 guests from the Polish American diaspora, Polish military veterans, and friends of Poland from the official Washington community — civilian, military, and political. Warsaw was represented by former Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, now chairman of the Economic Council of the Prime Minister, and Jacek Junosza-Kisielewski, director of the

See "Independence Day," page 4

ALMANAC



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January Styczeń

"I regard creative activity as a kind of soul-fishing, and the 'catch' is the best medicine for loneliness, that most human of sufferings."

— *Composer Witold Lutoslawski*

1 **NEW YEAR'S DAY**

Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku!
1467. Birth of **Zygmunt I Stary**, Renaissance king of Poland.
1919. Birth of Polish American actress **Carol Landis**.

3 1795. Third Partition of Poland.

4 1925. Birth of **Johnny Lujack**, All-American and Heisman Trophy winner at Notre Dame.

5 1173. Death of **Bolesław IV the Curly**

6 **FEAST OF THREE KINGS**

On this day, K+M+B (the initials of Kaspar, Melchior and Baltazar the three kings who visited the Holy Infant) are inscribed above main entry of one's home. From this date until February 2, pastoral visits (kolęda) to the homes of parishioners are held to update parish records, discuss any family problems and bless the family and home.

7 1882. Death of **Ignacy Lukaszewicz**, inventor of the kerosene lamp. (b. 1822).

8 1681. The **Treaty of Radzin** ended a five year war between the Turks and the allied countries of Russia and Poland.

9 1797. **Jan Henryk Dabrowski** organizes his legion in Italy, and thus honored by having his name included in the Polish National Anthem.

11 1953. Death of opera singer **Marcella Sembrich-Kochanowska** (b. 1853).

13 1982. The Mass for the Nation by **Fr. Jerzy Popieluszko** at the Church of St. Stanislaus Kostka

15 1797. In St. Petersburg Russia, Prussia and Austria signed and act that terminated the Lithuanian-Polish state.

1919. **Ignacy Jan Paderewski**, 58, pianist, composer, becomes first premier of the newly created Republic of Poland.

17 1734 Coronation of **August III the Saxon**

18 1943. Jews in **Warsaw Ghetto** began an uprising against the Nazis.

19 1967. Death of **Casimir Funk** in Albany, N.Y., Polish-born biochemist who discovered vitamins.

20 1320. **Wladyslaw I Lokietek** (Ladislaus the Short) crowned King of Poland.

21 1268., Pope Clement IV gave permission to Poland's **King Premislaus II** to take over Lithuania and establish Catholicism.

24 1507. Coronation of **Sigismund I the Old**

25 1913. Birth of **Witold Lutoslawski**, composer and pianist. (inset, above).

26 1934. Germany signed a 10-year **non-aggression pact** with Poland, breaking the French alliance system. Germany violates with pact on Sept. 1, 1939 when it invades Poland.

30 1717. Surrounded by the Russian army the **Lithuanian-Polish parliament** reduced its army by half and acknowledged Russian protection.

**Wesołego Nowego Roku! Happy New Year!**

Happy New Year to all our readers and your families! We wish you happiness and health in 2015! We thank you for your support and encouragement, and hope your fascination with our shared heritage never wanes. Your interest in things Polish continues to be the driving force behind the Polish American Journal.

We send Happy New Year wishes to newscasters, advertisers, and the fraternal benefit societies who make the Polish American Journal their official publication. Your untiring dedication to this publication has given the paper an outstanding reputation, not only within American Polonia, but across globe.

The beginning of the new year is time to consider our role in this great country. Do not "be Polish" only at Christmas, Easter, or during Heritage Month. Our ancestry has far more to offer and can easily be a year-round endeavor.

Make your ethnicity a part of your day-to-day life. Take steps to learn more about your ancestry. There are several universities and colleges across the United States that offer Polish Studies or mini-courses on Polish history.

Support Polish American businesses. This cannot be overemphasized. When dealing with a Polish American merchant, let that merchant know you chose his or her services or products

because of your common heritage.

Attend Polish American functions. Planning a family outing to the ball park? Then go on "Polish American Night." Is there a Polish film series or exhibit at your local library or university? Then by all means, stop by. When was the last time you went to a polka dance?

Join a Polish club. You don't have to run for president at your first meeting. Your support—just by your presence—is important. There are Polish-based cultural, sports, veterans, religious and many, many other organizations that would welcome you as a member.

Make your heritage a year-round celebration!

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Szczęśliwego
Nowego
Roku!

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Nowego
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Nowego
Roku!

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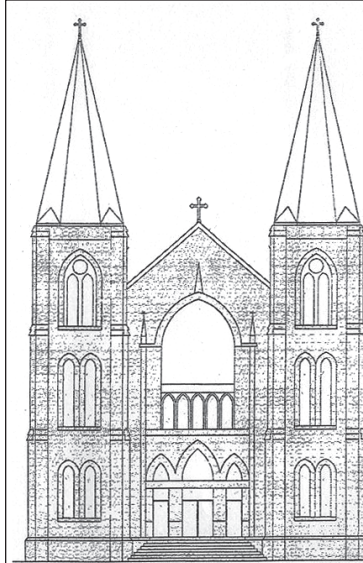
Mark Your Calendars for
Our Annual Parade
July 19, 2015

Happy
New Year!
Szczęśliwego
Nowego
Roku!

to our family, friends,
Polish Americans,
and Poles everywhere.

**RICHARD
AND PEARL
WILGOSZ**

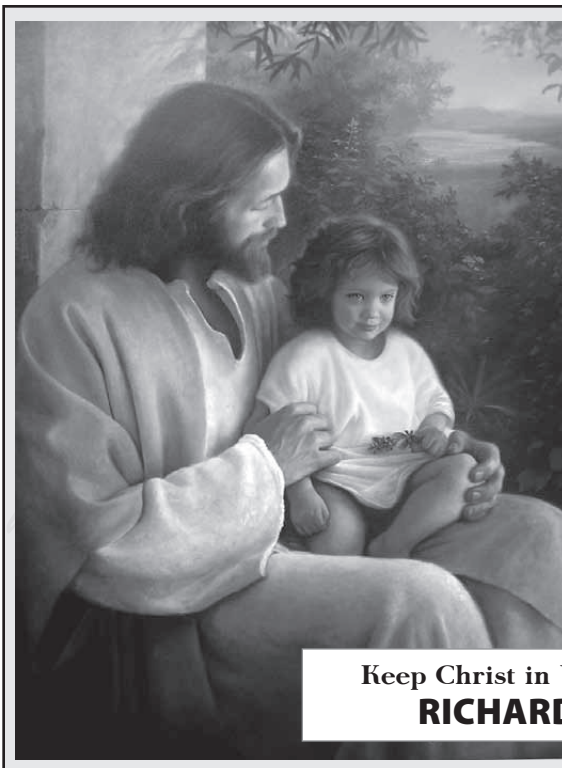
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OUR FRATERNALS / Dorothy Wieczorzak

FORUM

Life Insurance is a Benefit I Get from My Employer

Most American corporations and businesses provide life insurance for their employees. It usually is in the form of Group Term insurance. In this case, all employees are placed under one blanket policy with individual restrictions such as age and longevity of service to the employer. Today, most employers offer other benefits, such as a pension plan and health insurance. But the economics of keeping these benefits in force once the employee has retired is becoming a great economic weight on Corporate America. While the costs of providing group term life is economically sound, providing for a retiree in many cases is cost prohibitive and may not be disclosed until the time of retirement. Keeping to contracted pension benefits and even health benefits may eventually become impossible as the work force diminishes and the percentage of retired persons increases and the demand for their protection increases.

ANOTHER CONSIDERATION is the frequency in which today's employees change positions or even jobs within, and more likely, beyond their current employer. Once this change occurs, this will most often mean a cancellation of contractual agreements that include the benefits provided. In most cases, pension benefits that have been saved and added to by the employee can be converted to new plans. There is also temporary post employment coverage available for health insurance but most often does not include life insurance.

Should you be between jobs and have a family to support, unemploy-

ment may help defray some essential costs. In the event the cost of this stress may be your life, how will your family support themselves if you do not have life insurance? While you are at the beginning of your career and look forward to the next forty years, this is the best time to think *The economics of keeping benefits in force once the employee has retired is becoming a great economic weight on Corporate America.*

about a life insurance policy that will cover your final expenses. This is the time when premiums are inexpensive and affordable. You can purchase one policy payable for twenty years and have the peace of mind that comes with the knowledge that no one will be burdened with your end-of-life payments.

THIS SECURITY WILL GIVE YOU more flexibility in making choices and changes without the anxiety of what might be or could be. There are no guarantees in life but if you choose to become insured, especially with insurance from a Polish American Fraternal Society, where the premiums are reasonable, you will have the guarantee that these funds will be available when needed. Since we are not-for-profit and do not have paid agents, we can offer lower premiums and provide a simple policy for just those needs, as opposed to a group term that may offer you coverage that is several times your yearly salary and is terminated once you retire. Call us at (215) 535-2626 or (201) 935-2807 or visit us at www.polishbeneficialasoc.com or www.sonsofpoland.org.

Polish American Congress: On Immigration, a Good Step Forward, but More Needs to be Done

On November 25, 2014, President Obama traveled to Chicago to address several immigrant communities, including Polish Americans. His focus: discussion of an executive action that provides amendments to immigration-related rules and regulations that will affect millions of undocumented immigrants.

The Polish American Congress (PAC) — founded in 1944 and the largest Polish American umbrella organization in the United States with membership nationwide — urges the Obama administration and Congress to ensure that all ethnic groups living without proper documentation in this country, including persons of Polish ancestry, are fully included in the offer to help to regularize their status.

Some four million undocumented residents may be included in the White House initiative, meant to help the parents of U.S. citizens or permanent residents. In the city of Chicago alone — home to the largest Polish population outside of Warsaw — the impact can be significant, as an estimated 16,000 Poles are living in Illinois illegally. Like the others, those meeting the requirements will be allowed to remain here if they have lived in the United States for five or more years, register, pass a criminal background check, and pay taxes and other fees.

Furthermore, the PAC urges a renewed focus on Poland being able to join the U.S. Visa Waiver Program — one of the key unresolved issues in U.S.-Poland relations that was not addressed in the President's speech and one that would give Poles traveling to the U.S. the chance to come to our country without need-

ing a visa, a privilege already extended to citizens of many other European nations.

Although not technically immigration related, the fact that Poland has not yet been allowed to become a member of the Visa Waiver Program remains no less upsetting and frustrating. Today Poland is the only country in the European Schengen zone (border-free area in the EU), and one of only three remaining EU and NATO members, whose citizens must still go through the bureaucratic visa application process to travel to the United States.

This anomaly continues even at a time when the people of Poland moving to the United States in search for jobs and a better life — a key argument by U.S. consular officers when denying a U.S. visa — are a thing of the past. Today, Poland's is one of the strongest and fastest-growing economies in Europe. Poles now come as tourists, to visit relatives, or attend colleges and universities, spending money in the process and thus helping the economy here. Yet, Polish citizens applying for a visa, must still prove that they have "sufficient ties" to Poland and convince often harried consular officers that they are in fact planning to return to the homeland.

The Polish American Congress has been advocating for the inclusion of Poland into the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, among other issues, for a number of years. In connection with the President's recent announcements, the group calls on federal elected officials to ensure that Poland joins the VWP as soon as possible, for the benefit of both nations.

REASON TO GIVE THANKS. Two women from Poland who had not seen each other in nearly 70 years had a special Thanksgiving reunion in New York, where they remembered how one saved the other from Nazi persecution during World War II.

Mira Wexler, who is Jewish, recalled how German soldiers surrounded the farmhouse that served as her hiding spot when she was six years old. The farmhouse belonged to the family of Helena Weglowski, who ignored the risk to hide Mira, her mother and her brother from the Holocaust.

"My parents had huge hearts and they decided to rescue everybody who it was possible to," Weglowski told MyFox New York through an interpreter.

Wexler, 76, and Weglowski, 85, tearfully embraced when they saw each other for the first time since 1945 at JFK Airport the day before Thanksgiving. The New York-based Jewish Foundation for the Righteous arranged the reunion. The group supports Weglowski financially because of her family's good deed saving Jews from the Nazis.

Weglowski risked her life to bring food to her little friend's hideout.

"I'd hide myself and my mother in the woods and in the nights, when we could, we'd always go to Helena's home to have coats and food," said Wexler.

After the war, Wexler fled to Brazil. Weglowski left the farm, but still lives in Poland.

POLISH AMERICAN JOURNAL FOUNDATION



We invite you to become a member of the Polish American Journal Foundation. Established this year, the PAJF is a non-profit 501c3 organization. Our mission is to promote Polish and Polish American culture and traditions among members of the public and other Polish and Polish American groups. This will be done by organizing special events, networking, consultation, and gatherings.

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

OUR INITIATIVE

In this, our initial year of operation, we will solicit funds for our first funding project. In June 2015, we will ask our members how the PAJF's proceeds should be used. As a member, you can suggest any worthwhile cause: a donation to a local Polish American museum; veteran's group; scholarship fund; dance group, etc. Our board will review these suggestions and cre-



ate a ballot of the most-requested causes/recipients, which will then be voted on by current members. (Membership is yearly, starting with the date of your most recent donation). All members reserve the right to abstain from being a voting member.

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Donations are accepted in any amount. All donations will be acknowledged and may be used as charitable contributions on your tax return.

"KEEP ALIVE THIS HERITAGE"

— Saint John Paul II, Gniezno, Poland, June 3, 1979.

Please help us help our own community. Since 1911, the Polish American Journal has been an advocate for Poles and their descendants in the United States. Help us utilize over 100 years of the Polish American experience to support those who share our core values of strong family, faith, and community.

We would be happy to discuss all the various options available to you so that you can make a donation in a way that corresponds exactly to your own personal situation.

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POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE (a non-profit corporation, State of New Jersey) begins its 30th 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 six hospitals in Zabrze, Katowice, Lodz, Suwalki, Bialystok and Grajewo. 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

For information call (732) 680-0680 or write POLISH CHILDREN'S HEARTLINE, INC., 177 BROADWAY, CLARK, NJ 07066. e-mail: childshart@aol.com website: PolishChildrensHeartline.org

Paderewski Festival: Famed Pianist Played in Raleigh Four Times

continued from cover

University and about 2.2 million residents.

The Festival strengthens Paderewski's connections to Raleigh: the pianist played here four times: in 1917, 1923, 1931, and 1939. A Steinway piano he bought and signed as a gift for the secretary of his wife, Mary Lee McMillan, is in the music room of Brenda Bruce. Much like the Paderewski Competition in Los Angeles, pianists performed a couple of works by Paderewski as well as music by others: Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, Mozart, and Dutilleux. For the choice of the pianists we have to thank Prof. Adam Wibrowski, who picked two winners of the 2013 Los Angeles Paderewski Competition.

After an informative lecture about Poland's history and Paderewski's links to Raleigh by Dr. Fountain, Nov. 12, Andrew Tyson, a native of Durham, gave a recital on Nov. 13 at the Meredith College. Tyson has the markings of the future piano star: impeccable technique, intellect, and expressive power. In short: charisma. His program placed Paderewski's music in the context of classical "heavyweights" and included the Polish composer's *Minuet in G, Op. 14/1* and *Intermezzo Polacco, Op. 14/5* from *Humoresques de Concert* (1887-1888).

By starting the concert from the *Minuet* that Paderewski typically played at the end, Tyson honored the old master with a look backward, through modern lenses. The modernity of his approach was apparent in the *Three Preludes* by Henri Dutilleux (1973-1988) with their clearly articulated forms and kaleidoscopically rich expressive nuances. The Chopin selections showed Tyson's prowess as an intellectual-virtuoso: *four Mazur-*



(l. to r.): Adam Wibrowski, Krzysztof Książek, Peter Toth, Maja Trochimczyk, Brenda Bruce and A. Mark Fountain II at North Carolina Museum of Art, November 16, 2014.

kas Op. 30, the Polonaise in C-sharp Minor, Op. 26 and the *Third Ballade in A-flat, Op. 47*. Tyson, who just released a CD of *Preludes Op. 28*, is definitely a Chopin specialist. The *Études Symphoniques, Op. 13* by Robert Schumann highlighted the pianist's ability to construct temporal flow into a massive musical architecture.

The second recital, by a Polish pianist, Krzysztof Książek, took place in the historic Smedes Parlor on the campus of St. Mary's School. Prof. Adam Wibrowski gave a lecture about Paderewski's debut in Paris (his lecture also preceded Tyson's recital, taking the audience on a trip back to Poland). After Mozart's *Variations on "Come un agnello"* by Giuseppe Sarti, Książek demonstrated his Chopin credentials with an extensive program: *Nocturne*

in F-sharp Minor, Op. 48/2, two Etudes, E Minor, Op. 25/5, and F Major, Op. 10/8, Fantasia in F Minor, Op. 49, Mazurkas Op. 50, Polonaise in F-sharp Minor, Op. 44, and A-Flat Major Waltz, Op. 42. As reviewer John Lambert observed: "These performances were revelatory in terms of the fresh insight the artist brought to them." Indeed, "revelatory" is the right label for this poet-philosopher of the piano. From the sorrowful and tranquil notes of the *Mazurkas*, to large-scale twists and turns of emotions and form in the *Fantasia*, to the joie-de-vivre of the *Waltz* and the tragic heroism of the *Polonaise*, there was something new and previously unheard-of in each of the works selected for this journey. Książek's renditions of Paderewski's pieces were equally original, revealing the depth

of expression and abundance of detail in the *Variations in A Major, Op. 16, No. 3* and the fantastic, shimmering impressionism of the encore, a *Krakowiak* from 1884.

The Hungarian pianist, Péter Tóth recently won the First Prize at the 2013 American Paderewski Competition. On Nov. 16, 2014, he appeared at the North Carolina Museum of Art, opening the recital with Paderewski's *Nocturne in B Major, Op. 16/4* and the *Polonaise, Op. 9/6* as well as *Chopin's Ballade in G Minor, Op. 23*. The second half of the recital was filled with Liszt: *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude (S.173/3)*, the *Legend No. 2 (S.175/2)*, and the *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6*. Liszt's music revealed the full diversity of Toth's talents: his titanic virtuosity, a chess-player's strategic thinking, and brooding romanticism. Paderewski himself often played one of Liszt's Rhapsodies to top off his programs and Toth's choice was a bow to the patron of the festival. While thinking of a label for this great pianist, I thought of the "Titan of the Keyboard," a title bestowed on Paderewski himself.

I had a pleasure of preceding Toth's recital with a lecture on Paderewski in the English-speaking world, focusing on Paderewski myth-making and summarizing the main points of my article from 2010 (*Polish American Studies* 67/1). The musical delights of the Paderewski Festival could take place thanks to an impressive group of supporters, including: Wspólnota Polska, Meredith College, St. Mary's School, North Carolina Museum of Art, and many friends of classical music.

For more information, visit the Festival's website: paderewski-festival.org.

Cold War

continued from cover

gent meant to stand guard over Poland and the three Baltic states was highly symbolic.

NATO has intensified training exercises in Poland and plans to create a new rapid reaction force headquartered in the western Port of Szczecin. But critics were quick to point out that geographically Szczecin is located as far from the eastern border as possible. A location closer to Russia's Kaliningrad region, pro-Russian Belarus or Ukraine would be far more effective, they argue.

In recent months, Russia has been testing NATO's reconnaissance and air-defense potential by provocatively sending planes to buzz NATO and other countries along the Atlantic, the North Sea and Baltic. Polish airspace was buzzed 22 times last year and on one occasion Russian fighter planes actually penetrated some two miles into Polish territory. Polish aircraft policing the airspace of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which lack their own air force, received intercept orders on 30 separate occasions when Russian planes got uncomfortably close. Russian planes have also buzzed the California and Alaska coastline.

Moscow's provocative behavior has prompted NATO to begin taking those threats more seriously. In February, NATO defense ministers are due to meet to create a High Readiness Joint Task Force presumably comprising more than 5,000 troops deployable anywhere on the globe within 48-72 hours. But the details are still under wraps and remain to be worked out.

A recent survey has shown that 84% of Poles feel Russia poses the greatest threat to their country and only 4% pointed to Muslim terrorist scare. Nevertheless, Poland does not appear to be imminently threatened by Moscow militarily. At least at this stage, no-one seriously expects Russian tanks to rumble across the border or Russian missiles to attack Polish targets. President Putin lacks a pretext such as "coming to the rescue of its Russian-speaking compatriots" who account for a quarter of the population of Latvia and Estonia.

But history has shown that even a minor incident can easily escalate into a major conflict. That could be a Russian plane shot down for violating some country's airspace. Maybe a missile inadvertently launched from Russia's Baltic Naval Base in Kaliningrad bordering Poland or something else now difficult to imagine.

The fact is that Warsaw is taking no chances. Polish Americans should be happy to know that Poland's defense and security strategy is a two-pronged affair, based both on active cooperation within NATO as well as direct, bilateral ties between Warsaw and Washington. Recently Poland signed a \$250 million contract of with America's defense giant Lockheed Martin to upgrade its defense potential. The hardware including for 40 joint air-to-surface standoff missiles is the most modern military equipment Poland has ever had.

Ukraine Makes Move Toward NATO

KIEV — The Ukrainian parliament has renounced the country's "non-aligned" status with the aim of eventually joining NATO, angering Moscow, which views the western alliance's eastward expansion as a security threat.

Kiev first announced its intention of seeking the protection of NATO membership in August 2014, following what it deemed the open participation of Russia's military in a separatist war in Ukraine's eastern provinces.

Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, called Ukraine's renunciation of its neutral military and political status a "counterproductive" step that would only boost tensions around the crisis in the east.

"It will only escalate the confrontation and creates the illusion that it is possible to resolve Ukraine's deep internal crisis by passing such laws," TASS news agency quoted him as saying.

Addressing deputies in Kiev before the vote, the Ukrainian foreign minister said the move underscored the country's determination to pivot towards Europe and the west. "This will lead to integration in the European and the Euro-Atlantic space," Pavlo Klimkin said.

The amendment passed easily, receiving 303 votes — 77 more than the minimum required to pass into law. Any accession to the western military alliance is likely to take years, but a Nato spokesman in Brussels said: "Our door is open and Ukraine will become a member of Nato if it so requests and fulfils the standards and adheres to the necessary principles."

Ties between Moscow and Kiev are at an all-time low since Russia's annexation of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine in March 2014 and the subsequent outbreak of the pro-Russian rebellion in the east.

WARY OF MOVE. Former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski has questioned the logic of Ukraine joining NATO. In an interview with Polish Radio in Washington before the Ukrainian Parliament vote, Brzezinski argued that Ukraine's membership of the organization could worsen the current crisis with Russia.

"A limited conflict may be more beneficial for Russia than for us, because it could cause the complete collapse of the Ukrainian economy and its democratic system," Brzezinski said. "What in such circumstances would membership in NATO give Ukraine and what would this presence give us?"

"One should consider such matters and not be guided by sentiment or sympathy for Ukraine," he added, while acknowledging that he himself has had a sentimental attachment to Ukraine since childhood.



BRZEZINSKI: Thinks NATO membership for Ukraine will worsen situation.

Independence Day

continued from cover

Department for Cooperation with Polonia and Poles Abroad, a standing committee of the Polish Senate.

After the singing of the Polish and American national anthems by baritone Josef Surowiec, Ambassador Schnepf addressed the assembly and introduced all the special guests — especially the nimble Walter Zachariasiewicz celebrating his 103rd birthday. The ambassador recounted the major milestones during this past year: the 25th anniversary of free elections in 1989 after the ouster of the communists, 15 years in NATO, 10 years in the European Union, the Warsaw Rising 70 years ago, and the 100th birthday remembrance of Jan Karski. Schnepf also commented on the profound changes in Poland since 1989, and concluded with thanking the American Polonia for its support and engagement over the years.

Minister-Chairman Bielecki delivered the keynote speech. He remembered and saluted all persons, big and small, who contributed to Polish independence. He was very appreciative of America and its Polonia during his remarks. Special mention was made of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson who presented and propelled his "Fourteen Points" agenda at the Treaty of Versailles that formally ended World War I. Point Thirteen insisted upon the resurrection of the nation of Poland after being partitioned off the map of Europe by Austria, Prussia and Russia for the previous 128 years. Wilson was greatly influenced in this by world renowned pianist and zealous patriot Jan Ignacy Paderewski, who then became prime minister of the newly independent Poland. "My country is now the land of the free and home of the brave," said Bielecki in conclusion of his speech, which was greeted with knowing smiles and enthusiastic applause.

For contributions to Poland, democracy, freedom and culture, Ambassador Schnepf decorated the following personages: **Stephen Heintz** — Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and **James Dean** — Heritage Foundation Diplomatic Program, both the Officers Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland; **Jackson Diehl** — The Washington Post newspaper, the Knights Cross; and **Izabela Rutkowska** — Polish Library in Washington, the Gold Cross of Merit. All honorees were very proud of the medals bestowed upon them by Poland's President Bronislaw Komorowski.

In a tradition he started last year, Ambassador Schnepf led everyone in a rousing singing of "My, Pierwsza Brygada" ("We, The First Brigade"), undoubtedly one of the most beloved patriotic songs of the Polish nation. It proved to be a most fitting way to end the day's official ceremonies. Everyone then retired to enjoy a lavish buffet and the remainder of the evening in old country comradery.

SPEAK UP / Letters to the Editor

“The Jewish Perspective ... is not the only one.”

Dear Editor:

Here is my letter to the editor that *The Jewish Forward*, a Jewish-American national newspaper published in New York City, does not want its readers to see. It is in response to a disparaging article about Poland, written by the paper's editor-in-chief Jane Eisner:

❖ ❖ ❖

I read with great disappointment Jane Eisner's piece, "Chasing Ghosts, Reviving Spirits: The Fall and Rise of Poland's Jews, A Movement To Resurrect Life in the Home of Death Camps." The feeling Jews have toward Poland is understandably painful because millions were killed there. But most of that anger is misplaced. And, the Jewish perspective on Poland is not the only one.

For starters, the "Home of Death Camps" line is antagonistic toward Poland. Nazi Germany built these camps in Poland because it was the one country in the world that provided asylum to Jews for centuries.

Ms. Eisner asks if it's time to "forgive a country and a people many Jews blame as much as the Germans for the atrocities and destruction of European Jewry," but then emphasizes the negative rather than the positive.

Let's not forget that during World War II, the Germans killed millions of Christian Poles as well, and that no country did more than Poland to rescue the Jews. Even though Poland was the only country whose citizens were given the death penalty for helping Jews, it was the only country to establish an organization to rescue Jews, Żegota, "The Council to Aid Jews."

Ms. Eisner writes that Jews fled to Israel and America where "they could find an open door." Really? Didn't America pull up the gang-plank in 1939 on the MS St. Louis to deny entry to more than 900 Jews trying to escape persecution in Nazi Germany? The U.S. Coast Guard blocked these refugees from coming ashore. The ship was sent back to Europe where many of the passengers were murdered in German concentration camps because America would not "open its doors" to the Jews.

No country "opened its doors" wider for the Jews over the past millennium than Poland. Yes, Poland has anti-Semitism and bigotry like all other nations. Yes, there were Poles who killed, or turned over Jews to the Germans during the war, but the Polish underground searched for these traitors to execute them. No country did more than Poland to rescue Jews during World War II. Jews should know the names Karski, Bartoszewski, Sendler, Pilecki, and about the 6,454 Poles honored at Yad Vashem.

JEWIS SHOULD KNOW that the Statute of Kalisz, passed in the year 1264, protected them. That's why the Jewish Diaspora flocked to Poland. This was a willful migration. Jews came to "Polin" because that's where their culture, religion, commerce and self-governing society, a Jewish state within a state, was allowed to flourish.

The story of Polin is finally being told, faults and all, in the Museum of the History of Polish Jews that opened in Warsaw. The Polish government paid for the building and the exhibits were paid for with donations from Jewish and Christian donors. Ms. Eisner writes that she "believes" the "museum presents a message that is fundamentally sub-

versive for Jews." Why is the truth subversive?

Unfortunately, Ms. Eisner makes fun of the Warsaw Rising Museum honoring Poles who died fighting to liberate their capital from Nazi Germany, calling it a "horrible experience." As a Polish-American with family members who fought in that battle, I found this offensive. My visit to the museum was fascinating, and 90% of the 1,580 reviews on Trip Advisor, mostly by foreign tourists, are positive.

Worse yet, Ms. Eisner suggests there should have been "Nuremberg style trials" to punish Poles. That is outrageous. My stomach turned when I read this. No country fought Nazi Germany longer than Poland. My father and grandfather were both wounded fighting Germans during the war. And what was their reward? After the war, Poland was subjected to forced Soviet occupation and oppression for another 45 years. For Poland, World War II only ended 25 years ago.

Ms. Eisner's says that, "Poland has yet to conduct the sort of therapy forced upon the Germans." Poles are doing just fine without having anything "forced" on them. And if Ms. Eisner spoke Polish, she would know that once Soviet tanks left two decades ago, Poland's intelligentsia, media and popular culture have finally been able to honestly discuss and assess World War II and the Cold War.

That enlightenment has also led to research in the history of Jewish life in Poland. If Jewish history in Poland is allowed to die with the Holocaust, it means the bad guys won. How is this subversive?

AT A TIME when the military threat against Israel is growing, anti-Semitism in Europe is on the rise, and fewer people are willing to show support for Jews, Poland is trying to keep its Jewish history alive. And Poland, like the United States, is one of the few countries that Israel can count on as a friend in the United Nations. It makes no sense for Jews to continue bashing an ally. There is a renaissance of Jewish culture in Poland where even Christian students are studying Hebrew and Jewish customs. It is a genuine, benevolent fascination in Poland's Jewish past.

Jonathan Ornstein, director of the JCC in Krakow told Ms. Eisner that Jews "need to see that there's a country in the world that likes us." That's the message that Poles are trying to convey. But Ms. Eisner's piece is a slap in the face to the Poles who do feel an affinity toward Jews and have an interest in the role that they played in Polish history.

That's why the Museum of the History of Poland's Jews is so important. So perhaps instead of saying that Poland needs to "conduct therapy," a process that has been underway for two decades, maybe Jews should also try to understand why their ancestors freely flocked to Poland in the first place.

Alex Storzynski
New York



Editor's note: Alex Storzynski (inset, left) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, award winning author, and president emeritus of The Kosciuszko Foundation

ENJOYS INTERPRETATIONS.

Thank you for writing the wonderful Journal. I enjoy it so much, especially the Polish interpretations, as I am 88½ years old, and have a 96-year-old Polish friend.

We were born and raised in Harrah, Oklahoma, and we seem to be the only Polish-speakers left from our community that was settled by Poles in 1892. The younger generation no longer have anyone to go to, as their generation also are passing away. Marriages are no long pure Polish.

We have many good Catholic converts that are doing a great job of continuing some of the Polish traditions. Our last church, St. Teresa of Avila, was built in 1925 by Polish farmers, and it is still maintained, as is the parish hall and cemetery.

Martha Hopcus
Midwest City, Oklahoma

MOST INFORMATIVE. The Polish American Journal is one of the most informative papers anyone can read.

I turned 90 on December 20th, and it makes me cry when I read all the interesting articles, especially now for holidays. You really write everything important for the public to know.

I want to wish you all a very happy, holy holiday season.

Victoria Farren
Puritan, Pennsylvania

CHANGING TIMES

Churches on the Chopping Block

POUGHKEEPSIE — Announced in August 2014 and almost complete, more than 100 Catholic churches across New York, including several in Dutchess and Ulster counties, have been closed or merged with others.

In all, the Archdiocese of New York merged 112 parishes into 55 new parishes, with more than half closing the second church, except for special occasions. Masses and other sacraments will not be celebrated at the churches merging with others, at least not on a regular basis.

Final decisions on the use of the buildings will come later, but some could be used for housing or the care of people with special needs, while others could be sold, the archdiocese said.

In the City of Poughkeepsie, St. Joseph Church merged with St. Mary's Church. St. Sylvia's Catholic Church in Tivoli merged with the Church of St. Christopher in Red Hook.

"What we're talking about is realism," said Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York, in a blog posting when the announcement was first made. "Families do it, our schools have done it, corporations do it — now our parishes must do it: We merge in the areas where the population has shrunk, and build and expand — both plants and ministries — in areas where the Catholic numbers are bustling."

In Poughkeepsie, St. Joseph's long-standing traditions were established when the goal of the church was — in 1901 — to minister to the spiritual needs of Polish immigrants, according to its website.

"It's a time of sadness for me and all of the parishioners," said the Rev. Jacek Nowak of St. Joseph's. "We feel like a little home so far from Poland."

Their little home counted more

Spirit of Giving



BUFFALO, N.Y. — Officers and guests of the **General Pulaski Association** met for the group's annual Christmas party at the Polish Villa restaurant in Cheektowaga. The directors and their sponsors brought fifty stuffed animals, which were donated to the Lee Gross Anthonie Advocacy Center. The center helps children affected by child, sexual, and physical abuse.

Pictured (l. to r.): are Child Advocacy Center Liaison Irene Kmiotek; Pulaski 2nd Vice President Ken Graber; Pulaski Association President Brian D. Rusk; Pulaski Christmas party Co-chairs Lottie and Stanley Pulaski, Sr.; Child Advocacy Center Director Judith Olin; Pulaski Directors Eric Pulaski, Tammy Strasser, and Richard Pulaski.

The Pulaski Association hosts the Pulaski Day Parade each July in Cheektowaga.

POET STANISLAW JERZY LEC survived a German concentration camp by killing his guard with a shovel that was given to him to dig his own grave, and then escaping in the guard's uniform.

POLAND IS DIVIDED into 16 voivodships (provinces), 373 powiats (districts or counties) and 2,479 gminas (municipalities). From 1975 to 1999 the country has been divided into 49 tiny voivodships.

than 200 parishioners in their ranks. Most of them do not go to St. Mary's.

Fr. Nowak said they attended St. Joseph's because it was an ethnic, Polish church, and "an active, vibrant community of faith."

"It's a family, a home, and now it's all gone," said lifelong St. Joseph's member Elizabeth Borkowski, 26, of Highland.

Dolan's statement was "almost like a slap in the face," she said, saying he took away "our parish, our home and our sense of community. This is our culture."

Borkowski's daughter was baptized in the church, and she was looking forward to watching her

grow up with the same traditions: "Our festivals, parades ... I feel like that family atmosphere — you don't see it in other places. They're more Americanized."

"It rips you apart," she said. "We're not a corporation, we're a faith."

There are 368 parishes in New York. "...we simply have too many ... in areas that used to have huge Catholic numbers, where most of the people have since moved away," Dolan said.

"By merging parishes, we will make better use of human and financial resources," Dolan said.

— Excerpted from
The Poughkeepsie Journal

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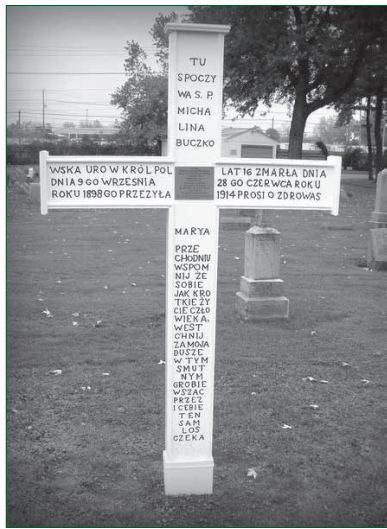
Social Problems Abound in Belarus

Magda Kaczmarek, senior staff member of Aid to the Church in Need, said after her visit to Belarus earlier in November, “The Church was not merely persecuted during Soviet times, but literally destroyed. Churches were made into cinemas, warehouses and sports halls. Priests were sent to Gulags in Siberia or murdered.” She noted, in addition that some Catholics in Belarus still wish to revive and live out their faith. The Church is responding to them with a full range of pastoral care, including care for homeless people and families, counseling services for pregnant women, support for married couples. Alcoholism is another widespread social problem. Along with Russia, Belarus is one of the countries with the highest abortion rates in the world. Problems facing the Church continue, especially the restriction on visas for foreign clergy, most of them Polish, to stay and minister in the country. Another problem is the building of small churches and chapels as well as the struggle to regain properties and buildings confiscated during Soviet times. The government of Belarus is a dictatorship and is full of corruption.

Unlike Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, the Russian Orthodox patriarch in Belarus stated, “We have not forgotten that the Catholic Church helped us when times were difficult ... Orthodox and Catholics have to defend the values of the Gospel. We have much in common.”

GAY MARRIAGE LEADS TO CHURCH FIRING. **Tom Wojtowick** and his partner Paul Huff had worked as volunteers at St. Leo's RC Church in Lewistown, Wash., for 11 years until they contracted marriage in a civil ceremony in Seattle, an action that is opposed to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The pastor of their church Samuel Spiering suggested they separate and divorce or else refrain from receiving the Eucharist and volunteering in the church. While they were willing to endorse the concept in the

Catholic church of marriage as between man and woman, they would not separate. Huff has since joined the St. James Episcopal Church, while Wojtkowick still attends RC Masses but leaves after the homily and before communion. The Church teaching on marriage has been subject of the recently concluded Synod of bishops and will be on the agenda of the second session of the synod to be held in two years.



HISTORIC CROSS RESTORED. Fr. Thaddeus Bocianowski, pastor of St. Stanislaus, Bishops & Martyr Church in Buffalo, N.Y. blessed a cross in St. Adalbert cemetery in Cheektowaga, N.Y.. The new cross replaced a hundred-year-old wooden marker of **Michalina Buczkowski** that had rotted away over the years. Ed Kornowski directed the fundraising and restoration project.

BISHOPS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE. **Most Rev. Mitchell T. Rozanski**, newly installed as bishop of the Diocese of Springfield, Mass., in an interview prior to his installation talked about the need for immigration reform and the need to investigate the causes that drive the poor in Central America to pay to send their children to the U.S. I unaccompanied. While an auxiliary bishop in Baltimore, he spoke in favor of the so-called DREAM Act which would allow non-documented students to pay in-state tuition at Maryland col-

leges and universities.

Miami's **Archbishop Thomas Wenski** echoed the words of Pope Francis as he saw the troubling rise in unemployment of young adults.

In a recent homily, Archbishop Wenski noted that “meaningful and decent work is vital if young adults hope to form healthy and stable families.” Failure to support work, on the other hand, contributes to a drop in the birth rates and declines in marriage overall. He urged support of policies and institutions that “create decent jobs, pay just wages, and support family formation and stability.” These would include “raising the minimum wage, more and better workforce training programs, and smarter regulations that minimize negative unintended consequences.”

CRITICAL MASS. According to the latest figures from the Polish Institute of Catholic Church Statistics, only 39 percent of declared Catholics take part in Sunday Mass.

The figure marks the first time Mass attendance has dropped below 40 percent, head of the Institute, Wojciech Sadlon told Polish Radio.

“People who go to church merely spurred on by tradition do not experience a deep personal commitment, and have started to stop practicing the faith,” he said.

“Along with the modernization of [Poland], including cultural and economic changes, as well as more attractive offers put forward to Poles, religious values and faith simply lose out to spending free time with friends or watching TV,” Sadlon added.

Meanwhile, the new numbers show that 16.3 percent of churchgoers attend Communion, slightly up on last year's figures.

The highest number of “dominantes” – people attending Mass – and “communicantes” – people taking Communion – can be found in the south-east of the country, in the Dioceses of Tarnow and Przemyśl, traditionally a more religious part of Poland.

The lowest numbers, on the other hand, are in the north-west of the country, in the Dioceses of Szczecin-Kamień, Koszalin-Kolobrzeg, as well as in the Lodz and Sosnowiec.

PRO-LIFE DEMOCRATS BUCK TIDE. Despite serious losses for the Democrats in the recent election, and particularly those who ran on a pro-abortion platform, Pro-Life Democrats Dan Lipinski of Illinois and Collin Peterson of Minnesota won re-election most handily. Both were endorsed by Democrats for Life and are known for supporting Pro-Life legislation, unlike other politicians who claim to be Pro-Life but then vote against that position in their support for tax-funded abortion.

STOLATTO... **Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski** of the archdiocese of Miami on his election along with four other bishops to the board of Catholic Relief Services of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops ... **Brian Hanson, Gabriel Milano, and James Stanley** on receiving fellowships through the Knights of Columbus for study at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at the Catholic University of America.

New Museum Highlights Millennium of Polish Jewry

by Robert Strybel

WARSAW — A modern structure in the heart of what once was the Jewish Ghetto houses the world's only Jewish museum of its kind. Unlike those institutions that focus extensively or exclusively on the Holocaust, Polin, the Historical Museum of Polish Jews, goes much the six-year World War II period and covers an entire millennium of history. After entering the building's elegant marble interior, the visitor is greeted by a symbolic green forest whose inscriptions in Polish, Hebrew and English prepare him or her for a 1,000-year journey through time. It explains the meaning of

Polin, the Hebrew word for Poland. Since each Jewish character has its own meaning, those forming the word Polin mean “here you shall rest.” But the follow-up goes. “Until the opportunity comes to return to Israel.”

Visiting young Israelis come away impressed

The main core exhibit, which had been 20 years in the making, starts at the beginning with 10th-century visitor Ibrahim ibn Jakub, a Moorish Jew from Spain. In his chronicles he described the realm of Mieszko I, Poland's first historical ruler, as “the most extensive of their (the Slavs') lands. It produces an abundance of food, meat, honey, and fish. He (Mieszko) keeps three thousand armed men divided into detachments...” The exhibition highlights the 1264 Statute of Kalisz in which Boleslaw the Pious granted Jews personal and religious freedom, their own judicial system as well as trading and lending rights.

The museum is an e-gadgetarian's paradise with countless touch screens, audio-visual installations and computer animations. They show documents, maps and pictures of every imaginable type and more information available at the touch of a button or slide of the screen. There is plenty of information on the Jewish Golden Age (16th to mid-17th century), when Jews prospered, their culture flourished and their religious life developed free of the persecution their coreligionists encountered in other countries.

What I found especially interesting was the symbolic recreation of a typical shtetl (little little Jewish town), roughly based on the eastern town of Żółkiew. With a bit of imagination the visitor is transported back in time and finds himself in the town square where Polish noblemen and peasants, rabbis and Jewish merchants are seen passing each other another on the street, where

Jewish vendors hawk their wares amid a flock of gagging geese and a Jewish innkeeper pour beer for gentle customers. Included is the intricately painted ceiling of a wooden synagogue and similarly decorated bima, a gazebo like pulpit-platform from which the Torah is read out

On more than one occasion I noticed groups of Israeli youth filing through the museum. Many of



A wooden synagogue that is part of “The Jewish Town” gallery within the core exhibition of the new Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

them were surprised at the wealth and variety of Jewish culture in Old Poland, the number of synagogues, Jewish thinkers, artists, musicians, professionals and traders. They said in Israel they had been taught that Poland was one big Jewish graveyard – Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek and Sobibór. Young Israelis used to visit Poland escorted by armed Jewish commandos as if to protect them against violent assaults by anti-Semitic Poles lurking in the shadows. Except that such attacks somehow never materialized.

But the exhibition does not present a sugar-coated vision of Poland's Jewish history. Mention is made of the mid-17th century Ukrainian Cossack Uprising, in which one-third of the Jews living in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were slaughtered, and of the 19th-century tsarist pogroms. The war-time German extermination of Jews on Polish soil is emphasized, and Poles who extorted money from hiding Jews by threatening to report them to the Nazis are also mentioned. So are the Catholic nuns who risked their lives hiding Jewish children at a Warsaw orphanage. And communist leader Władysław Gomułka can be seen and heard on an old-fashioned TV set offering Jews a one-way ticket to Israel in 1968.

One could spend several days in the museum if one were to inspect all exhibits and read all the available texts, but it takes most visitors some two to three hours to file through. A restaurant serving both Kosher and non-Kosher fare as well as Israeli wines is on the premises, as is a gift shop. The museum also hosts plays, concerts and youth activities such as a Chanukah workshop.

“Jewish identity is based on Judaism, memory of the Holocaust and the existence of Israel. Discovering the annals of Polish Jewry has added a fourth leg to the chair on which Jews sit,” one Jewish visitor wrote in the guest book.

SUPPORT THE PAJ PRESS FUND

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. **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.

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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.

PRAYER TO ST. GERTRUDE THE GREAT. Eternal Father, I offer You the most precious blood of thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, for those in my own home and in my family. Amen. My prayers have been answered. M.K.

HAPPENINGS: CHICAGO STYLE / Geraldine Balut Coleman

President Obama Visits Chicago Polonia

CHICAGO — On November 25, President Barack Obama made an historic visit to the Copernicus Center on Chicago's Northwest Side in hopes of securing support of the Polish American community, along with all who are in favor of immigration reform. It is estimated that nearly five million undocumented immigrants want legal protection from deportation. It is also estimated that there are approximately 15,000 undocumented Polish immigrants living in the Chicago area. The Copernicus Center was filled to a capacity of 2,000 individuals of many ethnicities who came to hear the president.

Obama began his remarks by referencing the events happening in Ferguson, Missouri. He condemned the violent protests, emphasizing that only demonstrations conducted in a peaceful manner can yield positive results. "For those who think that what happened in Ferguson justifies violence, I do not support such an approach. I object to the destruction of their communities," he said. He added that the acts of vandalism are contrary to the law and those who committed them will be punished.

The president then spoke on the main theme of his speech, which was the fate of undocumented immigrants. He welcomed everyone with *dzień dobry*. The Copernicus Center was selected to show that immigration concerns in the United States go beyond the Latino immigration community. However, Polish Americans are still asking about the status of visa waivers for Poles visiting the United States. Why, with Poland being the United States' strongest ally in Europe, are Poles required to have a visa?



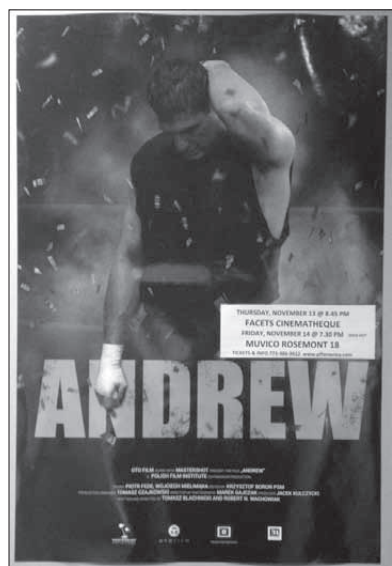
President Obama at the Copernicus Center.



Golota and his wife, Mariola.

over and over. The film shows his loneliness in the brutal world of the media and professional boxing. Only his wife **Mariola**, despite the dramatic experiences related to her husband's sport career, faithfully accompanies him in every important moment of his life. This is a triangle love story between a man, his sporting career, and his love of family.

Before the screening of "**Andrew**," Golota was awarded the *Ambassador of Poland* Award. This award is given by the Society of the Arts to outstanding professionals who contributed to Poland through their achievements. The trophy is a work of Adam Fedorowicz, well-known sculptor from Warsaw, who is also the creator of *Wings*, the award given by the Polish Film Festival in America, and *Eagle*, the award given by the Polish Film Academy. On behalf of the Society for Arts, the award was presented by Leslaw Samitowski, a long-time friend of Golota.



The film's poster.

ANDREW (ENDRJU). A premiere screening of "**Andrew**," a motion picture, about boxing champion, **Andrew Golota**, was shown on November 14 at the Muvico Rosemont 18 Theatre, located in Rosemont, Ill. This new, 40-minute film by **Tomasz Blachnicki** and Chicago-based filmmaker **Robert N. Wachowiak** is a documentary impression of Golota, a professional boxer who has concluded his active career. The film is the story of an athlete who cannot come to terms with his own weaknesses and the prospect of leaving the ring forever. Spectacular victories and defeats in the fights for world heavyweight championships come back to his mind and resound

reporter for NBC5, the winner of two national Emmy Awards while a producer at ESPN and six local/midwest Emmy awards, including four at NBC5. She was followed by **Aleksandra Kurzydłowski**, a Barnard College freshman, who sang the Polish and American national anthems, and **Rev. Jason Torba**, pastor of Chicago's St. Ferdinand Parish, who gave the invocation.

Highlights of the evening included performances by the Polonia Ensemble, the Argentine Tango of Daniel and Ramona, and the outstanding Likos String Trio. This year, the PAA presented two of its Presidential Awards: one to the Presence Resurrection Medical Center and the other to Polish Radio WNVR 1030 AM and TV Polvision. After the presentation, guests continued to enjoy the evening by dancing to the music of the Piotr Marszałek Band. They also had opportunities to participate in the PAA's raffle and silent auction. The Polish American Association is the only social assistance agency in the U.S. offering a full range of services to the Polish community and all those who need help.

CEP CELEBRATES POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE. On November 14, the Council of Educators in Polonia (CEP) celebrated its 17th Polish American Heritage anniversary at Northeastern Illinois University's (NEIU) Alumni Hall. With the hall filled with university and high school students, and members of the Polish American community, **Sharon Hahs**, President of NEIU, **Robert Rusiecki**, Poland's Deputy Consul General, and **Frank Spula**, president of the Polish American Congress and the Polish National Alliance, not only welcomed all, but spoke of the importance of Polish cultural heritage and the outstanding achievements of the CEP and NEIU students. Dr. Hahs also spoke of the NEIU's long-term cooperation with the University of Warsaw's Institute of International Relations and its School of Economics, and with the Technical University of Częstochowa and Jagiellonian University.

The year's scholarships recipients were: **Paulina Cekiera** (Marlene Wilczynski Gill Award); **An-**



(l.to r.): Jessica Jagielnik, Bozena Haszłakewicz, Dr. Henry Kurzydłowski, Mary Anselmo, Aleksandra Kurzydłowski, and Geraldine Balut Coleman.

PAA GALA BENEFIT. Loew's Chicago O'Hare was the site of the Polish American Association's (PAA) annual charity gala. On November 14, over 250 guests attended this black-tie event. The evening began with remarks from this year's Mistress of Ceremonies, **Peggy Kusinski**, journalist and television-sports

ette Zlotorzycki (Vanessa Przybylo Kolpak Award); **Anna Godlewska** (Blessed Mother Celine Borzęcka, CR, Award); **Karol Dubrawski** (Sister M. Edward Gira, CR, Award); **Paulina Wałęga** and **Magdalena Lenczowski** (Stanisława Plichta Award); **Joanna Nowack** (LJ Investments Award); **Anna Tacikiewicz** (Mr. and Mrs. Shea Award in



Council of Educators in Polonia: President Hahs with scholarship recipients and honorees.

the name of Anna Grzeškiewicz); **Mark B. Podowski** (Danuta Schneider Award), and **Magdalena Ignaciuk** (The Scholarship Competition Award for a Future Teacher in Memory of Mr. Ken Gill).

Awards of merit were given to Polish teachers: **Sr. Stephanie Błaszczynski**, past president and principal of Resurrection High School, a former teacher of physics, and co-founder and first director of a school for African girls in Tanzania; **Maria Omelańczuk**, computer and mathematics teacher, and the initiator of the mathematical Olympiad "Kangaroo" in the United States; and **Joanna Turska**, eminent flutist, musicologist, and lecturer on music.

FORMER PRIME MINISTER SUCHOCKA VISITS CHICAGO.

Hanna Suchocka, former Prime Minister of Poland (1992-1993), former Minister of Justice (1997-2000), and former Ambassador of Poland to the Holy See (2001-2013) was the guest of honor at the Polish Consulate General in Chicago on October 30, 2014. Ms. Suchocka's U.S. visit was at the invitation of the Nanovic Institute for European Studies of Notre Dame University, South Bend, Indiana. On October

28, she delivered a lecture at the Institute titled "*Democratic Poland: 25 years after the Fall of Communism*."

Suchocka also met with representatives of the Polish American community and the Polish media. During the meeting at the Consulate, the former prime minister spoke of Poland's achievements throughout the 25 years since the 1989 rebirth of Polish democracy and the fall of communism in other European countries. She also spoke of the June 4, 1989 free elections and their importance for the new transitions in Poland and in other countries of the region, and the importance of the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015. The guests also asked questions about her work as prime minister and ambassador of Poland to the Holy See.

Among the questions asked, journalists wanted to know how, in Prime Minister Suchocka's opinion, Poland's position has changed in the light of the selection of Donald Tusk as President of the European Council. She commented that the position of President of the European Council is a great honor and a prestigious symbol for Poland.

SCHOLARSHIPS

PACCF Accepting Applications for Majer and Lakowski Families Memorial Scholarships

The **Polish American Congress Charitable Foundation** is formally announcing that it is accepting applications for the Majer & Lakowski Families Memorial Scholarships.

Scholarships will be granted to full-time undergraduate or graduate students majoring in either engineering or business administration at a public state university or college.

Preference will be given to juniors, seniors and graduate students.

The amount of the scholarship will be equal to the total annual tuition charge, not including fees, for a student classified by the institution involved as a state resident. That amount will also be awarded to a student classified as a state non-resident.

Applications can be obtained at www.paccf.org, by written request to PACCF, 5711 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chicago, IL 60646, emailing to paccf@paccf.org, or by phone at 773-763-9942.

Deadline to apply is March 15, 2015.

The **Polish American Arts Association** (PAAA) Scholarship Grant Committee announces

the opening of the 17th season of the PAAA Scholarship Grant Program. New applications will be accepted from February through April 1, 2015 for a Scholarship Grant up to \$3,000. Winners will be notified by the end of May, 2015 and will receive the grant at the PAAA General Membership Meeting held in June of the same year.

Applicant must be an American Citizen, either by birth or naturalization; of Polish or Polish American heritage, and a resident of Washington, D.C., Maryland, or Virginia, or be a student at an institution in one of these jurisdictions.

Academic and scholastic performance and achievements, as well as potential contributions to arts, culture, sciences, or medicine, as well as financial need, will determine awards.

There is non-refundable \$20 application fee, payable to the PAAA Scholarship Fund.

For complete details, contact: Wanda O'Brien-Trefil, Ph.D., PAAA Scholarship Chair, 9413 Old Reserve Way, Fairfax, VA 22031; wandaobrientrefil@verizon.net.

POLONIA OF THE EASTERN GREAT LAKES / Michael Pietruszka

The First “Zupapalooza” Bowls Them Over

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The WNY Division of the Polish American Congress awarded the following honors at its first “Zupapalooza Polish Soup Festival”: **Polish Saturday School’s** white borscht (Golden Ladle Award), **Professional and Business Women of Polonia’s** mushroom soup (Silver Ladle Award) and **Polish American Congress’** potato leek soup (Bronze Ladle Award). The Golden Kettle Award (Peoples’ Choice) went to the **Polish Heritage Dancers of WNY’s** golabki soup ... On November 16, the **Polish Cultural Foundation** held its annual meeting and elections at the Butler Library on the Buffalo State College campus. **Michael Pietruszka** was elected president, **Dr. Kazimierz Braun** was elected vice-president, and **Andrzej Kucharski** was re-elected treasure.

Julianna Bednarz spoke on “Polish Poet: Wislawa Symborska” at the November 18th meeting of the Niagara Polish Cultural and Historical Society at the Niagara Falls Public Library.... The freak snowstorm that battered WNY leaving up to seven feet of snow in some areas November 18 through 20, left a legacy in Buffalo’s **Historic Polonia District** that will last for quite a while. The City of Buffalo dumped thousands of tons of snow on the property of the Central Terminal. Piles of snow stood in excess of 50 feet high.... The **Professional and Business Women of Polonia** explored the “Art of Elegant Folk Dolls” at their November 20th meeting at Salvatore’s Italian Gardens.

The **General Pulaski Association**, sponsors of WNY’s annual Pulaski Parade, elected the following leadership for the coming year: **Brian Rusk** (president, 27th term), **Sandi Schmid** (first vice-president), **Kenneth Graber** (second vice-president), **Edward Reska** (treasurer), **Jerome Inda** (secretary), **Rev. Michael Burzynski** (chaplain) and **Stanley Pulaski, Sr.** (sergeant-at-arms).... The Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Toronto and the Canadian Polish Congress presented soprano **Maria Knapik**,



NAMED TO ECMC BOARD. James L. Lawicki II has been appointed by the Erie County Legislature to serve on the Board of Erie County Medical Center, Buffalo, N.Y.

Lawicki is employed by Medtronic as a Spine Consultant. He serves as a board member of the Polish American Congress WNY Division, as well as vice-chairman of the board for the Canisius College Permanent Chair of Polish Culture.

In addition, he serves on many other area boards and has been instrumental in developing and philanthropically supporting many cultural events that have benefited the local Polish community.

“Having worked in the medical profession for over 25 years, I am humbled and honored to serve as a board member of ECMC,” said Lawicki.

tenor **Marek Korkusinski**, baritone **Krzysztof Biernacki**, pianist **Justyna Gabzdyl**, the **Novi Singers** and **Maciej Jaskiewicz’s** Toronto Sinfonietta as part of “Salute to Poland! : A patriotic celebration of Polish Independence Day,” at St. Michael’s College School Centre for the Arts in Toronto on the 22nd.

The **25th Festival of Polish Religious Song**, featuring performances by **Monika Kuszyńska**, **Marcin Styczen** and **Kinga Mitrowska**, was held at the John Paul II Polish Cultural Centre in Mississauga on the 22nd and 23rd of November...

Kosciuszko Foundation Teaching Fellow Dr. Piotr Derengowski addressed the topic “Poles in the American Civil War 1861-1865” at the November 19th meeting of the Polish Arts Club of Buffalo... **St. Casimir Parish** in Toronto’s Roncesvalles Village held its “Taniec z Gwiazdami Zabawa” on November 29.... Also on the 29th, local Polonia groups, especially those in the the Toronto area, held “**Andrzejki**” celebrations.... The **Polish Cadets of Buffalo** held its annual meeting and elections on November 30. **Rich Chmielnicki**, **Cindy Mauger**, **Lou Loubert** and **Karen Spencer** were elected to positions on the group’s board.

Father Czeslaw Krysa was extensively interviewed for an article entitled “St. Nicholas Teaches Children at St. Casimir Parish” for the December issue of WNY Catholic magazine.... **Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz** addressed the annual conference of the Polish Bankers Association in Warsaw via the internet on December 2. **Mr. Poloncarz** spoke on “Modern Local Government - Management and Finance”.... **Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish** in North Tonawanda hosted its 25th annual “Wigilia.” and the **Pulaski Police Association of Buffalo and WNY** held its Christmas party and installation of officers at the Polish Falcons Hall in Depew on December 6.... The **Chopin Singing Society** “Wigilia” took place at the Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga, and the **Polka Variety Social Club** Christmas Party was held on the 6th as well.

District IX of the Polish Singers Alliance of America presented its “Annual Festival of Carols” at St. Stanislaus Church, the Mother Church of WNY’s Polonia in Buffalo’s Historic Polonia District, on December 7th. The **Chopin Singing Society**, **Chopin Men’s Choir**, **Kalina Women’s Chorus**, **Symphonia Singing Society** and soprano

Emily Helenbrook performed at the event.... The **Professional and Businessmen’s Association** hosted its Christmas party and elections at **Rizotto Ristorante** in Williamsville on December 8th.

The **Buffalo-Rzeszow Sister City Committee** held its annual Holiday party at **Arty’s Grill** in Buffalo’s Historic Polonia District on the 12th.... The **Polish Heritage Society of Rochester** held its “Wigilia” in the Cleary Auditorium of St. John Fisher College, and the State University of New York at Buffalo **Polish Student Association** “Wigilia” was held at the St. Stanislaus Social Center in Buffalo, on December 13th.

On December 14, the **Polish Arts Club** of Buffalo hosted its “Annual Wigilia and Oplatek” and the **Kalina Singing Society** held its “Wigilia”, both at the Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga; and the **Syracuse Polish Home** held its “Wigilia” at its Park Avenue clubrooms

The **Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies** presented pianist **Dariusz Terefenko** and saxophonist **Alexa Tarantino** in a program featuring the music of **Komeda**, **Chopin** and **Szymanowski** entitled “Crossing Paths” at the Strong Auditorium on the University of Rochester’s River Campus on December 14.... The **Advocates Club of WNY** honored **Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz**, **NYS Supreme Court Justice Donna Siwek** and **NYS Supreme Court Justice-Elect Paul Wojtaszek** at its Christmas cocktail reception at the **Polish Villa II Restaurant** on the 15th.

Dr. Thomas Witkowski conducted the **Amherst Chamber Orchestra** in a holiday concert featuring a performance of **Moniuszko’s** “Christmas Roses” at the North Presbyterian Church in Williamsville on December 16 ... On December 20, the **Polish Cadets of Buffalo** held its annual Holiday dinner

at its Grant Street clubrooms in Buffalo’s Black Rock neighborhood, and the **Adam Mickiewicz Library and Dramatic Circle** hosted its third annual Christmas party at its **Fillmore Avenue clubrooms**.

Forgotten Buffalo offered its “**Polish Tavern Christmas**” tour on December 19th and 20th.... December 23 brought the “**Koledy Night with the Buffalo Concertina All Stars**” to the **Polish Villa II Restaurant** in Cheektowaga.... The **Syracuse Polish Home’s** “Oplatek” took place for December 29th.... The **Polka Country Musicians** and **Special Delivery** performed at the “**Polish Polka New Year’s Eve**” at the Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga on the 31st of December.... The **Podhale Parent and Youth Association** celebrated **New Year’s Eve** with the music of “True Colors” at the St. Stanislaus Social Center.

UPCOMING. The “God is Born, Bog Sie Rodzi” Christmas concert featuring the **Novi Singers**, **Our Lady of Sorrows Choir** and **Maciej Jaskiewicz’s Toronto Sinfonietta** will take place at Toronto’s **Our Lady of Sorrows Church** on January 4.... The Polish rock band, **Czerwone Gitary**, will stop at Buffalo’s St. Stanislaus Social Center on January 22 and **Brampton, Ontario’s Rose Theatre** on the 24 as part of its 2015 North American tour.

The **Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO)** is sponsoring an eight day VIP tour of Warsaw and Krakow with **Maestro JoAnn Falletta** and **BPO First French Horn Jacek Muzyk** during May of 2015. More information is available at bpo.org. Search for the Poland tour.

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If you have an item for this column, please send the information by the 6th day of the month preceding publication month (i.e. January 6 for the February edition) to pietruska@verizon.net.

The Oracle of Buffalo

BUFFALO, N.Y. — **Stephanie T. Mucha**, 97, who remembers the 1929 stock market crash, worked as a licensed practical nurse for more than four decades, and has parlayed her humble earnings into a Penta-size portfolio. In recent years, she has given away \$3 million—and she still has \$2.5 million left. Her goal: to give away a total of \$6 million before she dies.

Mucha was no debutante. She dropped out of high school and worked as a maid, helping her parents hold on to their house during the Great Depression. Later, she worked for 44 years at the Buffalo Veterans Affairs Medical Center, where she was one of 100 civilians to receive the Purple Heart. Mucha earned \$23,000 a year when she retired in 1994.

When she was 25, her father, afraid she’d be an old maid, matched her up with **Joseph Mucha**, a machinist 26 years her senior who emigrated from Poland at age 18. Joseph earned \$6,000 a year when he retired around 1958. By the time he passed away in 1985, the couple’s portfolio was worth roughly \$300,000.

The Muchas invested without the help of Wall Street. Some 30 years ago a broker advised them to sell their Intel shares; after that, they ignored his advice

Mucha was working in the VA

hospital when **Wilson Greatbatch**, a local inventor, implanted a pacemaker in a dying dog. “I came home and said to my husband, ‘I saw a dead dog come to life.’”

“Women need to learn how to use their money so it outlasts them.”

What she had seen was a demonstration of the first implantable cardiac pacemaker. The device was licensed in 1961 to **Medtronic (MDT)**. In around 1964, the Muchas spent \$255.50 to purchase 50 shares at \$5.11. By the time she donated a portion of the shares in 2007, the position had grown to \$459,000. She still owns about 300 shares, at \$66.

HARD WORK AND FRUGALITY also contributed to the Muchas’ success. They created three apartments in their house, one to live in and two to rent out. After her husband’s death, Mucha sold her diamond ring and wedding band for \$2,700, investing the proceeds. She also rented out a room in her apartment for \$15 a night to women visiting their sick husbands at the VA hospital. She invested the estimated \$25,000 she earned over 20 years from that rental in the market.

She held on to her stocks in both up and down cycles. She also realized that women tend to outlive men, so they need to know how to invest. “Women need to learn how to use their money so it outlasts them.”

Mucha doesn’t have a computer. She has an Ameritrade account that gives her free trades over the phone, reinvests her dividends, and sends her five research reports a month. She reads *The Wall Street Journal* every day, along with *Barron’s*, *Forbes*, *The Economist*, and the *New York Times*, and watches **CNBC** and **Bloomberg**. As for picking stocks, she recalls her husband saying, “You can’t build without nuts and bolts.” With that in mind, in recent years she has bought **Precision Castparts (PCP)**, **Snap-on (SNA)**, and **Illinois Tool Works (ITW)**.

Mucha, who never spent a dime of her investment capital, has put \$1 million in trust each for the **Kosciuszko Foundation**, which helped her husband when he immigrated to the United States.; the University at Buffalo’s School of Arts and Sciences, because it has a Polish studies program; and the School of Engineering, as her husband had wanted to be an engineer.

— Excerpted from a story by *Jacqueline Doherty* in *Barron’s*.

POLISH NIGHT

EVENTS

Saturday
January 24th
2015

4 pm Polka Mass
5:45 pm Polish Heritage Dancers of WNY
6:15 pm Polka lesson
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to benefit

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SPOTLIGHT ON LONG ISLAND / Barbara Szydłowski

Celebrating the Feast of Epiphany

Happy New Year 2015 and I do hope you had a merry and joyous Christmas.

KEEPING THE HOLIDAYS HAPPY. No matter how festive the winter holidays are or how we look forward to them, they affect thousand of people every year in many ways. First, stress, anxiety and depression appear and sometimes continue to grow until we are overwhelmed. In light of that, here are some suggestions to help you enjoy your holidays. Don't try to do everything in one day, avoid crowds, shop early and, whatever you do, do something nice for yourself, you deserve it.

CUSTOM: In Poland, the **Feast of the Epiphany** or **Trzech Krolu** is celebrated with huge parades welcoming the Wise Men, often riding on camels or other animals from the Warsaw Zoo and other cities. The Wise Men pass out sweets to children, carols are sung and living Nativity scenes are enacted. Similar celebrations are held in Italy and Spain reflecting each country's Catholic heritage. At the end of the parade route, church leaders often preach on the spiritual significance of the Epiphany. In 2011, by an act of Parliament, Epiphany was restored as an official non-working national public holiday in Poland for the first time since it was cancelled under communism fifty years before. Singing and house blessing are popular in Poland, as well as in the rest of Central Europe.

TRADITION: In Burgos, Spain, Spanish children impatiently wait for **Epiphany Eve** when the Magi Kings, Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, travel through Spain on the way to Bethlehem. On their journey to the Holy Land, the Kings leave presents for children.

Before going to bed, the young people stuff hay or grain into their shoes which they leave near the door for the horses of the Wise Men. By morning, the food is gone and in its place are all kinds of festive cakes, candies and playthings of straw or clay.

In many cities in Spain, Mallorca and the Canary Islands, Epiphany begins with a colorful procession of the Magi Kings and their attendants. At Palma, the Kings arrive by torchlight. The city officials lead on horseback and the Magi's retainers in colorful oriental robes bring up the rear.

CUSTOM: The **Armenian Apostolic Church** celebrates Christmas on January 6. This day also celebrates Epiphany or the visit of the Three Wise Men, but some churches, like the Armenian Apostolic Church also celebrate the Baptism of Jesus on this day.

Some Armenians fast in the week before Christmas. The Christmas Eve meal is called *khetum*, consisting of rice, fish, nevik (green chard and chick peas) and a yogurt/wheat soup called *tanabur*. Desserts include dried fruits and nuts including rojik (whole shelled walnuts threaded on a string and encased in grape jelly). This light meal is meant to ease the stomach off the week-long fast and prepare for the Christmas Day dinner.

TRADITION: Some of England's West Country communities still **wassail**, or toast, the apple trees on January 18, Old Twelfth Night. In apple-producing regions, wassailing (which comes from the Old Eng-



On the Feast of the Epiphany (Three Kings), the streets of more than 180 Polish cities host the Cavalcade of Magi, called the "biggest street Christmas pageant the world." Over the past ten years, groups from Ukraine, Italy, Germany, UK, Rwanda and the United States have joined the processions.

lish "waes hael," which translated, means: "Be thou hale") was once a fertility rite. Farmers believed it ensured health and good crops to their fruit trees in the coming year. Today, few remember how this custom began but it continues to be a rousing climax to the holiday festivities.

OF INTEREST: The giving of Christmas tree has often been associated with the end of hostilities. In 1918 after the signing of the Armistice, the city of Manchester sent a tree and £500 to buy chocolates and cakes for the children of the bomb-destroyed town of Lille, in northern France.

Trees represent special commemorative gifts, such as in Trafalgar Square in London where the City of Oslo, Norway, presents a tree to the people of London as a token of appreciation for the British support of Norwegian resistance during the Second World War.

In Boston, the Christmas tree is a gift from the province of Nova Scotia, in thanks for rapid deployment of supplies and rescuers to the 1917 ammunition ship explosion that leveled the city of Halifax.

In Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the Christmas tree is an annual gift from the city of Bergen, in thanks for the part soldiers of Newcastle played in liberating Bergen from Nazi occupation.

As a symbol of friendship between Norway and the United States, a Christmas tree was sent to Washington, D.C. as an expression of gratitude from Norway for the help received from the United States during World War II.

MUSEUM CORNER. The **Polish American Museum** in Port Washington, N.Y., features many artifacts imported from Poland, including paintings, maps, some regional dress costumes, military medals and documents on loan to the museum from the Center for Military Studies. The museum will be offering a \$500 Founders Scholarship to students of Polish heritage entering college in the Fall, 2015 and residing in Nassau or Suffolk county. Applications will be available in February. For additional information, call (516) 883-6542. The museum is open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

FOLKLORE. February 2 — The folklore surrounding the groundhog seeing his shadow originated with sixteenth century German farmers. The original animal of German legend was not a groundhog, but rather a badger. The switch from badger to groundhog did not result



from mistaken identity. German immigrants who settled in the nineteenth century in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania — a small town in the heart of Allegheny plateau — found that the area had no badgers. However, it did have hordes of groundhogs which the immigrants conveniently fitted to their folklore. The weather did come to play a key role in the legend.

WHY DO YOU THINK people dread the end of the winter holidays?

First of all because everything related to the celebratory time — ornaments, stockings, decorations, etc. — must be down taken and put away for another year. Yes, it is tiring and consuming work, but we can't forget the shortage of containers and storage space!

Life is too short not to smile.

VETERANS

Nephew's Research Leads to New Appreciation

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. — Nearly 70 years after D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge, the nephew of young Army Air Force flyer learned of his uncle's bravery during World War II.

Andrew Ostrowski unraveled the aged cord binding the pages of the notebook to reveal his uncle's words.

Staff Sergeant **Stanley Francis Ostrowski**, a 23-year-old New Brighton resident, penned his first entry — on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 1944 — into a 3-by-5-inch notebook. He was a B-17 Flying Fortress ball turret gunner, and his entry recounted the "biggest mission in history," which "started off with a pretty rough one, a little too close for comfort."

"Turning each page was an incredible journey," says Andrew, of West Brighton. "You felt right there beside him at 28,000 feet as he fought off Messerschmitts en route to bombing enemy munitions factories, railroad yards, and oil plants."

Andrew notes that Stanley was a 1939 graduate of Curtis High School. After high school, he took a job as a carpenter in the McWilliams Shipyard in West Brighton.

One of nine children born to Polish immigrants, like his other brothers, Benjamin, Edward, John, and Daniel, he aided the war effort as a proud first-generation son.

Copernicus House to Be Razed

by Linda Finarelli

UPPER DUBLIN, Pa. (Montgomery News) — The fate of Copernicus House has been sealed — it will be razed.

An effort to find a buyer for the 109-year-old, 18,500-square-foot historical home in Fort Washington was unsuccessful, according to Sam Paone, of Sal Paone Builders, which owns the former Pizsek estate.

The 94-acre Pizsek tract spans both sides of Pennsylvania Avenue in Springfield and Upper Dublin townships. Paone is building townhomes on the Springfield side and 43-single-family homes on the Upper Dublin side, on which Copernicus and the historic Emlen House stand.

Sal Paone Jr. previously said Emlen House, a private 18th century estate that served as Gen. George Washington's headquarters during the winter of 1777 and was later home to the Pizseks for about 50 years, would be preserved and sold.

The 37-room Copernicus, however, needs extensive renovations and sits in the middle of the hill, where 10 of the new homes will be built, he said. The home was put up for sale, but if not sold it would be razed, he had said.

"About seven or eight came through" to view and appraise Co-



The Copernicus House in Fort Washington.

pernicus, which sits on a 4.3-acre lot and was listed for \$1.8 million, Sam Paone said. "When they realized the cost to renovate it was pretty expensive, the price together [with renovation costs] was too high for anyone," he said.

"The township is going through the permitting process for demolition," said Paone, and "we're starting to put together a pre-demolition sale."

Previously known as Hawkswell, the home was designed by Wilson Eyre Jr. and built between 1903 and 1904 by Sarah Drexel Fell Van Rensselaer for her daughter Mae and husband Howard Huston Henry, according to the Historical Society of Fort Washington. The home was used as a school afterward and eventually became the headquarters for the Copernicus Society, established in the mid-1960s by Edward Pizsek, a founder of Mrs. Paul's Kitchens, to promote ties between Poland and the United States.

Those who wanted to own a part of the storied structure were given an opportunity during a three-day sale held in November.

Everything was for sale, including shrubbery and outside flagstone, said Kevin Tobin, the owner of Pre-Demolition Sales. Tobin's company, which has been in the "recycling" business for 26 years, got a percentage of items sold, he said.

The rest will go toward the demolition cost, Sam Paone said.



Ed Pizsek, founder of Mrs. Paul's Kitchens. His former home served as headquarters for General Washington in the winter of 1777.



Stanley F. Ostrowski (1921-1992)

Andrew said Stan arrived at Fort Jay Induction Station on Governor's Island in August 1942. The young draftee was then sent to Upton, N.Y., Miami Beach, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and finally Arizona, where he was fully trained as a gunner.

Stan then left for England to be assigned to the 8th Army Air Force, and the renowned 390th Bombardment Group. The group had been cited by President Franklin Roosevelt for skill and daring in battle, and holds the war record for destruction of enemy aircraft by a lone group in a single engagement, having shot down 63 German fighters.

Says Andrew, "Upon reading this

old article, what struck me as astonishing was the selfless giving of these flyers knowing full-well that they could die in a matter of hours. I would be a nervous wreck."

He adds that Stan's position in the ball turret, which is a clear, round capsule on the plane's underbelly, saw him lying flat on his back with legs up and finger clutched to the weighty .50 caliber gun trigger as he rotated.

Stan flew 29 other missions and was awarded the prestigious Air Medal with Four Oak Leaf Clusters.

But perhaps an even greater award came from the mouth of German Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt in admitting that the crew's air assaults "did more to stop my counter-offensive into Belgium than any other factor."

After the war, Stanley Francis Ostrowski returned to his family in New Brighton, taking a job as a NYC civil servant. His passions included 8mm filming, cats, and gardening. He died in 1992.

"Upon reading these accounts, it became impossible not to shed a tear. If there is a bright moment here for us in reading through this notebook, it should be because of the heroism and sacrifice of a soldier. And I thought to myself, how much more honorable does it get?"

— Excerpted from a story in the Staten Island Advance

SPORTS / Tom Tarapacki

Brad Does it His Way

Brad Keselowski just missed out on his attempt to be one of the four finalists for the NASCAR Sprint Cup championship. Keselowski finished fourth in his No. 2 Ford at Phoenix International Raceway following a flurry of controversy.

Keselowski angered fellow driver Jeff Gordon the previous weekend in Texas after their cars made late-race contact and Gordon suffered a flat tire. Gordon finished a lap down in 29th, while Keselowski placed third. "There was a hole and I went for it," Keselowski said. "It closed up and we bounced off each other and kept going. It was just a battle for the win."

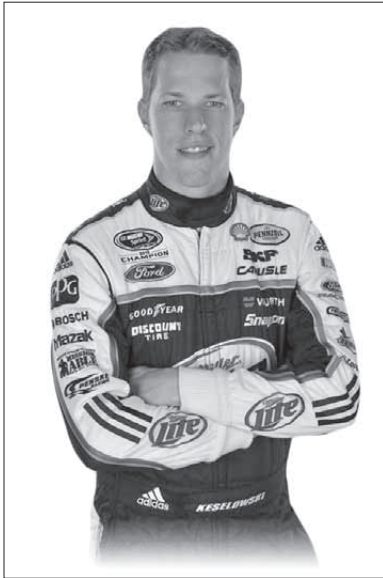
The result was a brawl in pit row between Gordon, Keselowski and their crews. That incident led NASCAR to suspend four crew members. Brad responded to criticism by saying: "I feel pretty good about the actions I've taken. Certainly I'm not perfect. I've made some bad ones, but I didn't make any bad ones last week, and I still feel that way."

Known as "Bad Brad," his aggressive racing style helped him win the 2012 NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship in only his third season. Keselowski grew up in a racing family from Rochester Hills, Michigan. He is known for his outspoken opinions and his use of social media. He attracted a lot of attention after going on Twitter during a lengthy delay in the Daytona 500 in 2012.

Keselowski was presented with a special award by the National Polish-American Sports Hall of Fame in 2012: the newly created "Excellence in Sports Award." After accepting the honor, Brad made note of the fact that the Hall had inducted another Polish American driver from up north, the late Alan Kulwicki, back in 2001. Kulwicki won the 1992 Winston Cup Championship with his self-owned team. After building the team, the Wisconsin native received offers to drive for others prior to his title run, but didn't want to give up the team he built. Kulwicki was killed in a plane crash in 1993 at age 38.

"Alan had such an interesting story," Keselowski said of Kulwicki. "He was definitely known for doing things his own way. Maybe it's a Polish gene because I think I do the same; I really enjoy doing things my own way. It's a lot more fun."

WHAT WIZ WEARS. James Wisniewski is not only a standout de-



Keselowski

fenseman with the NHL Columbus Blue Jackets, he also has his own line of clothing, which you can check out at: www.wizwear.org. According to the website, "With a hockey theme, a USO undertone, and a hint of Polish heritage, the James Wisniewski clothing line shows off his flair for the game and his allegiance to style."



Wisniewski

"Mostly Wiz Wear is done to try and raise some money for the USO. I have very high respect for those that serve this country," said Wisniewski. "It really means a lot to me, because of my grandfathers, they both served in World War II."

A native of Canton MI, Wisniewski was drafted in the fifth round by the Blackhawks in 2002. He also played for Anaheim, the Islanders and Montreal. He had a great season for Columbus last year, with a career-high 51 points. While smallish for a defenseman (5' 11", 205) he's a skilled skater with a great shot.

SADECKI PASSES. Ray Sadecki, a pitcher who won 135 games dur-

ing 18 seasons in the major leagues — including 20 wins with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1964 — died at age 73 from complications of blood cancer. Sadecki, a left-hander who finished his career with the Mets, was 19 when he reached the majors in 1960. He was the grandson of Polish immigrants, and his family ran a grocery store in the Polish Hill neighborhood of Kansas City. He later he returned to serve as a grand marshal for the neighborhood's Polski Day celebration. In 2007, Sadecki was inducted into the National Polish-American Sports Hall of Fame, and was inducted into the Kansas Sports HOF in 2010.

PERKOSKI'S NOTEBOOK. The Eagles signed veteran safety **Chris Proinski** to their roster. Originally a fourth-round draft pick of the Jacksonville Jaguars in 2011, he was released by the team after suffering a torn Achilles ... **Pat Kaleta** returned to the Buffalo Sabres after missing a month due to being hit in the face with a puck ... Former Nebraska and NBA star **Eric Piattowski** is now the Cornhuskers' men's basketball color analyst for Fox Sports ... Polish native **Jaro Zawislán** is the men's soccer coach at Cornell, which was recognized by the National Soccer Coaches Association for achieving a team grade point average of 3.0 or higher for the 2013-14 Academic Year ... University of Miami freshman **Piotr Lomacki**, a native of Warsaw, is a rising star on the collegiate tennis circuit ... **Pawel Kadlubowski**, a former starter on the Junior Polish National Team, is an assistant coach on the Princeton men's volleyball staff ... Polish born **Wojciech Wolski**, who played for several NHL teams, is currently playing in Russia's Kontinental Hockey League (KHL)... Polish born **Joanna Jędrzejczyk** is a six-time Muay Thai fighting world champion who now competes in the UFC Women's Strawweight division.

COMEBACK KID. **Rob Gronkowski** has re-emerged as a force in the NFL after a slow start this season following knee surgery. Gronkowski values his health all the more now that injuries have derailed his brothers' NFL careers. At one point, three Gronkowski brothers were playing in the league. Since then, Rob's brother Chris tore his hamstring, and brother Dan tore a pectoral muscle, ending their NFL dreams. Chris re-

tired because of his injuries but will draw an NFL pension based on four years of service. Brother Dan retired vested with three years of service.

"It's weird, because it seems like yesterday they were still in the league with me," Rob told ESPN Boston. "I loved watching their games when our games were done. And now, just like that, they're gone. It makes me understand what a great opportunity I have, because one bad injury and you're out of the league."

"It's unbelievable to me that Rob has been in the league five years already and he's only 25," said dad Gordy Sr. "People want to call him injury-prone, but what happened with the forearm was a fluke. Then he got the infection. The knee injury was bad, but it's not like he's had multiple knee issues. It was the first one."

POLISH POWER.

You won't see the greatest champion in World's Strongest Man competition competing in that arena anymore. **Mariusz Pudzianowski** is now a mixed martial artist, and last month in Krakow earned a unanimous decision over Pawel Nastula to bring his record to 8-3.

During his career as a strongman, Pudzianowski won five World's Strongest Man titles — more than anyone else — and had two second-place finishes. However, in 2009 the native of Biala Rawska joined MMA, which requires an entirely different training regime.

"Pudzian" has always been known for his intense workouts, which not only build his strength but also give him a bodybuilder physique. He also eats plenty of food. The 37-year-old generally starts his day with a breakfast of 10 eggs and two to three pounds of bacon. He likes Polish cuisine, and prefers to cook for himself when possible. He likes bigos, Polish soups, Polish sausages and typical Polish dinners with cooked potatoes and salads. Mariusz also has protein shakes, nutritional supplements and candy throughout the day. However, he



Mariusz Pudzianowski is now a mixed martial artist.

has gotten his weight down to 260-lb. from about 300 to withstand the rigors of fighting.

Mariusz has fought mostly in Poland, and has shown steady progress, improving both his technique and stamina. Two of his victories have come against a couple of big names, Eric "Butterbean" Esch and Bob Sapp.

THEY SAID IT

"He was just yappin' at me the whole time. So I took him and threw him out of the club."

— **Rob Gronkowski** explaining his actions when he blocked Colts safety Sergio Brown off the field and to the ground. He was penalized for unnecessary roughness on the play and later fined.

"I eat everything. I do not follow any particular diet. I eat anything I want, anytime I want"

Polish strongman turned MMA fighter Mariusz Pudzianowski.

"We're not giving up. There's no quit in this team, and that counts for something. We're going to keep fighting until the end. I do think that we have a high-character team. A lot of good pros that are going to keep working and keep fighting no matter what the record is."

— **Center Stefen Wisniewski**, on the Oakland Raiders' difficult year.

DID YOU KNOW? Poland's Noble Prize winners were: Maria Skłodowska-Curie (1903 jointly with husband in physics; 1911 in chemistry); Henryk Sienkiewicz (1905 literature); Władysław Reymont (1924 literature); Czesław Miłosz (1980 literature); Lech Wałęsa (1983 peace prize); Wisława Szymborska (1996 literature).

— **Robert Strybel**

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POLISH CHEF / Robert Strybel

Traditional Winter Soups

On a cold winter's day nothing hits the spot like a steaming bowl of traditional Polish soup. Soups have long been a Polish speciality and there are so many varieties to choose from. This is but a small sample.

CHICKEN SOUP (rosól z kury). A fryer/broiler can be used, but for that rich, old-time flavor a mature stewing chicken is preferable. Wash 1 cut-up 3 lb chicken, place in pot, add 1 T salt and 2-1/2 - 3 qts water, bring to gentle boil and cook 90 min or until meat is fairly tender. (Cook only 60 min if a fryer is being used). Skim off scum until no more forms. To broth add 1 portion soup greens

and 1 halved onion (impaled on fork and charred over flame), 6 peppercorns, 2-3 grains allspice and 1 bay leaf. Cook until vegetables are tender. Strain and discard all spices. Vegetables may be used in some other dish, but the carrots may be diced and served in the soup. Serve over home-made or store-bought egg noodles or poured-batter noodles, cooked diced potatoes, cooked rice or barley. Weight-watchers should refrigerate broth overnight and discard congealed fat (or freeze it in 1/4 c batches for future roux-making) before reheating. Garnish hot soup with a little finely chopped parsley and/or dill before serving.

BEEF BROTH (rosól wolowy). Wash 1-1/2 lbs bone-in beef and drench with 8 c cold water. Bring to boil very gently, skimming off scum. Add 2 t salt and cook 2 to 2-1/2 hrs. Add 1 portion soup greens (with or without a slice of Savoy cabbage), 1 halved onion (charred over flame revealing blackened concentric rings), 6 peppercorns 2-3 grains allspice and 1 bay leaf. Cook another 30 min or until vegetables are tender. Strain, refrigerate to remove congealed fat and serve as above.

POURED-BATTER NOODLES (lane kluski). Fork-blend 2 small eggs, 6 T flour and 2 pinches of salt

until mixtures is smooth. Stir in 1 T hot chicken broth or as much as needed to get a nice pourable batter and beat with fork until smooth. Pour batter in a thin stream into a pot of rapidly boiling water and cook about 2 min. Remove with slotted spoon and serve in chicken soup or beef broth.

VEGETABLE-BARLEY SOUP (krupnik polski). Soak 4 dried mushrooms in 1 c warm water several hrs. Wash 1/2 lb or so meaty beef bones and place in soup pot

containing 7 c water. Add the mushrooms and liquid and cook 60-80 min, skimming off scum. Add 1 portion soup greens and 5 peppercorns, 2 grains allspice and 1 bay leaf and cook until vegetables are tender. Strain soup. In separate saucepan cook 1/2 c pearl barley in 1 c strained stock. Dice vegetables, mushrooms and any meat attached to bones and return to soup together with the cooked barley and 2 peeled, diced potatoes. Cook until potatoes are tender. Salt to taste and garnish with 1 t chopped parsley.

HORSERADISH SOUP (zupa chrzanowa). To pot containing 6-7 c water add 3/4 lb fresh (unsmoked) kielbasa, 1 halved, charred onion, 6 peppercorns 2-3 grains allspice and 1 bay leaf. Bring to boil. Reduce heat, skim off scum that forms, cover and simmer on low about 90 min. Strain, discarding spices and onion but set aside sausage. To stock add 1 heaping T prepared horseradish or more to taste and simmer several min. Remove from heat. Fork-blend 1/2 c sour cream with a heaping T flour until smooth, adding several T hot soup one at a time and beating until well blended. Whisk mixture into soup. Add 1 t marjoram, 1 crushed bud garlic and simmer briefly. Season to taste with salt, pepper and a bit of sugar. Slice the kielbasa into thin rounds and place in bowls together with 1 sliced hard-cooked egg per serving. Pour hot soup over sausage and egg in bowls. This will warm up your innards and clear your sinuses as well!



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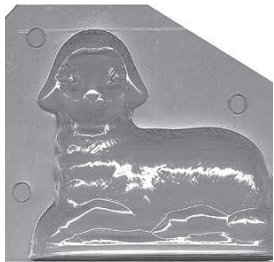
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PAJ Bookstore Price: \$17.95
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 384 pp. 8 1/4 x 5 1/2

12 b/w illus. Index 2nd ptg.
 Reissued by Pelican Publ., The Art of Polish Cooking, contains 500 authentic recipes, complete with recipes for hors d'oeuvres, soups, entrees, vegetables, pastries, desserts, and beverages. Special holiday menus are also presented, along with charming descriptions of traditional Polish feasts and celebrations. Author Alina Zeranska provides easy-to-follow recipes for favorites like Cabbage Rolls, Chicken in Dill Sauce, Meat Pierogis, and Fruit Mazurka. Zeranska has translated these Polish recipes perfectly using exact American measurements.

POLISH HERITAGE COOKERY
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"Polish Heritage Cookery is the best Polish cookbook printed in English on the market." — Polish Cultural News
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\$24.95
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Polish Holiday Cookery covers holidays such as Christmas and Easter, as well as celebrations year-round. Ideas for banquets, picnics, dinners, and family favorites abound throughout, ensuring that cooks have a selection of dishes for any occasion.

THE POLISH COUNTRY KITCHEN COOKBOOK

\$16.95. by Sophie Knab
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 This popular cookbook by beloved Polish American author Sophie Hodorowicz Knab is now updated with a new section on Polish Feasts and Festivals! Knab combines recipes for favorite Polish foods with the history and cultural traditions that created them. Arranged according to the cycle of seasons, this cookbook explores life in the Polish countryside through the year, giving readers priceless historical information to common questions asked by descendants of Polish immigrants. Lovely illustrations by Elliott Hutten and pearls of practical wisdom from the old Polish kitchen marvelously complement this book. This title includes over 100 easy-to-follow recipes, and a detailed bibliography and resource guide.

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BOOKS IN BRIEF / Mary Lanham

A Tale That Keeps You Guessing

WALKING ON ICE

By Maria Pilatowicz
Tate Publishing and Enterprises, LLC, 2011, 191 pps.
Mariapilatowicz.com

Agnes a young girl in communist Poland comes of age in the novel, *Walking on Ice*. It is 1953, Stalin has just died, the secret police are seemingly everywhere, and a 12 year-old Agnes tries to navigate a world that she does not fully understand. Her father, who she was very close with, is suddenly taken away and imprisoned. She and her mother try to cope with his absence in a country with an unpredictable government. Through a friend, Agnes's mother learns of and is able to take over a newspaper stand and earn some income after the owner decides to retire. Through it all Agnes and her family struggle to survive in an oppressive system.

In this first person narrative, the author uses vivid imagery to describe Agnes's world. Passages such as, "... I sometimes think of our life as a motif in a painting of landscape. Life as a thread of carmine winding through dry, leafless bushes, rendered in washed-out browns, and through white trunks of birches shedding yellow feathers. A flash of intensity..." along with its pacing, made this book hard to put down. The short novel is interspersed with newspaper clippings of the time, translated from the original Polish that enhance this narrative even further. Fully fleshed out characters

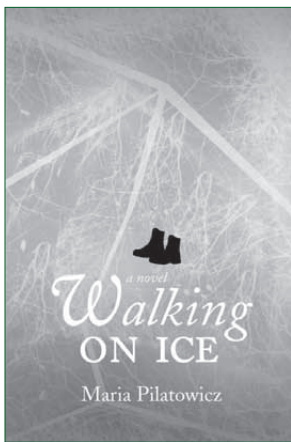
with their own pasts, motivations, and growth also give this novel concreteness.

Walking on Ice is one coming-of-age tale that keeps you guessing. It is now available on Amazon.com.

About the author. Maria J. Pilatowicz is a native of Warsaw, Poland where she completed high school and two years at the Warsaw University Law School. However, Pilatowicz wanted to pursue more opportunities in the West and subsequently moved to Paris for six months where she worked and studied French.

Maria first moved to New York after receiving her emigration papers and soon found a job at an insurance company despite not knowing much English. Maria continued her studies by taking English classes at Hunter College. She later moved to California where she studied English while working clerical jobs. After earning her BA in English from the California State University Northridge, she went on to pursue a Master's degree at the Professional Writing Program of the University of Southern California.

Pilatowicz has been published in several small presses and magazines and is now working on her next novel, *Notes from the Edge of the Continent*. It is based on her three year residence in China and her travels throughout Asia. She now lives in Southern California with her husband.



Bielski Receives Agency Community Award

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Allstate Insurance agent David Bielski, whose office is located in Tonawanda, N.Y., received the "Agency Hands in the Community" award for his commitment to volunteering in the community. With this award came a \$1000 grant from The Allstate Foundation for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Metro New York in Rochester, where Bielski volunteers.

"David is an active and respected member of the business community, protecting customers with insurance and financial services products," said Don Rubbo, New York regional sales leader at Allstate Insurance Company.



Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York touches the life of a child diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition every 10 hours. They believe that a wish experience can be a game-changer. This one belief guides them in everything they do. It inspires them to grant wishes that change the lives of the kids they serve.

THE PONDERING POLE / Ed Poniewaz

Achievers and Greasers

Unfortunately for me, the things that stick in my craw will remain there until I can find resolution and solace. That is why I have a bottle of Tums at my side at all times.

In the "Quotes" section of the Polish American Journal in July of 2014 there was an excerpt from the show *The Millers* where the character Carol Miller said, "Poland is ahead of the U.S. in math and science. Poland?" If we knew that Carol was Polish and loved being Polish that questioning actually could have been a reasonable expression of surprise and support for the small country that is better at something than the large country. In this case, let's be real, *The Millers* is a comedy, out of Hollywood, and well, not so much. Humor at our expense and it sticks in my craw.

However, since I am a super positive guy I will ignore *The Millers* aspersions and interpret that comment as, yes, but no surprise, small country better than large country, in this case in math and science. Six months later, I decided to research the Miller's math and science reference and was pleasantly surprised. Be careful of interpreting the stats but there seems to be a lot of evidence that the Poles do very well in these two categories and are not too far down the list on the third big one, reading. See the charts below for instance.

From the *Business Insider* – December 3, 2013, "Here's the new ranking of top countries in Reading, Science, and Math" by Joe Weisenthal (www.businessinsider.com/pisa-rankings-2013-12).

Keep your eye out for the 2014 *Business Insider* and other reputable rankings that will most likely be published soon. The bottom line — and there is no boasting or "pride" here, but merely another substantiation of something we knew all along — our people in Poland are well-educated and do well in school and in the workplace. Not me necessarily, but our people. This is true for our Polish people in Poland and the United States. For example, I recall that my class at William Cullen McBride High School, one of many Catholic prep schools in St. Louis back in the sixties, was pretty smart. According to Father Piekarski, (Marianist priest and math teacher during the week), it was the grade just ahead of us that was most outstanding. The top-ten honor roll posts each quarter usually included Rich Kobylinski, Bob Bonskowski, and Bobbie Wisniewski. As I recall, Rich went on to become an engineer, Bob B became an accountant, and Bob Wisniewski continued to be the great, lovable, and musical being that he always was and excelled at whatever endeavors he pursued.

I don't know what the statistics are for Polish American kids in education and scores compared to other ethnic groups, but I am thinking they are not too much different than their European counterparts. At least from the anecdotal evidence, I think we are doing okay.

"LIKE RAMA LAMMA LAMMA KA DINGA DA DINGA DONG." There were greasers (or as we say in St. Louie, "greasers") at McBride

and some were on the honor roll. The sixties and seventies were a strange transition time where some of us baby boomers drifted into the hippie scene and others clung to the black leather and the lure of the city. The lure of the city meant their families hadn't moved to the suburbs yet.

The majority of us were confused and got by existing in one or the other world, a mix of the two, or in neither of them. Like the legend of the Polish math and science person, watching the movie *Grease* again made me wonder about McBride's greasers, the Broadway musical's greasers, and their Polish background.

Jim Jacobs is the co-creator of the musical theatre hit *Grease*, and I found an excellent online article from the *Chicago Tribune* featuring him talking about the origins of the people, places, and culture on which he based the play. Jim got his inspiration from the kids at Taft High School on Chicago's Northwest side.

"Stop," he suddenly shouts on Normandy Avenue. "Sandy lived right there."

A startled father and daughter in a front yard across the street disappear quickly into their home as we all pile out of the car to stare and take pictures of the modest frame house. I wonder to myself if they know they live right across the street from Sandy Dumbrowski.

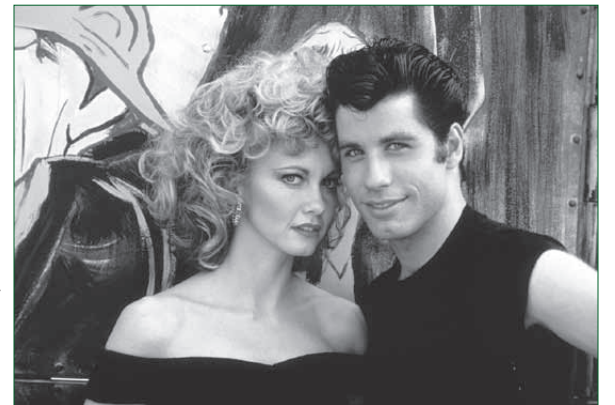
Jacobs is talking about the real Sandy — a much-desired teenager called **Jeanie Kozemczak**, long-gone from the area. She was Polish-American like most of the rest of the folks in a blue-collar neighborhood where Italian-Americans ran a close second, where most of the fathers had been in World War II and now worked factory jobs on Chicago's West Side.

So the era of *Grease* and the kids at Taft that were part of it had names like Zuko (we had a Yanko — not a greaser by the way) and Kenickie (Kaniecki) and at the center of it all was the beautiful Sandy Dumbrowski or as Jim Jacobs tells us, the real Sandy, the "much-desired" Jeanie Kozemczak. These people we watch with amusement in the musical *Grease* were our friends and relatives in many cases and they were part of our lives in an intimate way or we observed them from afar. Quite the phenomena really to think these were the children of the grandpas and grandmas that came from places like Lomza, or Wroclaw, or Rzeszow.

Well, as my grandma Casimiera used to say about the whole thing, "rama lamma lamma ka dinga da dinga dong!"

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS? It is the beginning of a new year so let's do a quick review of the Polish checklist. Every year of life is precious and I hope you pledge to make the best of every Polonian minute.

Get organized for all of the year's



While many notable actresses have played Sandy, most associated with the role is Olivia Newton-John (above, with John Travolta). On Broadway she was Sandy Dumbrowski. In the movie version, she became Sandy Olsson, a foreign exchange student from Australia to suit Newton-John's nationality.

activities early.

Make a note to consider adding new things and what to tweak to enhance the Polish character (such as substituting some of the non-Polish signage for Polish, adding Polish accoutrements, paintings or art, or posting "teachable moment" translations or information) of your activity. Do me a favor and change the name of the ball from Polonaise (French) to Polonez (Polish). Please.

Always think of ways to include new or younger people in the process and look for ways to introduce Polish to an individual or group.

Good luck and I pray for your success in maintaining and promoting our beautiful Polish culture!

POLISH OR NOT? It was interesting that Jim Jacobs told us who the person was that he modeled Sandy Dumbrowski after, Jeanie Kozemczak, but did not indicate her current status, whether *Grease* changed her life, etc. Does anyone know anything about her since those "Summer Nights" in Chicago?

Received a reply from Frank Corsoe, Sports Editor of *The Blade*, the Toledo, Ohio newspaper, on the ethnic background of Urban Meyer, the very successful Ohio State University football coach. Per Frank, "as far as we can tell, Mr. Meyer is mostly German. He was named after Pope Urban." Unfortunately that is not what I wanted to hear but it does make me wonder what the unmost part of him is.

Dziękuję bardzo to Tony Kaminski and the *Polish Polka* program for the "Very Important Polish Person" award to the Pondering Pole. This means a lot to me, is already framed and hanging on my wall.

If you have a thought about this month's topic, an answer to the question, a question of your own, or have interesting facts to share, contact me at: Edward Poniewaz, 6432 Marmaduke 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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THE OLD COUNTRY / Richard Poremski

GENEALOGY / Stephen M. Szabados



HEAVYWEIGHT SOVIET SOUVENIR. Lublin, Poland. May 18, 1976.

Social History and Our Ancestors

Genealogy is not just a collection of names and facts. Our ancestors were living human beings who interacted with the people around them. We need to go beyond the documents to add life to our family histories. Each document that we find is a snapshot of our families. Interpret the facts and use them to tell the story of our family. Each detail can be analyzed and used to help envision their lives.

It is also important to know the historical events surrounding our ancestors. Even more important, we should research the local history of the specific area where our family lived. Town histories and county histories can provide fascinating details about our families and help their stories come alive. Family members want to know why our

ancestors did certain things in their lives. Researching history may answer why our ancestors immigrated, why they moved from one locale to another, how they met their spouses or why they settled in a certain area.

Expanding our family histories by adding an historical event should not mislead the reader. Be careful not to use historical events as a backdrop to family stories or attach an event to your ancestor when it has no impact on their life. Use historical events that have affected the lives of your ancestors and use historical events to give context to their lives and help explain their actions.

We need to study the history of the times and places in which our ancestors lived to help understand their lives. Social history can help us understand the motivation and

decisions of our ancestors. History may point to possible factors which influenced them. It can also help us fill in the gaps in their stories that are left by more traditional records. Breathe life into the ancestral stories with the help of these social history resources — newspapers, county histories, town histories, military unit histories, firsthand accounts and diaries of other immigrants and many more. Use the internet to its full capabilities. Use local history museums and the history shelves at local libraries to find histories and firsthand accounts.

Make your family history more interesting to read. Tell your family how social history impacted the lives of your ancestors. Make them come alive.

Have fun!

POLISH CAN BE FUN! / Robert Strybel

SURNAME CORNER / Robert Strybel

“Daj mi buzi” and “Jak się masz?”

There are Polish American Journal readers who attended a Polish parochial school and had formal Polish classes conducted by the Good Sisters. They picked up the basics of Polish spelling and to this day know that Wróblewski is pronounced “vroob-LESS-key,” not “rob-LOOSE-key.” Others only heard Polish spoken now and then — at “busia’s” place, at the corner grocery, after church let out on Sunday or elsewhere in the old Polish neighborhood. There, PolAm kids and even those not of Polish ancestry often picked up words and phrases on the streets.

Jak się masz? was widely known to mean “how are you?” **Daj mi buzi** meant “gimme a kiss.” Kids heard grown-ups greet one another with **dzień dobry** (good morning or good day). There was also **dobry wieczór** (good evening) and **dobranoc** (good night), but no “good afternoon.” Every language has its quirks!

Some grownup might get on the porch and shout out to little Jasiu, Joey, Stan or Władziu: **“Do domu!”** (you get back home immediately). Babcia may have also come out on the porch and called out: **“Basiu, kolacja!”** (Babs, supertime!). A kid who was becoming a nuisance was sometimes told by his disgruntled playmates. **“Idź do domu spać!”** (Go home to bed). Naturally, most everyone who grew up in or near the old Polish neighborhood knew that **“Sto lat”** (Hundred Years) was the traditional song of well-wishing, sung at nameday and birthday parties.



Grandpa would scream “dog’s blood” every-time he’d hit his thumb with the hammer.

Many heard Dziadzio shout “psia krew!” when he hit his thumb with a hammer but lots of kids couldn’t figure out why “dog’s blood” was a bad word. Sometimes he said “cholera!” (pronounced: haw-LERR-ah), causing Babcia to raise her eyebrows and frown. But again, why should the name of a tropical disease be considered cursing?

There were lots of rougher curses like the D-word, G-word, P-word and CH-word. PolAm kids knew what they meant but used them only when grownups weren’t within earshot. Otherwise they might have

had their mouths washed out with Fels Naptha soap.

Proficiency in Polish was especially high in the culinary field. Even those PolAm youngsters who couldn’t put together a single sentence in Polish pricked up their ears and even began salivating in eager anticipation when they heard such mouth-watering terms as **pączki, chruścicki, babka, gołąbki, pierogi, barszcz, kielbasa, kapusta, kluski** and many more. But among U.S.-born kids such treats as **flaczki, kiszka** and **zimne nogi** (also known as **studzienina** and **galar-eta**) had far fewer devotees.

There was also the “half-na-pół Polish” also known as “Polglish” or “Chicago or Buffalo Polish.” It produced such terms and phrases as “grosernia na kornerze stryty” and “dziadzia pejntuje stępsy i giejte.” But let’s save that for another time.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Krowa, co dużo ryczy, mało mleka daje!

Do milego! Until next time!

P.S. Reader input is most appreciated. If you have any questions, remarks or suggestions, please feel free to email them to: strybel@int-eria.pl.

My name is Kowalski. Am I from Nobility?

A lot of confusion surrounds the nobility of Old Poland and their coats of arms, the badges of their “well-born” status. Some PolAms have heard that Polish surnames ending in “-ski” are a mark of noble stature. That is only partially true. It would be more accurate to say that coats of arms went with more surnames ending in “-ski” than with any other type. But that does not mean that Every Kowalski, Wiśniewski or Lewandowski traces his ancestry to Poland’s szlachta (gentry).

Worth bearing in mind is the fact that only 10-12% of Old Polish society was “well-born”, and nearly all the Poles who had immigrated to America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were commoners of good peasant stock. Even if a Polish American has a surname to which coats of arms were attached, the chances that his line of the family was entitled to use them is usually quite negligible.

If Brzezina (Birchwood) was the name of an estate or village, its owner had originally been known as Michał z Brzeziny (Michael of Birchwood). In time that adjectivalized into just Brzeziński. But the cooks, coachmen and stable hands at the Brzezina estate were also identified by fellow-villagers with

the Brzeziński tag, although that did not grant them gentry status. That toponymic nickname eventually evolved into a full-fledged surname, passed down to subsequent generations and finally brought to America by immigrant ancestors.

Poland’s heraldic/clan system began emerging in the 13th century. A knight, or more rarely non-combatant, usually was ennobled by the king as a reward for some feat of battlefield valor. That meant that he was granted a coat of arms and started his own gentry clan. That clan-name (which was also the name of the coat of arms) indicated the clan someone belonged to through patrilineal inheritance (from one’s father’s line), adoption or marriage, and many variously surnamed and unrelated individuals shared the same clan-name.

The formulation “Wiśniewski herbu Gryf” (inset, above) simply identified a Wiśniewski as belonging to the Noble Clan (or House) of Gryf. In the 19th century, the clan-name often became part of its bearer’s signature. Therefore, a noble Gryf-linked Wiśniewski who had

been baptized Stanisław could have therefore signed himself Stanisław Gryf-Wiśniewski.

There was only one noble line among the Nowaks, even though that is Poland’s most popular last name. But there were 12 noble lines amongst the bearers of the Kowalski surname, Poland’s second most common. It should also be mentioned that many variously surnamed nobles shared the same heraldic emblem. For example, the Sępówron coat of arms was used by nearly 1,000 noble families with surnames ranging across the alphabet from Adziejewicz to Żywułt.

Polish heraldry is more of a whimsical art than an exact science, closer to astrology and alchemy than to astronomy and chemistry. It is based on lore and legend which have been additionally elaborated and embellished over the centuries. Heraldic experts themselves do not always agree on the design and color scheme of individual coats of arms nor as to which families belonged to which noble clan.

Old Poland’s lack of Royal Office of Heraldry gave rise to false counts and others illegitimately claiming noble status. Although noble ancestry no longer ensures any titles or privileges, many tradition-minded families, including Polish Americans, continue to fondly display Polish coats of arms on plaques, paintings and tapestries in their homes as cherished ancestral keepsakes. Many different Polish heraldic devices may be viewed online at: [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herby_szlachty_polskiej_\(galeria\)#Herby_rod.C3.B3w_szlachekich](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herby_szlachty_polskiej_(galeria)#Herby_rod.C3.B3w_szlachekich) or <http://www.polish-gifts.com/polish-coats-of-arms.html> (most extensive but poor artwork).

For a custom-researched analysis of your Polish surname including its meaning, number of users, where they are from and whether a coat of arms goes with it, kindly airmail a \$19 personal or bank (cashier’s) check or money order to: Robert Strybel, ul. Kaniowska 24, 01-529 Warsaw, Poland.

You will also get a genealogical contact sheet listing researchers who trace family records in Poland, help complete family trees and even photograph or videotape family homesteads and graves.

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CULTURAL TELEGRAM / Kasia Romanowska

Polish Filmmakers Win Awards in America

Well before Paweł Pawlikowski's film *Ida* won five top European Film prizes at the latest European Film Awards, the black-and-white drama was a multiple prizewinner as judged by Los Angeles Film Critics Association, drawing awards not only for foreign-language movie, but also for supporting actress **Agata Kulesza**, who plays the title character's aunt, a former state prosecutor in communist Poland.



Kulesza

OSCAR-WINNING FILMMAKER RECEIVES 2014 WINGS AWARD.

Piotr Fudakowski has written and produced among other films, *Tsotsi* and *The Last September*. He has won numerous international prizes, including those as executive producer on the movie *The Last September* and producer on *Tsotsi*. This year, the Polish Film Festival in America awarded Fudakowski for his achievements in the movie industry beyond Poland.

"My Polishness is very important to me culturally ... I owe quite a bit to my parents, both consciously and subconsciously," said Fudakowski.

MASŁOWSKA'S NEW PLAY IN POZNAŃ. Guaranteeing public and media attention, the works of **Dorota Masłowska** are a tasty morsel for theaters. Masłowska has

already written plays for the Teatr Studio and Teatr Rozmaitości in Warsaw. Now, in the Teatr Nowy in Poznań, Cezi Studniak directed the adaptation of the writer's last novel, *Honey, I killed our cats* (Kochanie, zabiłam nasze koty).

The book "is an astonishment about the spiritual condition of the new man," said Masłowska.

POLISH MURAL DESTROYED IN NEW YORK. A Polish Mural depicting the **Warsaw Uprising** heroes, located in Greenpoint, New York, was destroyed by as-yet unknown vandals. According to wit-

nesses, a couple of hours after the incident, three people appeared at the destroyed mural to take pictures. Security of the "Warsaw" Polish National House tried to follow the suspected group, but they managed to escape. Polish activists claim the act of vandalism is ethnic in nature. They received hundreds of e-mails from people, both in America and Poland, wishing the memorial would be promptly restored.

HISZPANKA - POLISH BLOCKBUSTER? Everything seems to indicate that this movie will become a real Polish blockbuster. *Hiszpanka* is full of special effects, battle scenes, international actors and supernatural elements. It depicts the life of Ignacy Jan Paderewski and the only successful Polish uprising - the Wielkopolska Uprising. But *Hiszpanka* is not a classical historical movie. Łukasz Barczyk, director and screenwriter, says the movie is a combination of a thriller and comedy. It tells the story of a group of clairvoyants and spiritualists, who at the end of the World War I, are trying to protect the Polish pianist and politician from the mental attack of a medium working for the Prussian Army.

The premiere will be held on Jan. 23.

POLONIA PLACES / Greg Witul

Dom Polski in Perry, New York

36 Water St, Perry, NY 14530
Status: Closed

For the first time in 105 years the Poles of Perry, New York are without a home. In the last few years they have lost both their church, with the merging of St. Stanislaus Kostka in 2008 and their community center with the closing of the Perry Dom Polski last year. The loss of the Home has been especially hard on the families who worked so hard to start and maintain the facility.

Poles started moving into the Village of Perry in Western New York at the dawn of the twentieth century. They came to the area with the promise of clean country air and work at the Perry Knitting Company. By 1910, the Polish population of Perry was nearing 600 and the community had two demands: a church and a social hall. They received the church first, with the establishment of St. Stanislaus Kostka in 1911. Shortly thereafter, a Polish clubhouse was opened, but burnt to the ground in 1913. It would take the community eight years from this tragic event to recuperate.

In January of 1921, Anthony Dec, Chester F. Jędrzejewski, Felix Kwiecien, Walter Odymala, and Szczepan Siembida decided they would do whatever it took for Per-



ry's Polonia to have a building of her own. These men fanned out raising money and collecting donations for the Home. By 1924, it became necessary for them to incorporate, naming the entity, the Polish Home Association of Perry. The next year the group purchased a two family home on Water Street in the heart of Perry's Polish neighborhood. Half of the was remodeled into club rooms while the other half served as living quarters to the building's custodian. Not satisfied with their meager facility, the Home hired architect, Bronislaus A. Kalinowski of Buffalo, to design them a new,

modern building. The structure Kalinowski came up with was a two-story brick building measuring 65 feet long and 40 feet wide. The upper half was dominated by a large gathering hall with a stage in the rear, while the lower floor had space for small club rooms.

On June 10, 1928 will all the appropriate pomp and circumstance a groundbreaking for the new Dom Polski was held with over 300 honored guests from across New York State. An equally joyous celebration was held on January 20, 1929 when a banquet was held for the official completion of the building. For the next 70 years, the Home weathered the hard times of the Great Depression and Second World War and the easy times of the Pirates Orchestra dances and Dyngus Day celebrations. By the end of the 1980s, the older members were dying off and the Home approved of non-Polish members to keep its rolls up. By the millennium the Home had both rebounded and maintained its Polish flavor. The end for the club began as the once lucrative bell jars pullers started heading over to the newly opened casino. This coupled with the declining population and lack of youth interest forced the Perry Dom Polski to close its doors January 16, 2014.



Kalinowski's rendering of the facade.

INTERNATIONAL

More Nazi Victims Unearthed

PRZEMYSL, Poland — Archaeologists have exhumed the remains of an estimated 3,000 men from eight mass graves in southeastern Poland — bones belonging to nearly-impossible-to-identify soldiers who were victims of the Nazis.

Soviet and Italian troops were interned in a German stalag near Przemysł, where they were shot, starved, worked to the point of collapse, or left to die of disease. The remains include those of Italian soldiers who were treated as traitors after Benito Mussolini was deposed in 1943.

Agence France-Presse describes bones sorted by type, with ribs in one area, skulls in another. "It's the only way to count the exact number of victims," says the archaeologist in charge of the dig near the former site of Stalag 327 of Przemysł-Pikulice, which reportedly closed in 1944. When the dig is finished, the remains will be moved to a military cemetery, already the final resting place for 1,500 victims found by Poland's Red Cross in 1963.

A representative for the Polish government body tasked with preserving such wartime sites notes, "We don't know why they didn't check all the mass graves then. Maybe they didn't have the funds. Today we're finishing up what should have been done long ago."

First Gay Mayor Elected

SLUPSK, Poland (TVN24) — Robert Biedron, a long-time LGBT campaigner and member of Janusz Palikot's ultra-liberal Your Movement (TR) party was named mayor of the northern city of Slupsk, Dec. 7, 2014, after claiming 57.8 percent of the ballot — a total of 15,308 votes.

Speaking to reporters after his victory, the 38-year-old chose to focus on his aims and intentions and claimed that he will be a "humble" mayor. "I will lead a very modest role as it is a very modest city, as well as being one of the most debt-ridden in Poland," he stated. "The three limousines which are available to the mayor will not belong to

me, I will go everywhere by bike."

He also made a point in stating this was a turning point, not only for the city, but for the nation. "If you step out onto the streets of Slupsk you can see that people want change. This city requires people to help begin solve the problems."

Speaking in an interview on TVN, former Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz said he was both surprised and pleased by the result but slightly worried by the state of Poland's left wing parties.

"I did not believe that he would win the election. I expected Polish stereotypes to prevail," he said. "In a way I'm glad, because it is now a chance for a 'culture shock' to spread beyond Slupsk. A lot will depend on whether Mr. Biedron will succeed."

"For a long time the left has been unable to perform an accurate diagnosis of country's social situation. I'm afraid it is still stereotyped as the way it was 100 years ago. It forgets that since the left ruled, Poland has undergone many changes."

Czech Ad Makes Poles Look Bad

PRAGUE — T-Mobile caused a stir in the Czech Republic thanks to an advertisement which the Polish Embassy says shows Poles in a bad light and stereotypes them as "thieves and scammers."

According to TVN24, the new commercial — in which a Pole dressed as a tree cheats a Czech citizen by selling him a dodgy phone before running off — has rankled officials and caused them to demand it is removed from the air.

"This advert for T-Mobile was an unpleasant surprise for me," said Grazyna Bernatowicz, the Polish Ambassador in Prague, in a letter to the CEO of Czech Republic T-Mobile CEO Milana Vasziny. "We are against any kind of campaigns that show Poles in a negative light."

The advert shows a group of Czechs skiing in the mountains and one man approached by a Pole disguised as a tree attempting to sell him a number of tacky goods. After purchasing a phone which breaks in his hands, the Czech turns around to find the Pole has disappeared.

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OBITUARIES

Sigmund Biernat, World War II Veteran

Sigmund Biernat, passed away peacefully at his home in Chicago, at the age of 94, surrounded by his loving family on August 20, 2014.

Born on March 23, 1920 in Dziurawo-Kolo, Poland, Biernat served in the Independent Polish Carpathian Brigade under British Command. He then served in the Middle East from 1940-1943 and the United Kingdom until finally being honor-

ably discharged in June of 1946.

He took part in the Libyan Campaign in 1941 and fought in the Battle of Tobruk, where he was wounded in action.

In 1943 he was transferred to the Polish Air Force under British command.

He was laid to rest at Resurrection Cemetery Mausoleum, Justice, Illinois.

Brig. Gen. Walter Jajko, USAF, Ret.

The photograph included in the obituary of Brig. Gen. Walter Jajko, USAF, Ret., published in the December 2014 edition was incorrect. Jajko was a statesman, strategist, and scholar. Born the first son of a Polish immigrant family, he served his country in a distinguished 29-year career in the United States Air Force, as well as for over two decades as a civilian official at the highest levels of government. At



the Institute of World Politics, he taught a course entitled "Military Strategy: An Overview of the Theorists of Warfare," which serves as a critical component of the school's programs in national security affairs.

POLAND AND WORLD WAR I / Martin Nowak

The Battles for Łódź and Galicia

The Battle of Łódź, a large manufacturing center in Russian Poland, occurred from November 11 to December 6, 1914. It happened as the Russians attempted to invade German Silesia. A German counter-offensive resulted in a major battle just outside Łódź in horrible winter weather. The Russian army stubbornly held its position before the city for nineteen days before withdrawing to form a stronger line to the northeast.

Some fighting between the two armies occurred in Łódź itself, including the use of poison gas, but little damage was done to the city. About a hundred civilian residents died. After Łódź came under German control on December 6 it suffered the usual hardships of similarly occupied cities in Russian Poland: food and fuel shortages as a result of being cut off from sources, hunger and disease, and general economic upheaval. Most factories in the heavily industrialized city were stripped down by the Germans and the machines sent to Germany. Many workers were forced to leave for Germany for work. As a result, the city's population was reduced by about forty percent for the war's duration.

A LITTLE FURTHER SOUTH, the Polish city of Lwów in the Austrian partition endured two invasions. During the Battle of Galicia from late August to early September of 1914, the Russians swept into Austria's Polish province and Lwów was captured on September 3. The Austrian forces had fled the city without putting up any resistance to the invaders.

The Russians entered a city with no signs of war, no burned or bombed-out houses. In short order the streets were full of cars, wagons and people resuming their business, mixing in with Russian soldiers

who now dominated the scene. But not everything was rosy. The czarist forces, mainly Cossacks, plundered and looted stores and they had a special hatred for the large population of Jews, who endured beatings and killings not only in Lwów but in the surrounding area. Many Austrian soldiers of Polish descent who had been captured in the vicinity offered to switch sides and fight for Russia.

By late May 1915 the Austrians had surged back eastward and were ready to retake Lwów. Realizing that they could not defend the city, the Russians began evacuating to the east. Russian civilian administrators were the first to leave. Wagons and trains were piled high with furniture, housewares and military materiel. The streets were choked with carts, automobiles, horses and shouting people. Most residents stayed in the city. However, men of fighting age from eighteen to forty-five were forced to evacuate with the Russians, lest they be conscripted into the enemy's army.

IN EARLY JUNE Austrian airplanes dropped a few bombs over the city, and by the fifth of the month the Russian army was completely gone from Lwów except for a few drunken soldiers. One of the Russians' last acts was to completely blow up the beautiful main train station. On June 8 Austrian troops entered a quiet city of empty streets to reclaim Lwów for the Austro-Hungarian crown.

Shortly after the Russians had



German soldiers carrying off parts of a wrecked Russian plane in Łódź.

captured Lwów from the Austrians in September, they pushed farther westward in Galicia. On September 24, 1914 they began a siege of the Polish city of Przemyśl. Przemyśl was a fortress city. Forty-five forts surrounded its circumference. The Austrians had garrisoned 120,000 soldiers in them and in Przemyśl proper and supplied them with food and weaponry to last for several months.

In just four days the Russians succeeded in encircling the entire city and began an assault on it. In mid-October a combined Austro-German force broke through the Russian lines. This allowed most of the 18,000 civilians cowering in the city to flee. It was not easy for them to remain in Przemyśl where malnutrition and disease became rampant as supplies ran short and horses, dogs and cats were slaughtered for food. And Russian artillery could strike anywhere, anytime.

The Russians renewed their assault and bombardment in December but it was not until March 22, 1915 that Fortress Przemyśl surrendered. The remaining civilians were put to work by the Russians cleaning up the damage. But by June 3 the Austrians and Germans retook the devastated city and chased the Russians out for good.

POLONIA ON FILM / Joseph W. Zurawski

Mr. Soft Touch (1949)

Drama, Romance, Crime
Distributor: Columbia Pictures
Directors: Gordon Douglas, Henry Levin
Screenplay Writer: Orin Jannings
Featuring: Glenn Ford (as Joe Miracle), Joe Mirikowski, Evelyn Keyes

It's the Christmas season in San Francisco. Joe Miracle is being chased by the cops after stealing \$100,000 from the River Club. He ditches the car and goes to the apartment of Victor Christopher, the brother of his dead partner, Leo. Victor's wife, Clara, shows Joe the ticket she got for Joe to leave town the following evening. Joe is upset as he planned to leave the same day knowing the mob who now owns the River Club and the police would be after him. Trying to console Joe, Clara says, "You had to steal your own money." Joe owned the River Club with Leo. When Joe went into the service, the mob killed Leo and took over the club.

Joe manages to get himself arrested and believes spending a night in jail will keep him safe from the mob. A social worker, Jenny, convinces the judge to release Joe in her care at a settlement house. Reluctant at first, Joe embraces the idea when he learns he can sleep over at the settlement house. He teaches teens a lesson in gambling, manages to fall on a piano while decorating a

large Christmas tree, and, posing as a rep from the D.A.'s office, gets a larger "free" piano for the settlement house from piano store that is really a front for back-room gambling. The settlement house also receives an unexpected large supply of towels and bed sheets.

A news columnist, "Early" Byrd, begins to follow Joe after noticing him in the piano store negotiating for a free piano for the settlement house. He reveals that Joe Miracle is really Joe Mirikowski, "the purple-hearted hero of the U.S. Army, an iron-brained Polack (who) caught fire and was busy being a patriot." Joe never revealed why he joined the Army, hinting he may have been on the lam.

Joe's "Polishness" is further unraveled as Jenny and Joe visit a Polish American elderly man who speaks only Polish to Joe. Joe explains that the man asked if Joe was her husband. A further question about diapers for the baby requires Joe to use a little hand language.



Glenn Ford plays Joe "Miracle" Mirikowski, an ambiguous character in a movie with an equivocal ending.

Joe drops numerous hints about his early difficult years. His parents consoled him, "We can't help where we're born; we can help where we're going." He frequently mentions getting out of, staying out of the gutter.

The mob learns of Joe's location, moves in, gets Joe's bundle of money as a fire destroys the settlement house. Joe re-steals his \$100,000, then acting as a Santa Claus, gives the money to the settlement house so it can be restored. The mob moves in again, shoots Joe as he is attempting to escape. In the final scene, Joe is pulled out of the gutter by and into the arms of Jennie.

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TOLEDO POLONIA / Margaret Zotkiewicz-Dramczyk

Nowakowski Brothers See Future for Bay View Naval Armory

The western end of Lake Erie is known for its shallow waters, world-class walleye fishing, and of late, national news-making stories about northwest Ohio's undrinkable water due to deadly algal blooms. Toledo sits at the point where the Maumee River empties into Maumee Bay, which forms the western most part of the lake.

It may surprise some readers to learn that downtown Toledo does not sit directly on the lake, rather, it sits upriver on the banks of the Maumee. Today, those banks are home to a mix of new and old buildings. Some of the most well-known include the Hollywood Casino Toledo, south of the DiSalle bridge (which carries I-75 over the Maumee), a line of restaurants called the Docks, and the National Museum of the Great Lakes, which was relocated from Vermilion, Ohio and opened to much fanfare in April 2014 on Front Street near the Veterans' Glass City Skyway Bridge.

Imagine taking a step back in time, to the Depression Era. It was the time when the movement known as Art Deco was popular all over the world. In architecture, Art Deco, with its bold geometry and striking ornamentation, was often found in the movie houses, railway stations, and public works projects built during this time. One such architectural gem stands on the shoreline of the Maumee River just a few miles from downtown.

THE BAY VIEW NAVAL ARMORY

sits on a seven acre peninsula, tucked away near the Toledo Yacht Club in Point Place, and across a narrow inlet from the Coast Guard station.

The Bay View Naval Armory was built by the Works Progress Administration in 1934-1936. It was located in Bayview Park in Toledo. It served the needs of the Ohio Militia until 1947 when it was taken over by the newly formed US Naval Reserve. The Naval Reserve last used the armory in 1988. Since then, it has been owned alternately by the City of Toledo, the State of Ohio, and a private owner. That owner has kept up on some repairs, with his intent being to use it for boat storage. However, that has not been carried out.

If a pair of local brothers get their wish, the armory will come back to life after almost 30 years of lying abandoned and unused.

JOHN NOWAKOWSKI of Swanton, Ohio recalled how he first



Brothers Jeff and John Nowakowski and the board members see the Bay View Naval Armory (above) as the home of the national training site for the Sea Cadets and other American youth groups.

found about the building:

"Our family is from Detroit. We moved down to Toledo in 1978, when my father took a job here. I started drawing a paycheck from the armory while on active duty for the United States Marine Corps in 1983. Our parents were always taking us to different historical sites as we grew up. My brother Jeff and I have always wanted to see a military museum in Toledo. We have great love for our country and our military history.

"The Last Patrol is a 501c3 organization Jeff and I started in 1990, and incorporated in 1993 to build the museum. The purpose of the Last Patrol is to teach and preserve United States military history by preserving equipment and artifacts of the modern military. The Last Patrol is run solely by volunteers, with a Board of Directors that meets quarterly."

The Nowakowski brothers didn't stop there. They added a second mission: the Sea Cadets.

John continued: "We first learned about the United States Navy Sea Cadets Corps, or Sea Cadets, about six years ago. The USNSCC has been around for 51 years. When Jeff and I became aware of them and started working with them, we met with our [Last Patrol] board and added an article to our bylaws stating that we are in direct support of the USNSCC, in particularly Commodore Perry Division and Training Ship Lawrence (the two local units). When we started working with the Sea Cadets, the idea of merging the two seemed to make sense."

The objective of the Sea Cadets is to introduce young people to naval life, as well as to develop a sense of pride, patriotism, courage, and self-reliance. These objectives are accomplished by utilizing a nautical-based theme and the core

values of the US Navy and the US Coast Guard: honor, courage, and commitment.

The brothers and the board members chose the Bay View Naval Armory as the home of the national training site for the Sea Cadets and other American youth groups. The name of the training site is Station Liberty.

They chose the Bay View Naval Armory at the site of Station Liberty for a number of reasons.

"Station Liberty would be one of the largest privately owned and funded training centers in the U.S., and one of the very few in the Midwest. [Due to its location on the Maumee River], it would give the kids the opportunity to train hands-on, on seamanship, and boat operations, as well as any other types of training and research. The location would also provide the opportunity to display both US Navy and US Coast Guard vessels as part of the museum," said John.

A daunting mission, to be sure, and add to these goals one more: obtaining a training ship for Station Liberty. When their plan to obtain the Toledo built Coast Guard cutter *USS Storis* came to an end in 2013, the Nowakowskis and the foundation sought to purchase the *M/V Susitna*. This boat is located in Ketchikan Alaska, and although completed and christened in June 2010 to be a one-of-a-kind, ice-capable vessel, she was never put into service. The Last Patrol researched the *M/V Susitna* and put together a plan to turn the vessel into an operational training vessel for Station Liberty.

The task is complicated by the various governmental entities that come into play for the successful completion of such a transfer.

"The Liberty Region Support Foundation was set up by people involved with the Sea Cadets to help

The Last Patrol build Station Liberty. The Foundation has not been fully incorporated yet. We have not decided if there is really a need for two not-for-profits on the same project."

IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE that all of this comes with a big price tag. Much of what has been done to date has been financed out of pocket by those closest to these causes. The Last Patrol has used past donations in the quest for the training ship.

"We need to raise \$500,000 to purchase the property: \$400,000 is the estimated purchase price and then we need to cover insurance and hire fund raisers. We have estimated about \$8-10 million dollars to save the building. We are hoping the vessel can be turned over through legislation and would not cost us anything. The vessel might even bring startup money with it."

I got the chance to visit the armory with Jeff and John on a Sunday evening in early October. It was perhaps fitting that we entered the property as the sun was setting behind us. Though we did not get inside the building, I could see from the sun shining in through the windows some of the Art Deco touches, such as the memorial tablet which displays that the armory was built by the WPA 1934-1936, and dedicated by FDR in 1936, and the sleek lines of the interior passages.

The majestic rotunda built of reclaimed sandstone is perhaps the most eye-catching exterior feature of all. Cement naval crests represent a marine, naval aviator, sailor, navy officer, navy chief petty officer, and one may represent Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, famous for his role in the War of 1812.

It isn't difficult to imagine the place in its heyday as a naval training site, and in its most recent role as a place for proms and dances until the ravages of time slowed the building down.

Jeff and John Nowakowski remain determined to see the project through, and to bring the Bay View Naval Armory to a newly purposed use. "We are looking for sponsors and donations, as well as looking for professional fund raisers to help."

The Last Patrol can be reached at lastpatrol@embarqmail.com.

Additional information and pictures of the Bay View Naval Armory may be obtained via Internet search: <http://navalmilitia.ohio.gov>, www.leihs.org, and general searches for naval armories.

Wheeling Polka Festival

The Wheeling Polka Festival is scheduled for March 27-29 at the Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, West Virginia. This three-day event will offer Dennis Polisky & Maestro's Men, Lenny Gomulka & Chicago Push, IPA Tribute Band, and Nu-Tones.

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OUR POLONIA

Largest U. S. Cities/Municipalities Ranked in Terms of Their Polish American Populations

The following 30 cities and municipalities, listed in descending order of their Polish American populations, have at least 10,000 or more residents who identified themselves as being of Polish ancestry, according to the 2000 United States Census. Source: *Polish American Congress*

CITY/MUNICIPALITY	NUMBER OF POLAMS	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	CITY/MUNICIPALITY	NUMBER OF POLAMS	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION
New York City	213,447	2.7%	Baltimore, Md.	18,400	2.8%
Chicago,	210,421	7.3%	Parma, Ohio	15,503	18.1%
Philadelphia	65,508	4.3%	Grand Rapids, Mich	15,442	7.8%
Milwaukee	57,485	9.6%	Amherst, N.Y.	15,136	13%
Los Angeles	56,670	1.5%	Erie, Pa.	14,718	14.2%
Cheektowaga, N.Y.	37,560	39.9%	San Antonio, Texas	14,475	1.3%
Buffalo, N.Y.	34,254	11.7%	San Francisco	14,332	1.8%
Phoenix	32,050	2.4%	New Britain, Conn.	14,257	19.9%
Toledo	31,792	10.1%	West Seneca, N.Y.	14,236	31%
Pittsburgh	28,178	8.4%	Boston, Mass.	13,704	2.3%
San Diego	25,201	2.1%	Seattle	12,622	2.2%
Cleveland	22,978	4.8%	Las Vegas	12,188	2.5%
Houston	19,290	1%	South Bend, Ind.	11,417	10.7%
Detroit	18,992	2.0%	Scranton, Pa.	11,311	14.8%
Omaha, Neb.	18,447	4.4%	Jacksonville, Fla.	10,500	1.4%

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POLKA JUKEBOX / Steve Litwin

Thanks to the Mechanics

Probably one of the best liner notes on Tony Blazonczyk's new compact disc, "Breakdowns — the Phaze that Never Ends," is Tony and the band sending a "thank you to all the mechanics and folks that have helped us through many breakdowns through our many miles of traveling."

One thing for sure, there is no break down of music on this 15-track collection of old and new, original and public domain tunes from the musical pens of Eddie Senior, Wally Maduzia, Li'l Wally, Randy Koslosky, Kevin Adams, John Furmaniak and more.

Joining Tony on this project is Tim Jagodzinski on concertina, John Furmaniak on accordion, Ray Rzeszutko on drums, CJ Lackowski on trumpet, Trent Urbytes on trumpet, Mike Stapinski on trumpet and clarinet and Matt Sienkowski on piano.

"Katy's" is one I could (and did) play over and over again. The concertina, accordion, horns, clarinet, drums, bass, all come together with a

musical smoothness. The traditional "Mountaineer's Farewell, Bright Star, Siwy Kon Medley" demonstrates the connection this group has to the traditional standards. "Hold the Glass," a Randy Koslosky original, tells the story I remember seeing at Litwin's on Sixth and Oliver — or any corner tavern in any old neighborhood — over and over again. John Furmaniak's "We Will Meet Again," is a heart-grabber and classic tribute tune that I've played more times than I can count.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the cover art of this CD. It pictures a "breakdown," apparently one of many, that has become the norm for New Phaze. No matter the road experiences of this band, Tony Blazonczyk and New Phaze are as hot as an overheated block on that engine that takes them from gig to gig. They know how to make the music happen and we are thankful for it.

The CD was mixed and mastered by Gary Rhamy, Peppermint Studios.

The "Twins" "Connecticut Staś" Przasnyski Passes

DELAND, Fla. — Legendary accordion player and polka musician, Stanley "Staś" Przasnyski, one-half of the famed Connecticut Twins Orchestra, died in Florida on Nov. 25, 2014.

Born in 1926 in Bristol, Connecticut, Przasnyski started to study the accordion at age ten while attending St. Stanislaus School. At the age of thirteen he was playing professionally at social affairs, concert solos, and private parties. He started a four-piece band at the age of eighteen. A typical Saturday consisted of a one-hour broadcast over Radio station WBIS, a wedding reception from 2:00-6:00 p.m., a night club from 8:00 p.m. to midnight, and then playing a place called the "Bottle Club" from 1:00-3:00 a.m.

In 1952 he made his first recording for the Stella Music Company of New York, under the name "The Connecticut Twins Orchestra." Original compositions on that recording included: "Polish Wedding Polka," "My Girl Friend Polka," "No Gonna Drink Oberek," "John and Katie Polka," "Sugar Daddy Polka" and "Accordion Magic Polka." As a result of their popularity, the Connecticut Twins produced a total of 16 LPs on the Stella Label and embarked on personal tours that took them to Canada, as far south as Baltimore and as far west as Chicago. The band played every major hotel in New York City, as well as the New York World's Fair in 1966, and the Roseland Ballroom on Broadway. The Connecticut Twins traveled so much that they only played one Saturday night a year in Connecticut.

In 1948, Przasnyski married Genevieve Sieruta, also from Connecticut. They had two sons, Staś Jr. and Vance. All members of the family performed as vocalists in the Polish language.

Przasnyski was a disc jockey from 1962-1982 over radio station WBIS, and was the promoter of a number of successful telethons that raised money for cancer research.

When the biggest polka recording of all time, "The Beer Barrel Polka," was released in 1939, RCA Victor wanted to stop paying royalties to Germany and The Bill Glahe Orchestra. They called upon Bernie (Wyte) Witkowski Orchestra to reproduce a new master recording. Witkowski asked Przasnyski to perform on the recording because the flipside featured a tune called "Hot Pretzel Polka," which featured a lengthy accordion solo. Years later, Przasnyski performed with the Witkowski Orchestra at Madison Square Garden for the Harvest Ball. Przasnyski was inducted into the

International Polka Association Hall of Fame in 1993. His brother John, who died in 1996, was posthumously inducted in 1998.

Funeral services were private.

loving family on November 25, 2014, after a sudden illness. Born in Scranton, Mike was a sergeant in the Army and served during the Korean War. A lifetime musician and



Bob Earl, long-time leader of The Imperials of Toledo.

Toledo Legend
Bob Earl Dies

The Toledo polka world lost a treasure with the recent passing of Bob Earl, long-time leader of The Imperials of Toledo.

Robert C. Earl was born August 21, 1930, to Eleanor (Pacer) and Floyd Earl in Toledo, Ohio. Bob married Mary Hollo on April 14, 1951, and served his country in the Korean War with the United States Army. He operated a variety of service stations with his father Floyd and brothers Al and Norm.

He was 17 when he first played drums in a polka band. Jobs at weddings and dances followed. He and his cousins formed a group that from the 1970s onward was known as the Imperials of Toledo. It recorded 16 albums, traveled internationally, and had a wide following, including a fan club in Baltimore.

In 1983, Bob was instrumental in starting the International Music Association, IMA, a nonprofit organization to promote polka music in the Toledo area, eventually garnering a membership of over 500 people. The IMA is still in operation today. In 1987, Bob was inducted into the International Music Association Hall of Fame.

He is survived by his wife, Mary; sons, Jim (Diana) Earl, Bob (Sandy) Earl; daughter, Mary (Jeff) Booth, 10 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Polka World loses
Mike Magdon

Michael Edward Magdon Jr., 85, of Peckville, Pennsylvania, passed away peacefully surrounded by his

recording artist, he played bass in several bands, including the Continentals and the Pennsylvania Merry Makers. He was a lifelong member of the American Federation of Musicians, serving as a board member for many years.

He was married to the late Elizabeth (Beneski) and is survived by four children, Sue Pagano and husband, Charlie of Dickson City; Mi-



Mike Magdon will be remembered as a member of the Continentals and the Pennsylvania Merry Makers.

chele Fyrster and husband, Jim of Mechanicsburg; Michael Magdon and wife, Natalie of Olyphant; and Paula Sweikert of Halifax.

Mike retired from the Scranton State School for the Deaf, where he also coached the boys and girls basketball teams. He was a member of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Peckville.

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DANCE TIME / Jen Pijanowski

Polka and Country Meet for a Most Wonderful Event

It's hard to believe that we are already saying goodbye to another year and looking brightly to 2015. I hope this time finds you all contemplating the blessings, good fortune, luck, and happiness that are waiting in this New Year. As each year passes, my feelings of success, expectations, and worth of my life unexpectedly change. Instead of a life filled with wealth, material possessions, and economic success, I find myself searching for fortune in the laughs of friends, a hug and kiss from my nieces and nephews, or a smile from a stranger. I am so grateful to be put on this earth to find joy through the people with whom I have surrounded myself. Thank you for the opportunity to express my joy of music and polka fans in writing this column. The laughter, friends, and soul-enriching nourishment I have acquired through the polka community cannot rival any amount of money.

THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

brought not only many feet of snow but much polka activity in the Western New York area. Buffalo **Concertina All Stars** charmed their fans at the 2nd Annual Turkey Trot dance at Potts Banquet Hall. Good music, entertainment, and laughter were served up with a delicious turkey sandwich with each admission. This band pulled a few new songs out of their typical repertoire and really surprised the audience by showcasing a few American tunes. **Veronica Wanderlich**, who was there with her video camera, was catching the evening's entertainment both on the stage as well as the dance floor. I always enjoy getting a chance to talk to her at these events. Her passion for polka music — especially her three talented sons — is impressive indeed. She has an incredibly deep-rooted respect and affinity for the capability of the musicians in the polka genre. Being married to a musician and sharing their love of polkas has played an important role in their family. Her three sons, Sonny, Johnny, and Tommy all share that family enthusiasm for polkas, and it's evident whenever you get the opportunity to see any of them perform. We are blessed to have this polka loving family in the Buffalo area.

Beginning at the Polish Nook in Niagara Falls, I began a race to make it to three polka events on a single chilly Sunday afternoon. **New Direction** packed the venue as they returned to this mainstay in the Falls. With a \$10 admission including a delicious Polish buffet, fans filled all of the tables and bars before the music even started. The dance floor which abounds with white twinkle lights and greenery felt the patter of feet dancing as the band belted out polka favorites. This is a beautiful venue for polka music and the staff filled the air with excitement in anticipation of the band, dancing throughout the tables as they brought drinks back and forth to patrons. **New Direction** does an incredible job filling this restaurant and giving their audience an afternoon full of entertainment. **Ron Urbanczyk** shows his commitment to polka music every single time he performs, exhibiting pride and joy in every note played and sung. The band underscores that by providing the infectious beat for the heartfelt honky polkas they play. Check out **New Direction's** schedule to see when they are playing next and make it is priority to see this band.

Next stop on my polka Sun-

day adventure was **Dianeagains** in Cheektowaga for **Special Delivery**. I have written many times about this venue and I still have a great

the good old days and his love of the music. This friendship is one that I will always cherish and, had it not been for polkas, I would have

janowski, Johnny Wanderlich, Jim Kaminski, Mike Melymuka, and Sonny Wanderlich all got up to join in. It was a Buffalo all star band per-

showcasing one of the nation's most popular bands: **Polka Country Musicians**. Over 450 people descended upon the venue to witness the coupling of PCM with one of WNY's hottest country bands, **West of the Mark**. It was evident, even as the evening started out with a packed floor during line dancing lessons, that this was going to be an iconic event. The large raised stage from which the band played allowed for a perfect view from any location. The beautiful wooden dance floor, touted as the largest in Western New York, endured continual dancing regardless of which band took the stage. Polka fans were out learning the country line dances during **West of the Mark** and then took their turn teaching polka lessons during **Polka Country Musicians**. As I took a moment to look around that evening, it was evident that the spirit of polkas was alive and well in Buffalo. There were a number of polka lovers that I had not seen in some time whose curiosity about the event brought them out to join us for this successful evening. At one point during the evening, **Wally Dombrowski** joined **West of the Mark** adding his fiddle skills to the song "Play Me Some Country Music." Screams from the polka fans filled the venue as this much-admired polka musician flaunted his skills on the stage. The highlight for me during the event was a **Polka Country meets West of the Mark** compilation of the **Garth Brooks** song "Callin' Baton Rouge". The band jammed and showed their delight at the talent which was evident from both sides of these opposing genres. **Val Bakowski** scored a home run with this event and I hope there are more like this in the future. Delight filled my mind as I saw so many new people exposed to the polka music that we all enjoy. A new venue, some new fans, and a nice contingent of Buffalo's polka aficionados expanded the success of this event. Thank you to the owner and staff of **Howdy's** for seeing beyond the typical realm of polka stereotypes and welcoming all of us. I would also like to extend huge congratulations and thanks to **Val** on spearheading this event. I look forward to what he has planned for polkas and the fans in the future.



Diane Raczkowski and Val Bakowski



Anne Marie Gifford and Charlene Krasuski



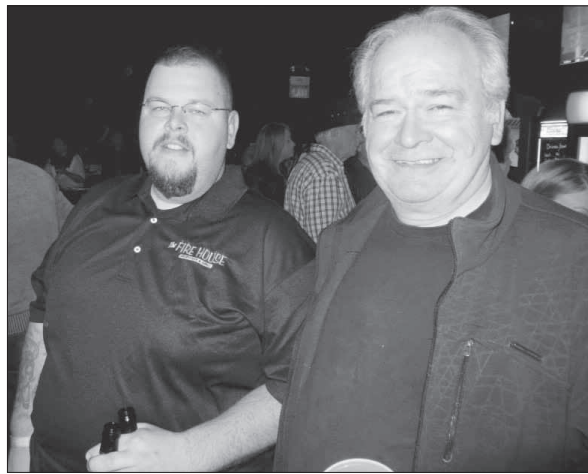
Veronica Wanderlich



Andy Pilecki, Marian Pilecki, Chris Bogdon



J.C. Thompson, Jason Urbaniak of West of the Mark, Cara Pijanowski, and Monica McNeill.



Dave DeFields (owner of The Firehouse) and Dave DeFields, Sr.

experience whenever I visit. This corner tavern has opened its arms to **Special Delivery** and the polka community. This band draws a devoted fan base whenever they play but it is especially obvious here. Their enthusiastic groupies come much earlier than the music to get the best tables adjacent to the dance floor. Whether it is a polka, oberek, or rock tune you can bet that room to dance will be at a premium. This band never disappoints; they share both a passion for the music and a wicked sense of humor. They are a joy to watch, hear, and have the opportunity to chat with during their breaks. This particular Sunday, it was a wonderful surprise to see America's Polka Sweetheart, **Stephanie**, in attendance. She was out enjoying an afternoon with great friends and incredible music. I also got the chance to catch up with my friends from Rochester. **Linda** and **Marty Merwin** — along with the famous **Mike Chipchak** — have been coming to Buffalo so often for polka dances, they should just pack up and relocate. The polka community is so blessed to have these fans who make the sacrifice to travel in support of this music. I always enjoy reminiscing with Mike about

never gotten the opportunity to meet **Linda** and her hysterical husband **Marty**. So after some chatting, we headed to our final destination along with our Rochester friends.

Anchor Inn which is a mecca of the Polish community in Cheektowaga, has been serving up polkas off and on for the past several years. **Phocus**, who have made this their home, pack them into this quaint establishment. Upon arrival, there was barely room to walk into the bar and order up a cocktail. We quickly made our way into the room where the band was set up to join a table that had a few empty seats. The band was finishing up their second set and cranking out polkas in their characteristic style. **Jimmy Nowaczewski**, who sings with such power and emotion, is able to quickly command any audience. His band, which consists of seasoned musicians, has a distinctive sound that is uniquely their own. **Phocus** band members work together to create their own take on standards as well as American tunes turned polka. After a few songs and a break, the band gave an opportunity to many polka musicians in attendance to play a few songs together. **Ray Barsukiewicz**, **Ken Machelski**, **Ricky Pi-**

formance like no other. These musicians, who typically do not play together, played like they had been rehearsing for months. Enjoying the impromptu performance and showcasing their talents, the enthusiasm was evident in the eyes of each of them. They pounded away song after song and I was suddenly wishing I was able to capture of this this energy for the world to see. Someone described it as like being at an old fashioned Polish wedding and everyone taking turns on stage. It was a show-stopping performance that everyone in attendance was glad to witness. Many thanks to the guys in **Phocus** for sharing the stage with your fellow musicians. It epitomizes your love and loyalty to all of you who share in the hope to keep this music alive.

JAK SIE MASZ, PARTNER? **Val Bakowski** once again organized an event that changed the way we typically view a polka dance. The successful event was called **Polka Meets Country**, and it far exceeded my expectations. The event was held at the iconic honky tonk, **Howdy's** in **Williamsville, N.Y.** The concept was to infuse a new audience into the world of polkas by

UPCOMING

- **Jan. 4.** **Special Delivery**. **Dianeagains**. 2460 Clinton, Cheektowaga (716) 768-3246. 4:30-7:30 p.m.
- **Jan. 11.** **The Knewz, USPA Hang-over Dance**, **Holiday Inn**, 1947 Royalton Rd., Strongsville, OH. Music 8:00 p.m.-12:00 a.m.
- **Jan. 17.** **New Direction, Piwo, Pierogi, & Polkas** at the **Broadway Market**, 999 Broadway, Buffalo. Music 12:00-3:00. Free admission.
- **Jan. 17.** **Special Delivery, Soup and Sandwich Dance**, **Donavan Post**, **Genesee & Beech St.**, Cheektowaga. (716) 896-3346.
- **Jan. 17.** **John Gora & Gorale, Dinner Dance**, **Millenium Banquet Center**, **Brampton, Ontario**.
- **Jan. 24.** **Special Delivery**, **St. John the Baptist Polka Mass and Dance**, 2021 Sandridge Rd., Alden, NY. Polka Mass 4:00 p.m., dance afterwards 6:30-10:00 p.m.
- **Jan. 24.** **New Direction, 5th Annual Snowball Dance**, **Potts Banquet Hall**, 41 S. Rossler St., Cheektowaga. Music 7:00-10:00 p.m. \$5.00
- **Jan. 31.** **New Direction, Fr. Krysa's 2nd Annual Krupnik Festival**, noon-3:00 p.m. **St. Casimir's**, Buffalo. Call (716) 824-9589 for more info.
- **Jan. 31.** **John Gora, Ludowa Nuta Dance**, **Polish Hall**, 1015 Barton St. E., Hamilton, Ontario 8:00 p.m. Call (905) 304-1945 for more info.

AMERICAN POLONIA AT A GLANCE

MASSACHUSETTS

NORTHAMPTON — The Polish Heritage Committee is sponsoring a **Polish Christmas Carol Sing Along** on Sun., Jan. 4, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Valentine Polish National Catholic Church, 127 King St.

All friends of Polonia are invited to attend.

The carols will be led by singers from area church choirs. An afternoon of music and fellowship is surely to be enjoyed by all. Refreshments will follow the event in the parish hall of the church.

For more information, contact Chris Newman at (413) 584-4531 or Bob Gibowicz at (413) 586-1079.

NEW JERSEY

CAMDEN — St. Joseph Church's **Annual Oplatek** (Christmas Luncheon). Sun., Jan. 4. The Kove, 20 West Atlantic Ave., Audubon. Noon. For info and reservations call Pat (856) 310-1783.

NEW YORK

BUFFALO, N.Y. — The Polish American Congress, Western New York Division, will hold a **Winter Kulig**, Sun., Feb. 8, 2015 from noon until 6:00 p.m. at the Casino Meeting Room located at Chestnut Ridge Park.

Traditionally, a kulig was a sleigh ride organized by Polish aristocracy. A cavalcade of horse-pulled sleighs and sledges went from one manor house to another, entertained everywhere with hearty meals followed by dances.

The PACWNY kulig will feature sleigh rides, sledding, tobogganing, live Goralska Kapela (mountain folk singers) playing music in traditional costume, Polish food and beverage, along with a roaring fireplace to keep warm and have conversation. Face painting and crafts will also be available for the children.

"We want to give individuals and families a chance to experience a

kulig," said event organizer, PACWNY Director Jim Lawicki.

Adult tickets are \$25, children are \$15. Discounted tickets are available for families and groups. For ticket information please call (716) 864-6110 or email to JLawicki@Verizon.net.

SAVE THE DATE! The **Polish Children's Heartline** will hold its annual Champagne Gala at



The Polish Consulate in Manhattan, Sun., Feb. 1 at 2:00 p.m. The Christmas season will continue at this special event with koledy and the sharing of oplatek. Delicious food, entertainment and gift raffles, all to help PCH continue its work in Polish hospitals. \$70 per person, Reservations required. Seating is limited. For more information (732) 680-0680.

Established in 1985, The Polish Children's Heartline is a non-profit, all volunteer organization, giving assistance to pediatric cardiac units in Poland by purchasing medical and surgical equipment critical in treating children. Currently it aids units at Lodz, Katowice, Zabrze, Bialystok, Suwalki and Grajewo, Poland.

This year, PCH celebrates 30 years of sending over \$20,000,000 worth of medical and surgical equipment to Poland. Every year over 2000 procedures are performed on children with heart problems. Through donations, PCH continues to save many, because ... "If We Don't Help Our Polish Children, Who Will?"

For more information, Call (732) 680-0680, 177 Broadway, Clark, NJ 07066, childshart@aol.com, or www.PolishChildrensHeartline.org.

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA — Everyone is invited to attend the annual tribute ceremony honoring American Revolutionary War hero and freedom fighter for Poland, General Thaddeus Kosciuszko. The event — Sat., Feb. 7, 2015 at the **Kosciuszko House**, 3rd & Pine Streets, at noon — will mark the 269th anniversary of his birth.

Sponsored by the Polish American Congress Eastern Pennsylvania District, a luncheon at the Polish American Cultural Center Museum will follow the ceremony.

For additional information or luncheon reservations call (215) 739-3408 or (215) 922-1700.

BENSALEM — **Polish Dinner**. Sat., Jan. 3, 2015, St. Ephrem Church, 5340 Hulmeville Rd. 4:00-8:00 p.m. Authentic Polish cuisine, live musical entertainment, basket raffles and more. Call Teresa (215) 752-9270 or Walt (267) 608-7969 for more information.

READING — Sun., Jan. 4. Polish American Heritage Association of Berks County **Installation Dinner**. Mountain Springs Restaurant, 2619 Hill Road. 1:00 p.m. For info call Marilyn at (610) 779-5523.

DOYLESTOWN — Sun., Jan. 11. Our Lady of Czestochowa Polish Language School Christmas Program, **Jaselka**. Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Ferry Road. Prior to the 12:30 p.m. Mass. For information, please call the shrine (215) 345-0600.

PHILADELPHIA — Sun., Jan. 11. St. John Cantius Polish Language School Christmas Program **Jaselka**. Parish Hall, 4415 Almond St., following 11:30 a.m. Mass. Everyone is invited. For info call Elzbieta Michta (215) 776-7311.

PHILADELPHIA — Sun., Jan. 11. St. Adalbert Polish Language School Annual Christmas Program **Jaselka**. St. Adalbert Auditorium, Thompson St. and Allegheny Ave., Noon. Free. For info call Danuta Eichler (267) 251-3776.

PHILADELPHIA — Sun., Jan. 11. Polski Uniwersytet Ludowy **Lecture** in the Polish Language. Associated Polish Home, 9150 Academy Rd. 3:00 p.m. Speaker:

Urbanik Guest Speaker

RADIO BROADCASTER Fania Urbanik from *Frania's Polka Celebration* delivered the main address at the Zabawa Polska, commemorating Polish Heritage Month. The event, sponsored by the Polish Heritage Club of Uniontown, Pa., was held at the Torchlight Inn, Oct. 12, 2014.

Club President Frank Cetera opened the event by inviting all to participate in the singing of the American and Polish national anthems. Rev. Canon Joseph Sredzinski followed with a bilingual invocation.

Urbanik gave an overview of the cultural aspects of Polish heritage in the United States, and also discussed the Jamestown, Virginia Settlement, the heroism of Polish freedom fighters, and celebration of feast day of St. John Paul II.

The PHC held its annual Wigilia Christmas Party on Dec. 19 at the Polish Club hall, the twenty-fifth such event since its founding.



Jan Rudomina, engineer and economist. Topic: "Marketing of tourism destination — How to increase a desire to visit Poland." For info call (215) 624-9954. All are invited to attend. Free.

READING — The members of the **Polish American Heritage Association of Berks County** (PAHABC) have elected the following officers for 2015: vice president, Sandra Hummel; and treasurer, Lynn Benusa. Marilyn Wlazewski and Toni Wade will continue to serve as president and secretary of the organization. They will be installed at a party to welcome the New Year, Jan., 4, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at the Mountain Springs Restaurant, 2619 Hill Rd., Reading. The cost is \$35 for members and \$40 for non-members. For more information and reservations call Marilyn at (610) 779-5523.

The PAHABC recently sponsored its 10th Annual Christmas Eve "Wigilia," which was held Dec. 14 at the Stirling Guest Hotel. The evening featured a social hour, sharing of the oplatek, dinner and koledy.

PHILADELPHIA — The **Pierogie Kitchen**, located at 648 Roxborough Ave. in the Roxborough section of Philadelphia, celebrated its 11th anniversary on Mon., Nov. 24, 2014.

"I'm extremely proud that we've been able to serve Roxborough, the city of Philadelphia, and the entire Delaware Valley for the last 11 years" said owner Marie Thorpe Jr., whose shop has been featured on the Food Network and has won a number of accolades, including Best of Philly (Best Pierogie, *Philadelphia Magazine*, 2006). "To share a family tradition and recipe that I learned from my grandmom with so many people over the years truly means the world to me."

The Pierogie Kitchen sells 29 varieties of frozen and hot pierogies in its Roxborough market, as well as its popular stacker sandwiches, homemade soup, stuffed cabbage, kielbasa and kraut, and baked goods. Pierogie Kitchen fans can also find some of its pierogies in local Acme Markets in the Philadelphia area and southern New Jersey.

CANDLEMAS (Feb. 2), known as the Feast of the Purification (of the Blessed Mother) officially ends the Christmas season in Poland. In Polish it is known as the Feast of Our Lady of the Thunder Candle (Święto Matki Boskiej Gromniczej), since the candles lighted during storms and at the bedside of the dying are blessed at church on that day.

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Polish American Museum Accepts Zaborski Archives

PORT WASHINGTON, New York — The Polish American Museum celebrated Polish Heritage Month on Sun., Oct. 26, 2014, by commemorating the 75th anniversary of the invasion of Poland and the unveiling of its latest exhibit.

The museum recently acquired from the Asher and Zaborski family, documents and clothing of the survivor of the Nazi concentration camp, Jan Zaborski, a corporal in the Polish Army.

The program commenced with the playing and singing of the Polish and American anthems, followed by an invocation by Father Jerzy Bres, associate pastor of St. Hyacinth's R.C. Church. A touching moment was the blessing of the clothing.

President of the museum, Barbara Szydowski welcomed everyone. Pianist Mateusz Majka played several compositions by Frederic Chopin, followed by violinist Krysia Wirkowski, who played *Concerto #2* by Bruch.

Guest speakers for the event were United States Army (Ret.) Colonel Richard Jung, Sr. and United States Army (Ret.) Colonel Gerald Kochan, who gave an outstanding presentation on the invasion of Poland.

In addition, Magda Kapuscinska, president of the Pilsudski Institute

of America, spoke of Pilsudski and his accomplishments.

The master of ceremonies for the program was Richard Brzozowski.

A SURVIVOR'S STORY. Jan Zaborski was born June 22, 1912 in Sanok, Poland. He was taken from his parents' home by the German Gestapo and arrested without explanation. Arrested at the same time were religious, government officials and officers of the Polish army.

He was sent to Sanok prison in March 1942, then transferred in August 1942 to Tarnow, where he was interrogated many times, each time about different activities. Zaborski was accused of participating in actions against the Third Reich and the Nationalist Socialist Party, for being a practicing Catholic, and member of the Young Men's Catholic Society, as well as for helping Jews by bringing food and aiding their escape from Poland to Hungary. Other accusations included his membership in the Polish National Guard and his being an underground member, in possession of a rifle issued to him as a soldier during the war.

During interrogations and hearings, Zaborski was called a Polish pig and Polish dog, thrown into a

cell and was so badly beaten he lost consciousness and no longer resembled a human being. The beatings were so frequent and severe that he could not remember all of them.

Zaborski was not shot because the German Nazis needed workers. He was sent to Auschwitz concentration camp; then to Mauthausen, where he worked 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days a week.

Being a prisoner under German Gestapo control, he did not see the reports of accusations against him. Why he was arrested was difficult for him to understand. He never had the opportunity to defend himself.

Zaborski was liberated from Mauthausen in May 1945, after more than thirty-seven months in captivity. His applications for compensation from the German government included all the allegations made against him by the German Gestapo.

Zaborski died in Florida, January 1999.

The Polish American Museum in Port Washington has on display, Zaborski's documents and clothing worn while in the German Nazi concentration camp.

The museum is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.